

1997-2012

# UNITED BY ONE CONVICTION

The history of the  
Youth of the European  
People's Party





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# Preface

The founding of the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP) in 1997 was a remarkable event. After decades of division among the Christian Democrat and Conservative youth in Europe, which were split between two organisations-the European Young Christian Democrats (EYCD) and the Democratic Youth Community of Europe (DEMYC)-the critical mass of organisations finally decided to unite the centre-right youth in Europe in one single organisation in the mid-1990s. From the very beginning YEPP was a success and has developed into the largest centre-right youth organisation in Europe, bringing together 57 organisations from 39 countries. YEPP has also become the sole youth organisation linked to the European People's Party, and in this way it has clearly contributed to the strengthening of our political family.

As a young man, I was President of the Flemish Christian Democratic youth organisation. In that capacity, together with my board, I set myself the task of putting forward ambitious proposals. Those proposals succeeded in influencing the policies of the Flemish Christian Democrats considerably. And I am convinced, especially in the case of YEPP and the EPP, that this is what a youth organisation should do: challenge and dynamise us all. A youth organisation must be a laboratory for new ideas and inspiring positions. Young people should put forward new ideas and new topics and, above all, push the party forward.

With my background, I have always had a lot of empathy with YEPP. To date, I have participated in all YEPP Congresses and I have experienced YEPP to be an active and committed youth organisation, which puts the views of the young generation at the centre of the political debate. I have always been impressed by the broad scope and high level of the political debates within YEPP, as well as by the numerous papers and resolutions that YEPP has introduced to the EPP. YEPP has not only interjected and had its say on youth issues. It has contributed to discussions on general EU policy issues, including social, economic and environmental policies, and sometimes put new topics on the agenda, for example sustainable development. YEPP has also regularly focused on institutional reform and the enlargement of the EU. Another unwavering characteristic of YEPP is that in its 15-year history it has tirelessly fought for freedom and against totalitarian regimes, as in Belarus for example. Moreover, YEPP has been exemplary and unique in the sense that since its foundation it has welcomed and included several political parties from Central and Eastern Europe. It united East and West, long before Europe did so.

Alongside the valuable contribution YEPP has made in terms of content, a new generation of remarkably skilled politicians has graduated from the ranks of YEPP to now lead a number of our member parties or to take up important roles in politics, in both elected and unelected functions at the national and European level. Many have become members of Parliament or hold key staff positions in parties or in parliamentary groups. In addition to this, some former YEPP Board members have taken up important roles in government. Currently Jyrki Katainen is Prime Minister of Finland, Jan-Kees De Jager is the Dutch Finance Minister, Lucinda Creighton is the Irish Minister for European Integration, Leo Varadkar is the Irish Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, and Mikolaj Dowgielewicz is the Polish State Secretary for European Integration. Undoubtedly though, the most remarkable achievement to date is that YEPP's first President, Fredrik Reinfeldt, is now the successful Prime Minister of Sweden. I am proud to acknowledge that all of these personalities experienced an important part of their political socialisation in YEPP.

Fundamentally though, YEPP has proven itself to be a precious network of politically engaged young people and friends sharing the same values and ambitions for Europe and defending the same positions. The strength of this network will become even more important in the future when more YEPP alumni progress to key positions.

On its 15th anniversary, I would like to congratulate YEPP, its member organisations and its past and present Board members for all of these achievements!

In these challenging times for Europe, it is important for the EPP to defend its values and the fundamentals upon which the party is built. As a people's party, the EPP needs strong associations that reflect the different groups in our societies. However, we especially need a strong youth organisation that defends the interests of the young and of future generations. Nothing makes this clearer than the political discussions we are currently having at the European level in relation to the debt crisis. The younger generation has to make its voice heard to fight for greater sustainability, not just in our economy and our public finances, but also with regard to the environment. I am convinced that YEPP will live up to this challenge.

As I said during my speech at the Founding Congress of YEPP in Brussels in 1997: 'European unification is not an event, but a process spread over several generations. It can only be realised through the symbiosis of generations.' I hope that YEPP will keep delivering new generations of politicians who will work towards that goal and who will walk in the footsteps of the founding fathers of Europe.

Happy 15th Anniversary!

*Wilfried Martens, EPP and CES President,  
Brussels, 20 January 2012*

# Acknowledgments

This book on the history of YEPP is based on primary written and oral sources. Documents from the YEPP archives have been used, along with a number of interviews that were conducted specifically for the purpose of this publication. Interviews with former YEPP Presidents and a number of key figures in YEPP's history took place in the autumn of 2011 (see Sources). Quotations from these interviews were presented to the interviewees for their approval. The authors wish to thank the interviewees for their kind collaboration and for sharing their insights with us.

We would also like to thank former Deputy Secretary General Ms Brenda Furniere, Mr Tom Roels and the Executive Officer of YEPP, Ms Helena Boyden Lamb, for their support during the writing process.

The text of this book was approved by the YEPP Board and edited by Marvin DuBois and the Communicative English editing team. The final responsibility for the book lies with YEPP.

*Steven Van Hecke and Wouter Wolfs*  
*Antwerp, 29 January 2012*

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*YEPP Board 2011-13*

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| AME             | Akhalgazrda Memarjveneebi (Georgia)  |
| CDJA            | Christen Democratisch Jongeren Appèl/Christian Democratic Youth Appeal (the Netherlands) |
| CDMU            | Christian Democratic Youth Union (Ukraine)   |
| CES             | Centre for European Studies  |
| CGCCD           | Consulta Giovanile Centro Cristiano Democratico (Italy)                                  |
| CoE             | Council of Europe  |
| CoR             | Committee of the Regions   |
| CSJ             | Chrëschtlech-Sozial Jugend (Luxembourg)  |
| CU              | Cura Ungdom (Denmark)  |
| CVP-Jongeren    | Christelijke Volkspartij Jongeren (Belgium: Flanders)                                    |
| DEMYC           | Democratic Youth Council   |
| DPMNE           | Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (FYROM)                            |
| ECOSY           | European Community Organisation of Socialist Youth                                       |
| EDS             | European Democrat Students   |
| EDU             | European Democrat Union  |
| EFS             | Eduardo Frei Stichting   |
| EGI             | Euzko Gaztedi (Spain: Basque Country)  |
| EP              | European Parliament  |
| EPP             | European People's Party  |
| EU              | European Union   |
| EUCD            | European Union of Christian Democrats  |
| EUYCD           | European Union of Young Christian Democrats  |
| EYCD            | European Young Christian Democrats   |
| FIG             | Forza Italia Giovani (Italy)   |
| FR-PD           | Forumi Rinor i Partise Demokratike te Shqiperise (Albania)                               |
| Giovani U.D.euR | Giovani Unione Democratici per l'Europa (Italy)  |
| Giovani UDC     | Giovani Unione di Centro (Italy)   |
| GL              | Giovani per la Libertà (Italy)   |
| GPI             | Giovani Popolari Italiani (Italy)  |
| HSS             | Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung  |
| IDF             | Ifjusagi Demokrata Forum (Hungary)   |
| IRI             | International Republican Institute   |
| IRLY            | Isamaa ja Res Publica Liidu Noorteühendus (Estonia)                                      |
| IYDU            | International Young Democrat Union   |
| IUYCD           | International Union of Young Christian Democrats   |
| JCVP            | Junge Christlichdemokratische Volkspartei der Schweiz (Switzerland)                      |
| JEF             | Jeunes Européens Fédéralistes (Young European Federalists)                               |
| Jeunes cdH      | Jeunes centre démocrate Humaniste (Belgium: French-speaking)                             |
| Jeunes PSC      | Jeunes Parti Social Chrétien (Belgium: French-speaking)                                  |
| JGSVP           | Junge Generation Südtiroler Volkspartei (Italy: South Tirol)                             |
| JKD             | Jaunieji Krikščionys Demokratai (Lithuania)  |
| JONGcd&v        | Jong Christen-Democratisch & Vlaams (Belgium: Flanders)                                  |
| JSD             | Juventude Social Democrata (Portugal)  |
| JU              | Junge Union (Germany)  |
| JVP/Junge ÖVP   | Junge Österreichische Volkspartei (Austria)  |
| KAS             | Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung   |
| KDN             | Suomen Kristillisdemokraattiset Nuoret (Finland)   |
| KDU             | Kristendemokratisk Ungdom (Denmark)  |
| KKID            | Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy  |
| KNL             | Kokoomuksen Nuorten Liitto (Finland)   |
| KrFU            | Kristelig Folkepartis Ungdom (Norway)  |
| KU              | Konservativ Ungdom (Denmark)   |
| LFSA            | Lebanese Forces Student Association (Lebanon)  |
| LYMEC           | Liberal Youth Movement of the European Communities                                       |

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| MChD           | Młodzieżchrześcijański Demokraci (Poland)  |
| MEP            | Member of European Parliament  |
| MGCDU          | Movimento Giovane Cristiani Democratici Uniti (Italy)  |
| MGDCS          | Movimento Giovane Democratico Cristiano Sanmarinese (San Marino)   |
| MGERB          | Young Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)   |
| MHDZ           | Mladež Hrvatske Demokratske Zajednice (Croatia)  |
| MIERT          | Magyar Ifjúsági Értekezlet (Romania)   |
| MKD            | Mladí Křesťanští Demokráte (Czech Republic)  |
| MSDP           | Mladezki Sajuz na Demokraticeska Partija (Bulgaria)  |
| MSI            | Mlada Slovenija (Slovenia)   |
| MUF            | Moderata ungdomsförbundet (Sweden)   |
| MZPN           | Moviment Żgħażaġh Partit Nazzjonalista (Malta)   |
| NATO           | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation   |
| NE.DI.SY       | Youth of the Democratic Rally of Cyprus (Cyprus)   |
| NEI            | Nouvelles Équipes Internationales  |
| NG PPCD        | Noua Generatie Partidul Popular Crestin Democrat (Moldova)   |
| NG SLS         | Nova generacija Slovenska ljudska stranka (Slovenia)   |
| NG             | Nova Genaracia (Slovakia)  |
| NNGG           | Nuevas Generaciones (Spain)  |
| ODSS           | Omladina Demokratske Stranke Srbije (Serbia)   |
| ONNED          | Organossis Neon Neas Dimokratias (Greece)  |
| OT PDL         | Organizatia de Tineret a Partidului Democrat-Liberal (Romania)   |
| QMV            | Qualified Majority Voting  |
| RPJ            | Res Publica Juventus (Estonia)   |
| RSF            | Robert Schuman Foundation  |
| SAQDA          | Saqartvelos Akhlagazrdobis Qristianul-Demokratiuli Asotziatia (Georgia)  |
| SDM            | Slovenska Demokratska Mladina (Slovenia)   |
| SMD            | Stowarzyszenie "Młodzi Demokraci" (Poland)   |
| UHL            | Unge Høyres Landsforbund (Norway)  |
| UJ             | Unió de Joves (Spain: Catalonia)   |
| UIJDC          | Union internationale des jeunes démocrates-chrétiens   |
| UMS VMRO-DPMNE | Youth Forces Union of Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija-Demokratska Partija za Makedonsko Nacionalno Edinstvo (FYROM) |
| YA SDA         | Youth Association of Stranka demokratske akcije (Bosnia and Herzegovina)   |
| YCSU-YD        | Youth Christian Social Union-Young Democrats (Belarus)   |
| YEPP           | Youth of the European People's Party   |
| YFG            | Young Fine Gael (Ireland)  |
| YFJ            | Youth Forum Jeunesse   |
| YLPP           | Tautas Partijas Jaunatnes Organizācija (Latvia)  |
| YN G17 PLUS    | Omladinska mreza G17 PLUS (Serbia)   |
| YUDF           | Youth Union of Democratic Forces (Bulgaria)  |



# ‘United by one conviction’: The road towards the founding of YEPP

The founding of the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP) did not appear from out of the blue. YEPP developed out of the diverse forms of cooperation that had long existed among Christian Democrats and Conservatives in Western Europe, particularly the European Young Christian Democrats (EYCD) and the Democratic Youth Community of Europe (DEMYC). EYCD was the youth organisation of the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD) and DEMYC was the youth organisation of the European Democratic Union (EDU). Gradually YEPP became a pan-European umbrella organisation for the youth of Christian Democratic, Conservative and people's parties alike, most, but not all, of them affiliated to the European People's Party (EPP).

The first institutionalised European cooperation among young Christian Democrats dates back to the period after the Second World War. It was originally linked to the *Nouvelles Équipes Internationales* (NEI), one of the predecessors of the EPP. The *Jeunes des NEI*, founded in 1948, was renamed during the course of the 1950s as the *Union des Jeunes Démocrates Chrétiens des NEI* and then as the *Union Internationale des Jeunes DC-section Europe*. In 1967, a few years after the establishment of EUCD, the *Union Européenne des Jeunes Démocrates Chrétiens* was founded. As not all of EUCD's member parties and their youth organisations were active in countries belonging to the then European Community (now the EU), a separate sub-organisation was established to deal with specific Community-related issues. This *Commission pour l'Intégration Européenne*, later the *Committee of the Nine* and, after the accession of Greece in 1981, the *Committee of the Ten*, became the most important arena for the cooperation of young Christian Democrats at the European level. In 1984 it merged with its mother organisation, the *Union Européenne des Jeunes Démocrates Chrétiens*, into EYCD.

DEMYC was founded in the early 1970s. In fact, it was not until 1978 that the mother parties of DEMYC member organisations followed their youth organisations' example and formed the *European Democrat Union* (EDU), a European-wide association of Conservative and other centre-right parties. DEMYC became a permanent observer of EDU in 1979 and took an active role in the creation of the *International Young Democrat Union* (IYDU). Similarly, EYCD was one of the strongholds of the *International Union of Young Christian Democrats* (IUYCD).

Obviously, the fact that two European youth organisations existed alongside each other, trying to serve the same audience, at least in part, weakened them both. The same was true of the mother organisations, EUCD and EDU. Moreover, many national youth organisations were members of both EYCD and DEMYC. This was not only a waste of money and resources, but it also led to divides in both organisations. Within EYCD, there was a pole of so-called pure Christian Democratic youth organisations, that were not members of DEMYC, opposing a conservative pole of DEMYC members; within DEMYC a distinction could be made between EYCD members and those that were not members of EYCD. Moreover, according

to Fredrik Reinfeldt, then president of DEMYC and later the first YEPP president, there was also a conflict inside DEMYC between those that wanted to follow an anti-European line, such as the British Young Conservatives, and those that were in favour of more European integration.

While a large part of DEMYC was in fear of losing its relevance and appeal given its distance from European integration affairs and the EPP in particular, at the beginning of the 1990s EYCD was suffering from a severe internal crisis. EYCD was the official youth organisation of the EPP and maintained a good working relationship with its mother party. One indication of this is that in 1994, a representative of EYCD, Secretary General Marc Bertrand, was elected as an EPP vice-president for the first time. Strategically speaking, however, EYCD did not make the same choices as the EPP. Young Christian Democrats from the Benelux countries, Italy and Ireland opposed the opening up of the organisation to Conservative and other centre-right youth organisations. This coalition of 'small' organisations (the implosion of the Italian Christian Democratic party in the early 1990s must be remembered) stood against the 'bigger' organisations that happened to be members of DEMYC as well. Tensions grew until, in 1994, at the EYCD Congress in Bogensee, near Berlin, the 'larger' organisations, including JU and NNGG, suspended their participation. They criticised EYCD for not being representative enough and for acting too much in favour of the 'smaller' organisations. EYCD was simply not adjusting to the changing Europe that many of its member organisations were experiencing.

The paralysation within EYCD was now complete. However, as is often the case, it also led to a change of mindset and behaviour. For the 'pure' Christian Democrats it was clear that without the bigger organisations, such as JU and NNGG, EYCD would quickly lose its credibility. For an organisation such as JU, which defined itself as the youth organisation of a people's party with both Christian Democratic and Conservative roots, it was unthinkable not to be part of an association of Christian Democratic or Conservative youth organisations. Their view was that Christian Democrats and Conservatives should not be split but join forces at the European level and stay 'united by one conviction', according to former Board member Markus Pösentrup. At the same time, many DEMYC members were very interested in closer cooperation with the national youth organisations that operated at the centre of the European integration process. In the same period, the British Young Conservatives left DEMYC because they felt it had become 'too European' and 'too federal', which also helped DEMYC's move towards European integration.

In 1995 the Political Bureau of EYCD and the Executive Committee of DEMYC established an EYCD/DEMYC Joint Working Group. This Working Group had the task of examining future methods of sustainable cooperation at the European level. The idea was to bring together the best of both worlds, not to impose a single membership on the various national youth organisations. As Yan-

nick Georges from Jeunes PSC, and later vice-president of YEPP, wrote, 'cette organisation ne devait pas être une simple fusion des JDCE [Jeunes Démocrates Chrétiens Européens, EYCD] et du DEMYC mais, bien au contraire, devait essayer de rassembler autour de valeurs communes un maximum d'organisations à la fois des JDCE et du DEMYC.'

The Working Group met in January, April, May and July 1996. At the same time discussions took place in the Executive Committee of DEMYC and the Political Bureau of EYCD. It soon became clear that all sides could agree to work towards establishing a broad umbrella organisation of Christian Democratic, Conservative and other centre-right youth organisations. In other words, in the first half of 1996 preparations for the foundation of a new association took place, alongside negotiations between DEMYC and EYCD. A consensus was established for a 'Declaration on the Basic Values and Principles' and on the statutes of the new organisation. On the basis of these documents an inaugural congress was to be convened.

In the second half of 1996 the national member organisations of DEMYC and EYCD were informed. In a letter dated 21 July 1996 and signed by Fredrik Reinfeldt, Winfried Weck and Matthias Peterlik on behalf of DEMYC, and Sandro Brodbeck, Brian Murphy, Valentin Hajdinjal and Marc Bertrand on behalf of EYCD, the founders of the new organisation, named the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP), made it clear what was at stake. They wrote: 'The results of our work are by nature a compromise. It is impossible in a negotiation such as this to satisfy in all respects the demands of every organisation. . . . The creation of YEPP and the decision over whether to join is ultimately one for each national or regional organisation. We firmly believe the package we have negotiated offers the best prospect for success.'

A general consultation in November 1996 in Brussels with all the members of both organisations proved to be very successful. A fruitful discussion took place on the basis of three documents: the Declaration on the Basic Values and Principles, the statutes, and the rules of the Congress. As the Working Group had done a good job, few or no changes were made. There were some amendments made to the Declaration in order to make it more Christian Democratic. The number of vice-presidents was also a point of discussion. The original three was increased to nine to make the Board more representative, taking into account the variety of national member organisations. Once these issues were settled, everything was ready for the dissolution of both EYCD and DEMYC and the foundation of YEPP.

The Founding Congress was organised in Brussels for the 31 January–2 February 1997. It was hosted by CVP-Jongeren and Jeunes PSC and organised by Fredrik Reinfeldt, Winfried Weck, Matthias Peterlik and Belén Ureña from DEMYC, and by Sandro Brodbeck, Brian Murphy, Valentin Hajdinjal and Marc Bertrand from EYCD. It took place on the premises of the Facultés Universitaires Saint-

**BASIC VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE YOUTH OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**

**Human dignity**  
YEPP affirms the inalienable dignity of every human being. We regard every man and every woman as unique, irreplaceable, and free by nature. Every person has the right and the duty to be fully responsible for themselves and their acts. The protection of human rights is inseparably linked with the protection of the rights of ethnic, cultural, and / or religious minorities.

**Society**  
Each human being within society depends on others. Because they are free, responsible and interdependent, people must take part in the construction of a pluralist society. The family has a central role in such a society.

**Values**  
Our thought and political action are based on fundamental, interdependent, equally important, and universally applicable value: freedom, responsibility, fundamental equality, justice and solidarity.

**Democracy**  
We consider that democracy is the single political system supporting and protecting the integral development of the individual. There is no alternative to democracy and the rule of law.

**Economy and social policy**  
The concept of market economy and competition is central to our approach to the economic life. Together with democracy it makes it possible to achieve freedom through the decentralisation of power. The economic and social systems are inseparably linked to one another according to the principle "as much market as possible, as much State as necessary". We consider that it is vital to ensure social justice and solidarity based on partnership and participation at all levels, non-governmental and governmental, local, national, and international.

**Environment**  
Our concept of man calls for management of the earth with respect for the self-regenerating potential of nature. Protection of the environment and the concept of sustainable development are bound up with that of responsible growth and must be incorporated into every policy, at whatever level of power. Political, social and economic action must be geared to ensure that all potential is safeguarded for future generations.

**Peace and security**  
We believe in the need for a common security architecture for Europe to guarantee the peace, stability and freedom of the continent.

**Europe**  
We believe in the European Union, as it stands for a future in freedom and security, progress, prosperity, and solidarity. European Union membership must be available to all countries on the European continent that meet the requirements of democracy, human rights, and market economy. Hand in hand with the enlargement must go further integration. For us there is no alternative to European integration.

**Subsidiarity**  
We believe in the sovereignty of states which enables them to work freely and as good as they can to ensure the well-being and development of their people and to defend and reinforce the international legal order. This also means, however, that States must share their sovereignty in supranational and international organisations where they cannot take effective action individually. The European Union as a decentralised community of nations and peoples, not as a unitary super State, must take account of local, regional, national, and European levels according to the principle of subsidiarity.

**Participation**  
It is the citizens of the European Union who by their support give it its legitimacy. The European Union requires the active participation of European citizens. Europe is not - and cannot be - the affair of governments alone.

Louis, in the city centre of Brussels, close to Brussels North station, and welcomed about 300 participants representing 42 organisations from 33 countries. Only the Bulgarian delegation of MSDP was absent because of financial problems and the difficult domestic political situation. On the afternoon of Friday 31 January there was a meeting of the heads of delegation which was followed by the opening session of the Congress. The Congress was inaugurated by EPP President Wilfried Martens. In his speech he appealed to the new organisation to become a privileged speaker within the EPP. On Saturday morning the plenary session continued and the first Board was elected, composed of 13 members (one president, one first vice-president, one secretary general, one deputy secretary general and 9 vice-presidents), as well as 2 financial auditors. In the afternoon three working commissions were established: one on the future of Europe, one on stability and security in Europe, and one on the work plan for the incoming Board. The first two produced statements that were later distributed within YEPP. No less than eight resolutions on the Council of Europe, employment in Europe, famine in the world, drug trafficking, internet and child abuse, transport and merchandises across the Alps, East Timor and terrorism were accepted. One resolution, which did not gain a sufficient majority, asked the EPP Group in the European Parliament (EP) to denounce the political agreement with the Socialist Group which reserves the function of the president of the EP in alternation for the members of just these two political groups. On the Sunday morning the outcome of the elections was reported during the final plenary session. The work could now begin.

# Fredrik Reinfeldt

## YEPP President 1997-9

*'Founding YEPP was our way of being close to the European policy process and, at the same time, bringing the family together.'*

*'It was very time consuming and we were very focused on building the new organisation, not yet on policy, because we first had to deal with the problem of getting the organisation running, which included bringing together a lot of people from very different traditions.'*

*'A lot of the people that were active in those days are now in the Brussels system. Many are actually on the appointed side rather than elected. I went the political way. My friends from those days certainly help me to find my way through the system. Most of them are from my era.'*

*'It is important to combine an interest in believing in European ideals with the desire to also be a part of and understand national political life.'*

*'At the end of the day all political life is in the hands of the electorate throughout Europe, so you need the confidence and support of the people in Europe. You can only gain that by understanding their fears and what they want in life ... And you can be a good European by putting that together, by combining a national appointment with pro-European action.'*



# ‘Keeping the balance’: YEPP’s pioneering years

The most important challenge for the newly founded YEPP was to prove its sustainability. YEPP was built to overcome the split between Christian Democrats and Conservatives, but this did not mean that all the tensions had faded away. Old wounds could easily be re-opened. Building this new organisation with new people, as at least half of them were, was not easy for many of the national youth organisations. For instance, it was the first time that the Swedish Christian Democrats had been a member of an organisation to which the Swedish Conservatives also belonged. Two different traditions had to be merged: the one of EYCD, which was more centrist and also placed a greater emphasis on ideology, and basic values and principles; and the one of DEMYC, which was more pragmatic and liberal-conservative. According to former YEPP President Michael Hahn, it was like ‘a leftist student organisation’ combined with ‘little adults in a political club’. It also meant that former EYCD members had to come to terms with non-Christian Democratic organisations (which they had long excluded from participation in their organisation). Former DEMYC members had to be conscious that the European integration process would now play a much bigger role in the political activities of their international youth organisation.

A lot of confidence-building measures were implemented. What was not foreseen, however, was that DEMYC would continue to exist alongside YEPP, while EYCD was dissolved. This naturally created a tense situation. Moreover, in the run-up to the foundation of YEPP, DEMYC deliberately opened its doors to new member organisations from Central and Eastern Europe. DEMYC became a much looser association than YEPP because of its more tolerant membership policy, linking national organisations of very different kinds. At the 1997 DEMYC Congress in Cyprus, a couple of months after the foundation of YEPP, JU and other Scandinavian youth organisations tried to close the organisation down. Unfortunately they failed to convince its members from within. As it became clear that DEMYC would stay, YEPP changed course and tried to establish a *modus vivendi* with its predecessor. After all, due to the continuing existence of DEMYC, double membership, now of DEMYC and YEPP, resulted in a number of national political organisations being active within two European umbrella associations. At the same time, with the election of a new DEMYC Board in July 1997, a period of dual membership between the Board of YEPP and the Board of DEMYC ended. Later, most, but not all, YEPP members became silent members of DEMYC. JU, for instance, already left DEMYC in 1997. DEMYC itself changed considerably, becoming less active and gradually transforming into an education and training network, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.

On the Christian Democratic side of the political spectrum, in 1997, after the foundation of YEPP, Kristendemokratisk Ungdom (KDU, Denmark) took the initiative to create ‘Cicero-the Christian Democratic Network’. According to its own charter, it was ‘an informal forum for discussion and reflection among all young European Christian Democrats. The debate should be centred

around interpreting problems facing society, using the Christian Democratic ideology. Thus the purpose of Cicero is to be a think tank of young Christian Democrats, and develop a Christian Democratic identity among its participants.’ Although the Christian Democratic tradition continued to be very important for a number of YEPP member organisations, little was heard from this network. This is not to say, however, that Christian Democratic member organisations within YEPP did not join forces. Representatives of Belgium (particularly Flanders), the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Catalonia, Switzerland and San Marino regularly sit together and hold informal meetings at the fringes of YEPP activities to prepare resolutions, for instance. Also representatives from the Nordic countries, the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and the German-speaking countries hold separate informal meetings. The so-called Larnaca Group, for instance, founded in 2005 during a seminar in Cyprus, played an important role in a number of Board elections. It brought together representatives from the German, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek and Austrian member organisations.

Not surprisingly, in the early years of YEPP a lot of attention was paid, in the words of former YEPP President Michael Hahn, to ‘keeping the balance’ between Christian Democrats and Conservatives, especially in the composition of the Board. In fact, the idea of balancing different ideological tendencies, as well as geographical areas and political cultures, has been one of the cornerstones of the way in which the Board has developed as an institution within YEPP. For instance, in contrast to the EPP, Central and Eastern European political organisations were well represented, even in 1997. They also had their share in the composition of the first Board. At the same time, in a much broader organisation, compared to DEMYC and EYCD, it was clear that privileged and strong positions had to be sacrificed, at least to some degree. It was an open secret, for instance, that the pivotal role JVP played in DEMYC, with its secretariat then located in Vienna, could not be prolonged within YEPP.

In the run-up to the Foundation Congress, a deal was made between a number of national youth organisations, particularly those that had steered the foundation of YEPP, to let the presidency alternate between the Conservatives, the people’s parties and the Christian Democrats during the early years. This resulted in the election of Fredrik Reinfeldt (MUF, Sweden) in 1997, Michael Hahn (JU, Germany) in 1999 and Rutger-Jan Hebben (CDJA, the Netherlands) in 2001. The election of Reinfeldt was particularly surprising since he was the outgoing chair of DEMYC. At the same time, this showed the commitment of Reinfeldt, his youth organisation and many others to working towards a single umbrella organisation at the European level. It also proved that during the foundation period Reinfeldt had become acceptable to the former members of EYCD, not least because of his personal skills. He was supported by the largest national youth organisation, JU, and, not insignificantly for young Christian Democrats, he was ‘a European guy who believed in the European project’.





On the Board, Reinfeldt was accompanied by a first vice-president from JU (Germany), Winfried Weck; a secretary general from CVP-Jongeren (Belgium), Walter Verbeke; and a deputy secretary general from CDJA (the Netherlands), Jan-Kees De Jager. Other Board members came from Austria, Norway, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Poland, Slovakia and Latvia. In other words, 7 years prior to the 'big bang' enlargement of the EU, 3 of the 14 members of the Board came from Eastern Europe.

The first Board was not only fairly balanced, it also invested a lot in 'getting to know and trust each other' according to former YEPP President Rutger-Jan Hebben. Starting a tradition within YEPP, this was done by discussing, accepting and implementing a work plan for the coming years. The work plan for the two-year term of the first Board, 1997-8, selected three areas of importance. In the first area, 'Political goals', YEPP wanted to develop a

good relationship with the EPP family. What YEPP wanted was to 'influence the political activities of EPP and develop a special relationship with the EPP youth fraction [sic] in the EP'. The second area was not goal- but means-oriented. One of the measures that was to be taken under the heading 'Political tools' was 'to position YEPP versus the other (youth) organisations (gradually replacing EYCD and DEMYC)'. YEPP also wanted to invest in its representation function: 'the new organisation has to become known in the political and socio-cultural arena'. In the third area, entitled 'Internal atmosphere', YEPP aimed to create confidence by, among other things, 'continuous and reciprocal communication between YEPP HQ and its member organisations'. Clearly, the first Board set a high standard for itself and for its successors.

As far as activities are concerned, the first Board meeting took place on 2 February 1997, immediately after the Founding Congress of YEPP. On the agenda were the inevitable transitional matters, the planning of events during 1997, participation in EPP activities, and also 'the development of the E-mail, to have a better communication inside the Board and with national organisations'. During a second meeting in Paris on 23 March 1997, a decision was made about YEPP's logo. The first Council meeting took place in Warsaw on 28 June 1997. The initial euphoria about the foundation of YEPP had somewhat faded, with the minutes reading: 'Frederik stressed out that five months after the Brussels Congress, it has been quite hard to start a new organisation. Few problems but very practical matters. Anyway, YEPP is not well organised.' The first Council, immediately organised in one of the Central and Eastern European member countries, occurred during the first YEPP seminar, which took place from 26-29 June 1997 and was entitled 'The state of our environment: confronting the global challenge on a European level'. In 1998 the Board organised the first Summer School and the first Chairmen's Conference.

It was only after a couple of years that YEPP was registered as a foundation under Dutch law. Once this had been done, it meant, among other things, that its legal address was in The Hague. At the 2011 Berlin Congress YEPP decided to become an international non-profit organisation under Belgian law, similar to the EPP, and to have its statutes amended accordingly. On 23 August 2011 YEPP became officially registered as an international non-profit organisation under Belgian law.



# Michael Hahn

## YEPP President 1999-2001

*'A political youth organisation is first of all a school, a place where people learn how politics work and how to handle complex situations.'*

*'It appears that there is a lot of continuity in political parties and in political youth organisations. In reality, however, each generation re-invents the whole thing. Moreover, each generation makes the same mistakes and has similar successes. In youth organisations especially, you do not learn from the mistakes of previous generations. And this is good. What else is a political organisation for?'*

*'YEPP is a connection for life, a way into politics and Europe.'*

*'Everyone that is active in YEPP should be curious, interested in understanding the others' position, whatever the position of the others is and whatever the outcome. The result will not change the world. What will change the world are the relations that have been built up.'*

*'I hope that YEPP always develops further, never stands still, continues to bring young people together and builds a European spirit.'*



# ‘Looking eastward’: YEPP’s membership

At the time of its foundation, YEPP had 38 full members and 5 observers. Since it combined both Christian Democratic and Conservative youth organisations, its membership outnumbered both EYCD and DEMYC. YEPP also had to reconcile two different approaches. EYCD had been very reluctant to accept, not to say hostile towards, any new members, especially if they were of a non-Christian Democratic nature. By contrast, DEMYC was a very open organisation that, without much hesitation, accepted members from Central and Eastern European countries.

Enlarging the membership base was not really a priority during YEPP’s first years. At the time of its foundation, a lot of attention had already been paid to the existing members of EYCD and DEMYC in order to convince them to join YEPP. There were almost no conditions of membership, as members of EYCD or DEMYC could automatically become founding members of YEPP. Once YEPP had been founded, the application procedure was to become much stricter. The idea was to encourage as many member organisations as possible to join at the point of foundation and to then keep the door more or less shut.

Accepting new members once YEPP had been founded was not on the radar of those who drafted the statutes. Consequently, and in the absence of any clear procedure, the first Council meeting had to deal with this issue. They approved an annex (‘Annex II Admission of new members and observers to YEPP’) to the statutes that states that:

1. All youth organisations must apply for a temporary observer status before they can become members of YEPP. The period as observer must be at least 6 months (see Art. 5).
2. The status of permanent observer will be provided for organisations whose international structures do not allow a membership in YEPP according to Art. 1 of the statutes.

In other words, YEPP introduced two kinds of observership: a temporary one for those waiting for full membership and a permanent one for those unable to become full members. The clear principle behind the annex is that every organisation must engage in an observership and cannot immediately become a full member of YEPP.

From 2001 onwards the success of YEPP began to be demonstrated by the number of applications made for membership. These applications were not from former members of EYCD or the remaining members of DEMYC. Most of the national youth organisations that applied were created in the slipstream of the rapidly changing political environment in Central and Eastern Europe. At the same time YEPP developed a much more outspoken, proactive membership policy towards the East. In fact it was the front runner vis-à-vis the EPP in this. Scanning this terra incognita for new members meant, however, a lot of extra work, particularly filtering the applications and satisfying all the invitations, for those that were in charge of YEPP. It certainly

helped that a lot of YEPP activities were organised in the area or, even better, were organised for this particular purpose. Often they were eye-opening events, for both good and bad reasons. This change was a completely new experience for most of the former members of EYCD.

Applications were considered case by case, based on the merit of the applicant, not its geographical location or any other reason. This allowed for organic growth. Waves of new membership, let alone a ‘big bang’, have never been able to destabilise the organisation. As the new membership grew, the face of YEPP changed gradually. It was a deliberate choice by the founders of YEPP to establish a rather demanding procedure for applicants. Indeed, membership requires real commitment. Similarly to the EPP, YEPP does not only ask for the statutes or the programme of the applicant, but also asks for and collects information on a broader set of issues. In practice, this means that, among other things, the youth organisation has to be pro-European. The network of the EPP, within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) for instance, and of the different political foundations was very helpful in determining membership. On some occasions the existence of other possible future applicant organisations within the applicant organisation’s country was also taken into account, to check whether they were ideologically closer to YEPP.

Every applicant must first comply with the membership article(s) of the statutes. The applicant organisation should share the principles of YEPP, the mother party should represent a stable political force in their respective country, and the applicant should not have suffered from a split or schism in the two-year period directly prior to its acceptance. Applicants must also complete a questionnaire, provide documents (statutes, a statement of the basic principles/values and a programme), and explain its structure, activities and so forth. The secretary general of YEPP, in collaboration with the deputy secretary general and the president, then takes a broad look at the applicant and consequently offers his or her recommendation to the Board. After a positive decision by the Board, the applicant receives invitations to upcoming YEPP events. The applicant also has the opportunity to present itself to the Council. Once an organisation has actively participated in at least 3 meetings within 12 months, they can apply for observership. The Board may decide to send a fact-finding mission to the country of the applicant in order to inspect the situation and take a closer look at the political reality. Having considered the results of such an investigation, the Council will make a decision upon the granting of observer status. After six months of being an observer and after having participated actively in three Council meetings, a decision about full membership can be made by the Congress.

Originally, observers had to wait 20 months before they could apply for full membership. At the YEPP Congress in Vienna from 5–8 April 2001 this period was shortened to six months. This



amendment of the statutes was proposed by JU, CVP-Jongeren, CDJA, KrFU and MD. According to spokesperson Christian Kremer (JU, Germany), now EPP deputy secretary general, 'YEPP needs to become more flexible in the procedure of accepting new members.' As the whole procedure took, at best, two and a half years, it meant that at least two Boards had to follow up the procedure and, moreover, one might need to wait a long time before the next YEPP Congress was organised. At the same Congress a resolution outlining this new membership strategy was accepted. Not surprisingly, the first priority of the 2001-3 work plan was to broaden YEPP's membership.

| RESOLUTION   |  |
|--|--|
| Adopted by the 3rd Congress in Vienna  |  |
| OPENING YEPP TO NEW MEMBER ORGANISATIONS   |  |
| YEPP has to front its own process of enlargement. In the upcoming years new organisations will become YEPP Members. It is our responsibility to ensure the perfect integration of them within YEPP and to guarantee that YEPP founding ideal is respected.   |  |
| The question on European borders is not a new one. Enlargement is fortunately an unstoppable process that increases the cultural, social, economic and political richness of the European Union. YEPP already consist of youth organisations from EU member countries and applicant and future applicant countries.  |  |
| Therefore, YEPP must have a strong compromise with new youth organisations willing to join us. We need to establish specific mechanisms to ensure their complete integration within YEPP structures as well as their respect to our principles and values.   |  |
| On many occasions the information we have from applicant organisations is not very wide. Therefore, an interesting possibility is to make every YEPP Vice-President responsible for an applicant organisation. He/she will visit the applicant organisation in its country of origin with a double objective:  |  |
| -Firstly, to get a close idea on how it is structured and which are its principles and values and the role it plays at national youth politics.  |  |
| -Secondly, to see what we can do to facilitate their entrance in YEPP  |  |
| A report will be elaborated and presented before the Council. This report will not be binding upon the Council in which remains the final decision on the acceptance or refusal of the application but will certainly be taken into consideration.   |  |
| Once an organisation is accepted as observer, the Vice-President responsible for it will be in charge of ensuring its perfect integration in all YEPP structures before it becomes full member.  |  |
| The limit to our enlargement is to be found both in the European geographical borders and, what is even more important, in the capability of YEPP to guarantee the well-functioning of its structures. We have to ensure that our sincere and logical will to universalise YEPP does not have the consequence of a loose of solidity and balance within it. Efficiency is one of our principles. |  |
| At the same time, we should not be afraid to open a serious debate on the possibility of reforming the current voting system to guarantee the balanced and democratic election of the Board.   |  |

Obviously, the opening up of YEPP towards the East was a process of trial and error. One of the most delicate points in this procedure was establishing the relative autonomy of the applicant organisation vis-à-vis its mother organisation. Such autonomy is necessary in order for the organisation to be able to function as a full member of YEPP. The different activities YEPP organises have regularly been offered as a testing ground in this respect. In other words the activities provide a forum in which it can be established whether the representatives of applicant organisations speak for themselves or whether they are merely spokespersons for their mother party or national government. On many occasions YEPP itself has maintained its autonomy vis-à-vis the EPP with regard to membership applications. Sometimes YEPP has reacted faster than the EPP; at other times YEPP has not imitated the EPP, irrespective of the kind or the level of political pressure applied. In some cases paying lip-service to the mother party is not the problem; rather it is the lack of representation provided by the applicant organisation. YEPP, therefore, invites different people from each organisation to its events and also tries to communicate directly with the leadership, not just through the international secretary. In other cases youth organisations may have no membership base of their own; may become inactive; may split into factions that often start to compete with each other; may be dealing with a crisis between the youth organisation and the mother party; and so on. At times things get so bad that there is no other option but to expel a member organisation. This has happened on several occasions. However, it is rare that it has occurred against the will of the youth organisation. Sometimes an organisation has not wanted to leave, despite no longer meeting the membership criteria. Full membership has then been downgraded to observer membership by the Council, with full membership being granted again after a positive vote at the Congress.

Since the 2011 Berlin Congress YEPP renamed permanent observers as associate members. Associate members are organisations that cannot become full members of YEPP because they are from outside Europe or because it is unclear how many votes they should have within YEPP as their mother party cannot take part in free and fair elections.

| Country               | Youth organisation    | Year  | Current Status    |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Albania               | FR-PD                 | 1997- | member            |
| Austria               | Junge ÖVP             | 1997- | member            |
| Belarus               | YCSU                  | 2003- | associated member |
|                       | Malady Front          | 2003- | associated member |
| Belgium               | CVP-Jongeren/JONGCD&V | 1997- | member            |
|                       | Jeunes PSC/Jeunes cdH | 1997- | member            |
| Bosnia and Herzgovina | YA SDA                | 2007- | member            |



|                |                              |           |                   |
|----------------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Bulgaria       | MSDP                         | 1997-     | member            |
|                | YUDF                         | 2003-     | member            |
|                | MGERB                        | 2011-     | member            |
| Croatia        | MHDZ                         | 1997-     | member            |
| Cyprus         | NE.DI.SY                     | 1997-     | member            |
| Czech Republic | MKD                          | 2007      | member            |
| Denmark        | KFU/CU                       | 1997-     | member            |
|                | KU                           | 2003-     | member            |
| Estonia        | RPJ/KU                       | 1997-2009 | member            |
|                | PPUY                         | 2005-2009 | observer          |
|                | IRLY*                        | 2009-     | member            |
| Finland        | KNL                          | 1997-     | member            |
|                | KDN                          | 1997-     | member            |
| France         | Jeunes Populaires            | 2005-     | member            |
|                | Jeunes Centristes            | 2007-     | observer          |
| FYROM          | UMS of VMRO-DPMNE            | 2011-     | member            |
| Georgia        | SAQDA                        | 1997-     | member            |
|                | AED/Young National Democrats | 2003-2007 | member            |
|                | AME/Young Rights             | 2007-     | member            |
| Germany        | JU                           | 1997-     | member            |
| Greece         | ONNED                        | 1997-     | member            |
| Hungary        | IDF                          | 1997-2009 | member            |
|                | Fidelitas                    | 2003-     | member            |
| Ireland        | YFG                          | 1997-     | member            |
| Italy          | CGCCD                        | 1997-2002 | member            |
|                | GPI                          | 1997-2005 | member            |
|                | MGCDU                        | 1997-2002 | member            |
|                | FIG/GL                       | 2003-     | member            |
|                | Giovani UDC**                | 2002-     | member            |
|                | Giovani U.D.euR.             | 1999-     | member            |
|                | JG SVP                       | 2007-     | member            |
| Latvia         | LKDJS                        | 1997-2003 | member            |
|                | YLPP                         | 2005-     | member            |
| Lebanon        | LFSA                         | 2011-     | associated member |
| Lithuania      | JKD                          | 1997-     | member            |
| Luxemburg      | CSJ                          | 1997-     | member            |

|             |                               |           |                   |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Malta       | MZPN                          | 1997-     | member            |
| Moldova     | NG SLS                        | 2001      | member            |
|             | NG PPCD                       | 2007-     | member            |
| Netherlands | CDJA                          | 1997-     | member            |
| Norway      | KrFU                          | 1997-     | member            |
|             | UHL                           | 1997-     | member            |
| Poland      | SMD                           | 1997-     | member            |
|             | MchD                          | 1997-2001 | member            |
| Portugal    | JSD                           | 1997-     | member            |
| Romania     | PNTCD-OT                      | 1997-2005 | member            |
|             | YPDL                          | 2011      | member            |
|             | MIERT                         | 2010-     | associated member |
| Russia      | Moscow CD Union of Youth      | 1997-2003 | observer          |
| San Marino  | MGDCS/GDC                     | 1997-     | member            |
| Serbia      | ODSS                          | 2007-     | member            |
|             | YN G17 PLUS                   | 2009-     | member            |
| Slovakia    | KDMS                          | 1997-2009 | member            |
|             | SDKU/NG                       | 2005-     | member            |
| Slovenia    | MKD                           | 1997-2001 | member            |
|             | MSI                           | 2007-     | member            |
|             | SDM                           | 2007-     | member            |
|             | NG SLS                        | 2003-     | member            |
| Spain       | NN.GG.                        | 1997-     | member            |
|             | UJ                            | 1997-     | member            |
|             | EGI                           | 1997-2001 | member            |
| Sweden      | KDU                           | 1997-     | member            |
|             | MUF                           | 1997-     | member            |
| Switzerland | JDC-JCVP                      | 1997-     | member            |
| Ukraine     | CD Youth Union of Ukraine     | 1997-2003 | observer          |
|             | CDMU/Democratic Alliance (DA) | 1998-     | member            |
|             | Young Rukh                    | 2005-     | member            |
|             | Batkivshchyna Moloda          | 2011-     | observer          |

\* IRLY is a merger between RPJ/KU and PPUY

\*\* Giovani UDC is a merger between CGCCD and MGCDU

Similarly to the EPP, special attention has been paid to filling in the blind spots on the map of Europe, especially if the blind spot happens to be one of the big EU Member States. However, also similarly to the EPP, such attention is not without controversy. At

the Council in Budapest on 11 December 1999 there was much discussion of Forza Italia Giovani (FIG). Other Italian parties opposed the Board's proposal to invite FIG to YEPP events. It should be noted that, by this point, Forza Italia was already a full member of the EPP.

Because the former procedure of 20 months of observership still applied, it had to wait until 2003 before becoming a full member. A similar process took place with Jeunes Populaires (or Jeunes UMP), meaning that it took a long time before it was accepted as a full member. First, Jeunes Populaires had to be accepted as observer. For this reason, Rudolf Granier, representative of Jeunes RPR, had to be present at the Summer School in Limmasol in 2002 where the Council was to vote about the application. He almost missed this important meeting, however, as his plane was overbooked. When he showed the programme of the Summer School and claimed that he had an appointment with the president of Cyprus and the Foreign Affairs minister, he was immediately rebuked and flew in first class to Cyprus. The accession as full member took place in The Hague on the occasion of the YEPP Congress of 29 March 2003. As many doubted its autonomy vis-à-vis the UMP, Vincent Richez, International Secretary of Jeunes Populaires, pleaded, 'We are here because we are pro-European, we are not here as speakers of the French government'.

The EU enlargements of 2004 and 2007 barely affected YEPP's membership policy as most of the political youth organisations from Central and Eastern Europe were already fully integrated within YEPP, some even from the very beginning in 1997. In other words, a

division between the so-called old and new Europe has never been very relevant. Just once has an exception to the normal accession procedure occurred. Given that democracy is under threat in Ukraine, Batkivshchyna Moloda may be granted full membership by the Council instead of the Congress. The membership could, therefore, be processed within a very short period of time.

Generally speaking, YEPP's membership policy has been successful. At the end of 2011 YEPP includes 57 member organisations from 39 countries. It is, therefore, a truly pan-European association of national youth organisations. By 2002, just one year after the introduction of the new membership policy, YEPP had become an interesting partner for many from all over Europe. In their mid-term evaluation of the period 2001–3, the Board noted that: 'Interestingly, with almost as many organisations having applied to cooperate with YEPP as we have members, YEPP is now faced with a new dilemma, namely, what should be the limit to YEPP's expansion? ... With the decision of DEMYC to move towards a new role as a training organisation and the inactive position of the EYC (European Young Conservatives), YEPP has become the only European-wide political youth organisation on the centre, centre-right of the political spectrum. The aims of the founders of YEPP have been realised.'



# Rutger-Jan Hebben

## YEPP President 2001-3

*YEPP showed its maturity as a political organisation by having more than one candidate for its presidency. Elections were often tight but afterwards we continued to be friends. This also distinguishes YEPP. In any case, we should always look for the things that unite us instead of looking for those things that create disunity. If you know that what unites you is strong, then there will be respect and you know you will be able to have difficult discussions within your own political family.'*

*'Respect inside the EPP is something that YEPP has to gain. It cannot be taken for granted.'*

*'YEPP is about political education, having intense and interesting discussions with each other, building coalitions. It is about meeting people and exchanging experiences with many young people all over Europe. It teaches you about the kinds of lives they are living and how they do politics.'*

*'YEPP should be the innovative force inside the EPP. Young people should claim that role without trying to replace or duplicate what professional politicians do. After all, we should not take ourselves too seriously.'*





# ‘Always new faces’: The people that run YEPP

Unlike many other political organisations, political youth organisations change their leadership relatively frequently. This is especially true for YEPP. Every two years a new Board is elected. On the one hand this guarantees a constant flow of new people taking charge of the organisation: while parties are often run by the same people for a rather long time, there are ‘always new faces in YEPP’, according to former YEPP President Michael Hahn. On the other hand, however, this means that no time can be wasted if one wants to achieve something during the term of office. Additionally, and similar to most political youth organisations, YEPP is self-governing. It is not run by experienced politicians or professional youth activists. Given the age limit in national youth organisations, YEPP positions are, by definition, temporary. Furthermore, one must first be active at the national level before a European position can be obtained. The bottom-up approach inside the organisation is, therefore, quite strong, especially at election time. In fact, the national political organisations are the only channel through which to enter YEPP. Jyrki Katainen, vice-chair of KNL between 2001 and 2004, later chair of its mother party, and most recently Prime Minister of Finland, is a notable example in this respect. It is often not the chairs of national political organisations that get elected to the Board but rather those occupied with European and international affairs, especially international secretaries. Indeed, one needs to have a special interest in European affairs and international cooperation in order to become involved with YEPP. Sometimes it is also a matter of deliberate choice, a strategy or part of a longer tradition of the national youth organisation to send someone to YEPP in order to try to get them onto the Board.

In the run-up to every series of elections, which take place during the Congress, each member organisation has the right to propose candidates for certain positions on the Board. If one wishes to be elected, then during the weeks and months preceding the Congress support needs to be collected from outside one’s own political youth organisation. According to former YEPP President Daniel Bautista this way of campaigning provides the opportunity for you to communicate directly with the member organisations and to collect fresh and new ideas. Coalition agreements or package deals are often made between different national organisations. That is not to say, however, that everything is precooked. On the

contrary, due to changing alliances in the run-up to the Congress, the outcome of the elections is often unpredictable, except of course in cases where there is only one candidate for a particular position. Of course, this can disguise the fact that candidates may have withdrawn from the election in return for specific favours. The scope of these deals, however, should not be overestimated. Internal alliances come with the elections but fall apart once they have taken place. Stable and unchallenged coalitions lasting for several years are rare, if not non-existent. It also helps that once a Board is elected the first meeting takes place immediately. Thus there is no other choice than to leave the campaign in the past if one wants the Board to act effectively.

Most attention is paid to the top level of the Board, consisting of the president, the first vice-president, the secretary general, the deputy secretary general and, since 2007, the treasurer. The latter position was created as one of the measures to solve YEPP’s financial problems. The president, the first vice-president, the secretary general, the deputy secretary general and the treasurer are elected on an individual basis, as well as two financial auditors. The vice-presidents, however, are presented as one list of candidates. If the Board consists of nine vice-presidents then the nine people that receive the most votes are elected. The order in which they are elected does not have any impact on the position they have on the Board. In fact, there is no tradition of portfolio distribution among the vice-presidents although, in practice, some sort of division of labour often does take place. Although elected, the financial auditors are not members of the Board.

The first Board was elected during the Founding Congress of YEPP. Fredrik Reinfeldt (MUF, Sweden) and Winfried Weck (JU, Germany) were the only candidates for the positions of president and first vice-president respectively. By contrast, there were 5 candidates for the post of secretary general, 7 candidates for the post of deputy secretary general and 19 for the several posts of vice-president. One of them was Marjo Matikainen-Källström, nominated by KNL (Finland), a world and Olympic skiing champion. There were no candidates for the two posts of financial auditor. Many people were candidates for more than one position, as is often the case within YEPP, sometimes for strategic reasons.

| Name              | Youth organisation | Country     | Function                 |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Fredrik REINFELDT | MU                 | Sweden      | President                |
| Winfried WECK     | JU                 | Germany     | First Vice-President     |
| Walter VERBEKE    | CVP-Jongeren       | Belgium     | Secretary General        |
| Jan-Kees De JAGER | CDJA               | Netherlands | Deputy Secretary General |
| Joanne HARMON     | YFG                | Ireland     | Vice-President           |
| Eva MITSOPOULOU   | ONNED              | Greece      | Vice-President           |
| André STOYLEN     | UHL                | Norway      | Vice-President           |

|                      |              |          |                |
|----------------------|--------------|----------|----------------|
| Belén UREÑA          | NNGG         | Spain    | Vice-President |
| Martin LEDOLTER      | JVP          | Austria  | Vice-President |
| Evarts ANOSOVS       | Former LKDJS | Latvia   | Vice-President |
| Yannick GEORGES      | Jeunes PSC   | Belgium  | Vice-President |
| Mikolaj DOWGIELEWICZ | MD           | Poland   | Vice-President |
| Peter STACH          | KDMS         | Slovakia | Vice-President |
| José Eduardo MARTINA | JSD          | Portugal | Vice-President |

Similarly to the first Board, on the second one there were still a lot of people that had previously held positions within DEMYC or EYCD. The second Board was elected at the Lisbon Congress in March 1999. Michael Hahn (JU, Germany) was the only candidate for YEPP President. He was elected with 108 votes in favour, 33 votes against and 1 abstention. There was only

one candidate for each of the posts of first vice-president and secretary general. Two candidates wanted to become deputy secretary general: Eva Mitsopoulou (ONNED, Greece) and M. Ruiz I Margalef. Mitsopoulou received 108 votes to 33 for Ruiz I Margalef. There were 13 candidates for the 9 posts of vice-president.

| Name                 | Youth organisation | Country     | Function                 |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Michael HAHN         | JU                 | Germany     | President                |
| Belén UREÑA          | NNGG               | Spain       | First Vice-President     |
| Rutger-Jan HEBBEN    | CDJA               | Netherlands | Secretary General        |
| Eva MITSOPOULOU      | ONNED              | Greece      | Deputy Secretary General |
| Niklas CLAEßSON      | MUF                | Sweden      | Vice-President           |
| Yannick GEORGES      | Jeunes PSC         | Belgium     | Vice-President           |
| Sidonia JEDRZEJEWSKA | MD                 | Poland      | Vice-President           |
| Jyrki KATAINEN       | KNL                | Finland     | Vice-President           |
| Stephen MCCULLEN     | YFG                | Ireland     | Vice-President           |
| Aidas PALUBINSKAS    | JKD                | Lithuania   | Vice-President           |
| Alina BITA           | PNTCD-OT           | Romania     | Vice-President           |
| Martin LEDOLTER      | JVP                | Austria     | Vice-President           |
| José Eduardo MARTINS | JSD                | Portugal    | Vice-President           |

The election of the third Board brought a new generation into YEPP, a generation that had not been active inside DEMYC or EYCD. They were the first real YEPP generation. For the first time there was also competition for the post of president. Both outgoing Secretary General Rutger-Jan Hebben (CDJA, the Netherlands) and Daniel Bautista (NNGG, Spain) were candidates for the post. Hebben won with 72 votes compared with 60 in favour of Bautista. Bautista became first vice-

president after his competitor for this post, Werner Amon (JVP, Austria) withdrew his candidacy. Markus Pösentrup (JU, Germany) was elected unopposed as secretary general. Sidonia Jedrzejewska (MD, Poland) and Riikka Kervinen (KNL, Finland) both stood for the post of deputy secretary general. Eventually Jedrzejewska withdrew her candidacy, becoming a vice-president instead. No less than 15 people stood as candidates for the vice-presidency.

| Name              | Youth organisation | Country     | Function             |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Rutger-Jan HEBBEN | CDJA               | Netherlands | President            |
| Daniel BAUTISTA   | NNGG               | Spain       | First Vice-President |

|                                    |          |             |                          |
|------------------------------------|----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Markus PÖSENTRUP                   | JU       | Germany     | Secretary General        |
| Riikka RAILIMO (formerly KERVINEN) | KNL      | Finland     | Deputy Secretary General |
| Sidonia JEDRZEJEWSKA               | MD       | Poland      | Vice-President           |
| Maria SYRENGELA                    | ONNED    | Greece      | Vice-President           |
| Aidas PALUBINSKAS                  | JKD      | Lithuania   | Vice-President           |
| Arnt KENNIS                        | JONGCD&V | Belgium     | Vice-President           |
| Alex WIDMER                        | JCVP     | Switzerland | Vice-President           |
| Miguel COLETA                      | JSD      | Portugal    | Vice-President           |
| David HANSEN                       | KrFU     | Norway      | Vice-President           |
| Leo VARADKAR                       | YFG      | Ireland     | Vice-President           |
| Alessia MOSCA                      | UDC      | Italy       | Vice-President           |

In 2003 Daniel Bautista (NNGG, Spain) again stood as a presidential candidate. This time he was the only one as Markus Pösentrup (JU, Germany) withdrew. Bautista was elected with 81% of the vote. Pösentrup was elected as first vice-president with 80.5% of the vote. For the post of secretary general, Riikka

Kervinen (KNL, Finland) received 60.4% of the vote, beating Robert Golanski (MD, Poland) who received 37.8%. Lucinda Creighton (YFG, Ireland) became deputy secretary general with the support of 84.9% of the electoral college. There were 13 candidates for the 9 vice-presidencies.

| Name                               | Youth organisation | Country     | Function                 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Daniel BAUTISTA                    | NNGG               | Spain       | President                |
| Markus PÖSENTRUP                   | JU                 | Germany     | First Vice-President     |
| Riikka RAILIMO (formerly KERVINEN) | KNL                | Finland     | Secretary General        |
| Lucinda CREIGHTON                  | YFG                | Ireland     | Deputy Secretary General |
| Paolo ZANETTO                      | FIG                | Italy       | Vice-President           |
| Bernhard PIRCHER                   | JVP                | Austria     | Vice-President           |
| Maria SYRENGELA                    | ONNED              | Greece      | Vice-President           |
| Arnoud STRIJBS                     | CDJA               | Netherlands | Vice-President           |
| Arnt KENNIS                        | JONGCD&V           | Belgium     | Vice-President           |
| David HANSEN                       | KrFU               | Norway      | Vice-President           |
| John BONELLO                       | MZPN               | Malta       | Vice-President           |
| Timotej NEUBAUER                   | NG SLS             | Slovenia    | Vice-President           |
| Pedro DUARTE                       | JSD                | Portugal    | Vice-President           |
| Mirko DOLFEN                       | Giovani UDC        | Italy       | Financial Auditor        |
| Andrei MARINESCU                   | PNTCD-OT           | Romania     | Financial Auditor        |

In 2005, for the first time, the winner of the election for the position of president was not from an EU Member State. David Hansen (KrFU, Norway) beat Lucinda Creighton (YFG, Ireland) with a margin of just seven votes. Robert Golanski (MD, Poland) and Martin Humer (JVP, Austria) were the only candidates for the positions of

first vice-president and secretary general respectively. There were three candidates for the post of deputy secretary general: John Bonello (MZPN, Malta), Timotej Neubauer (NG SLS, Slovenia) and Huibert van Rossum (CDJA, the Netherlands), who was the winner. Seventeen people stood for election as vice-president.

| Name                               | Youth organisation | Country        | Function                 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| David HANSEN                       | KrFU               | Norway         | President                |
| Robert GOLANSKI                    | MD                 | Poland         | First Vice-President     |
| Martin HÜMER                       | JVP                | Austria        | Secretary General        |
| Huibert van ROSSUM                 | CDJA               | Netherlands    | Deputy Secretary General |
| David CERMAK                       | MKD                | Czech Republic | Vice-President           |
| Paula GÓMEZ de la BÁRCENA ANSORENA | NNGG               | Spain          | Vice-President           |
| Galina FOMENCHENKO                 | CDMU               | Ukraine        | Vice-President           |
| Christian HOLM                     | MUF                | Sweden         | Vice-President           |
| Christoph ISRANG                   | JU                 | Germany        | Vice-President           |
| Stefano MORELLI                    | FIG                | Italy          | Vice-President           |
| Vincent RICHEZ                     | Jeunes Populaires  | France         | Vice-President           |
| Yannis SMYRLIS                     | ONNED              | Greece         | Vice-President           |
| Jeroen VANDEN BERGHE               | JONGCD&V           | Belgium        | Vice-President           |
| Darija JURICA                      | MHDZ               | Croatia        | Financial Auditor        |
| Ivett TAKÁCS                       | IDF                | Hungary        | Financial Auditor        |

In 2007 Yannis Smyrlis (ONNED, Greece) was the only candidate for the presidency after Robert Golanski (MD, Poland) withdrew. Smyrlis was elected with 80% of the vote. Thomas Schneider (JU, Germany), the only candidate for the first vice-presidency, was elected with 77% of the vote. Outgoing Secretary General Martin Humer (Junge ÖVP) secured his position when his competitor

Huibert van Rossum (CDJA, the Netherlands) withdrew. He was re-elected with 94% of the vote. Van Rossum was re-elected as deputy secretary general with 83% of the vote. For the first time a treasurer was elected. The only candidate, Sigbjorn Aanes (UHL, Norway), was comfortably elected with 94% of the vote. There were 11 candidates for the 9 vice-president positions.

| Name                               | Youth organisation | Country     | Function                 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Yannis SMYRLIS                     | ONNED              | Greece      | President                |
| Thomas SCHNEIDER                   | JU                 | Germany     | First Vice-President     |
| Martin HÜMER                       | JVP                | Austria     | Secretary General        |
| Huibert van ROSSUM                 | CDJA               | Netherlands | Deputy Secretary General |
| Sigbjorn AANES                     | UHL                | Norway      | Treasurer                |
| Irina PRUIDZE                      | AME                | Georgia     | Vice-President           |
| Laurent SCHOUTETEN                 | Jeunes UMP         | France      | Vice-President           |
| Carlo de ROMANIS                   | FIG                | Italy       | Vice-President           |
| James LAWLESS                      | YFG                | Ireland     | Vice-President           |
| Vaidas AUGUNAS                     | JKD                | Lithuania   | Vice-President           |
| Paula GÓMEZ de la BÁRCENA ANSORENA | NNGG               | Spain       | Vice-President           |
| Daniel FANGUEIRO                   | JSD                | Portugal    | Vice-President           |
| Charlie WEIMERS                    | KDU                | Sweden      | Vice-President           |
| Darija JURICA                      | MHDZ               | Croatia     | Vice-President           |
| Maria Laura MARINOZZI              | GDC                | San Marino  | Financial Auditor        |
| Andreja MILIVOJEVIC                | ODSS               | Serbia      | Financial Auditor        |



In 2009, the outgoing president stood for re-election for the first time. However, Yannis Smyrlis (ONNED, Greece) lost to Laurent Schouteten (Jeunes Populaires, France) because, among other things, Smyrlis had opposed the application of UMS of VMRO-DPMNE (FYROM) to become an observer. 43% of the votes went to Smyrlis; 57% went to Schouteten. Thomas Schneider (JU, Germany) was the only candidate to succeed

himself. He was re-elected with 76% of the votes. Carlo de Romanis (FIG), Brenda Furniere (JONGCD&V) and Julian Farner Calvert (KrFU, Norway) were also single candidates to become secretary general, deputy secretary general and treasurer respectively. They got elected by 95%, 97% and 100% of the votes respectively. There were 10 candidates for the 9 vice-president positions.

| Name                               | Youth organisation | Country        | Function                 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Laurent SCHOUTETEN                 | Jeunes Populaires  | France         | President                |
| Thomas SCHNEIDER                   | JU                 | Germany        | First Vice-President     |
| Carlo de ROMANIS                   | FIG                | Italy          | Secretary General        |
| Brenda FURNIERE                    | JONGCD&V           | Belgium        | Deputy Secretary General |
| Julian FARNER CALVERT              | KrFU               | Norway         | Treasurer                |
| Gernot BLÜMEL                      | JVP                | Austria        | Vice-President           |
| Juha-Pekka NURVALA                 | KNL                | Finland        | Vice-President           |
| Bronne POT                         | CDJA               | Netherlands    | Vice-President           |
| Melita KELENC ZIHER                | MSI                | Slovenia       | Vice-President           |
| Paula GÓMEZ de la BÁRCENA ANSORENA | NNGG               | Spain          | Vice-President           |
| Caesar ANDRES                      | JCVP               | Switzerland    | Vice-President           |
| Duarte MARQUES                     | JSD                | Portugal       | Vice-President           |
| Csaba DÖMÖTÖR                      | Fidelitas          | Hungary        | Vice-President           |
| Anatolii KOROL                     | DA                 | Ukraine        | Vice-President           |
| Michael CLANCY                     | YFG                | Ireland        | Financial Auditor        |
| Petr JURCIK                        | MKD                | Czech Republic | Financial Auditor        |

At the 2011 Berlin Congress the Board for the period 2011–13 was elected. Initially Laurent Schouteten (Jeunes Populaires, France) stood for re-election, but he eventually withdrew his candidacy. There were two candidates for the post of president: Darija Jurica (MHDZ, Croatia) and Csaba Dömötör (Fidelitas, Hungary). Dömötör received 64% of the votes against 36% for Jurica, therefore becoming the first YEPP president from Central and Eastern Europe. Unlike in 2009, two candidates wanted to become first vice-president: Samuel Laufer (Jeunes Populaires, France) and Duarte

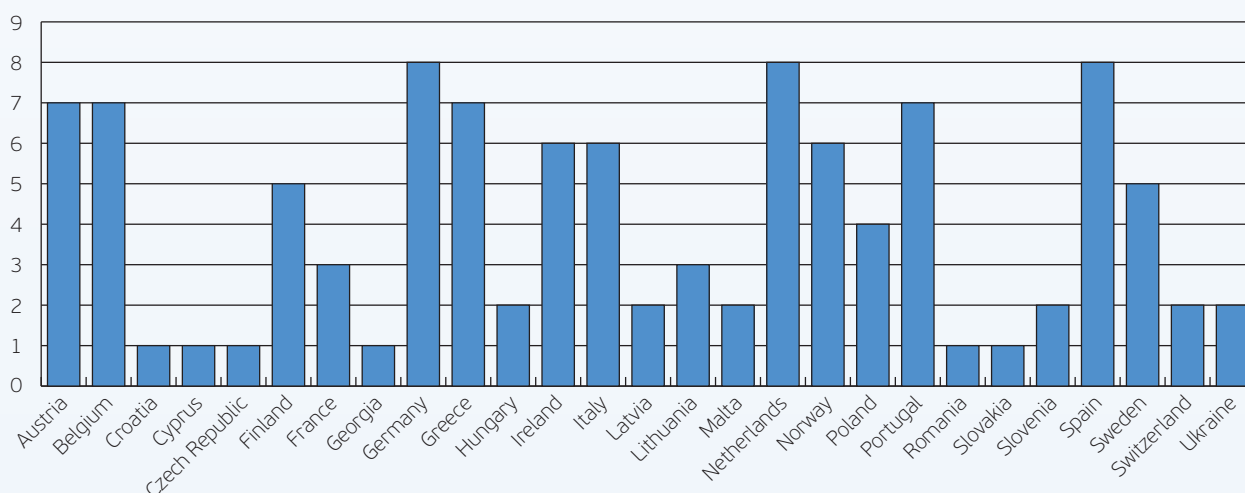
Marques (JSD, Portugal). Marques won with 53% of the votes against Laufer who got 47%. For the post of secretary general, Juha-Pekka Nurvala (KNL, Finland) received 96% of the vote. He was the only candidate. For the post of deputy secretary general there was also one candidate: Colm Lauder (YFG, Ireland). He got 97% of the vote. After the withdrawal of Charalambos Stavrides (NEDISY, Cyprus), Frank Lambertmont (CDJA, the Netherlands) was the only candidate to become treasurer. He was elected with 99% of the votes. There were 11 candidates for the 9 vice-president positions.

| Name                | Youth organisation | Country     | Function                 |
|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Csaba DÖMÖTÖR       | Fidelitas          | Hungary     | President                |
| Duarte MARQUES      | JSD                | Portugal    | First Vice-President     |
| Juha-Pekka NURVALA  | KNL                | Finland     | Secretary General        |
| Colm LAUDER         | YFG                | Ireland     | Deputy Secretary General |
| Frank LAMBERMONT    | CDJA               | Netherlands | Treasurer                |
| Reinhard BÄRNTHALER | JVP                | Austria     | Vice-President           |

|                        |             |         |                   |
|------------------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| Charalambos STAVRIDES  | NEDISY      | Cyprus  | Vice-President    |
| Benedict PÖTTERING     | JU          | Germany | Vice-President    |
| Konstantinos KYRANAKIS | ONNED       | Greece  | Vice-President    |
| Emanuele OCCHIPINTI    | GL          | Italy   | Vice-President    |
| Gunārs ELKSNIS         | YLPP        | Latvia  | Vice-President    |
| Ryan CALLUS            | MZPN        | Malta   | Vice-President    |
| Andrea LEVY SOLER      | NNGG        | Spain   | Vice-President    |
| Sara SKYTTEDAL         | KDU         | Sweden  | Vice-President    |
| Riccardo POZZI         | Giovani UDC | Italy   | Financial Auditor |
| Oliver JUNG            | Jeunes cdH  | Belgium | Financial Auditor |

So far no president has served for two terms, nor has a woman been elected as YEPP President. As former YEPP President David Hansen notes: 'It is difficult to expect something from YEPP that you do not see at the national level'. In other words, a lot of national youth organisations still have a long way to go too. The first Board was the largest with 15 members. It was then reduced in size to 13 members. With the introduction of a directly elected treasurer in 2007, the Board now consists of 14 members. In

total, 86 people have been Board members. Most of them have only served one or two terms, 73% and 25% respectively; Paula Gómez de la Bárcena Ansorena (NNGG, Spain) and David Hansen (KrFU, Norway) are the only two people to have served three terms. Women have been under-represented by an average of 22%. Overall, a lot of nationalities have been represented on the Board, but clearly some national youth organisations have held more positions than others.



Since its foundation in 1997, executive officers have supported the Board in its administrative and organisational tasks, which include designing and running events, editing and distributing papers, drafting minutes, fundraising, bookkeeping, preparing publications, arranging visas, reimbursing travel costs and speech writing. Of course, much depends on what the Board members do themselves. The maintenance of the website and updating of social media is currently done by Board members, for instance. As they are the only paid staff working in the YEPP office, the executive officers are the hands, the head and often the face and heart of the organisation. So far five executive officers have served YEPP: Marta Dondoli (1997–8), Kris Van Laethem (1998–2000), Filip

Vancraenendonck (2000–2), Ann-Pascale Mommerency (2002–9) and Helena Boyden Lamb (2009–). Mommerency was executive officer for what amounts to half of YEPP's life so far. With the increasing number of member organisations the work-load has increased accordingly. While in the early days fax and paper were the most frequently used tools, today almost all communication takes place electronically. Fortunately, also from a financial point of view, English is the only working language within YEPP.

YEPP's office has always been in Brussels, unlike DEMYC's secretariat, which for a long time was based in Vienna and now moves about depending on the location of its secretary general.

During the early years YEPP's office was located on the premises of the European Parliament, thanks to the hospitality of the EPP Group. Later the executive office moved to the EPP Secretariat, first in the Rue d'Arlon, and since 2006 in the Rue de Commerce, near the European Quarter.

Perhaps the most contentious issue in YEPP's history has been its financial housekeeping. With its foundation YEPP inherited money from EYCD, which ceased to exist. Its income is based on membership fees, a grant from the EPP and occasional grants won from the European Commission or Council of Europe, for instance. After a couple of years, however, financial problems arose because of, among other things, the rising number of participants at YEPP's activities (with high reimbursement costs for those from Central and Eastern Europe) and its ever growing membership, especially of political youth organisations with little financial means. Gradually the situation deteriorated, with outgoings in excess of receipts leading to increasing and accumulating debt. A number of initiatives were taken, including the creation of the position of a treasurer on the Board and the exploration of the possibility of attracting corporate funding. Clearly, this did not solve the structural problems. It seemed too little too late. A thorough financial reform was needed. After

much debate, a number of measures proposed by YEPP President Yannis Smyrlis and Secretary General Martin Hümer were approved by the Athens Council meeting in January 2009. A maximum for the reimbursement of Board members was installed; it was decided that representatives from Central and Eastern Europe, except for Belarus, would not receive any travel reimbursements; and no fees were given to national organisations hosting a YEPP event-instead it was allowed to ask for participation fees.

These measures helped to reduce the expenses but they were insufficient to pay back the debts from the past. Therefore, the incoming Board of 2009 decided to cut expenses even more and to follow a very strict financial policy. Thanks to a loan provided by the Danish Christian Democrats, Cura Ungdom, expenses during the transition period could be paid. According to then Deputy Secretary General Brenda Furniere, 'it was a very difficult period but not without success'. Indeed, YEPP was able to pay back all its debts in time and even started saving money. By the end of the term of the 2009-2011 Board finances were healthy again. Moreover, YEPP received a grant from the European Commission, the first one in five years. In other words, after a lot of trouble and with a lot of effort YEPP's financial future was secured.



Board 1997-1999



Board 1999-2001



Board 2001-2003





Board 2003-2005



Board 2005-2007



Board 2007-2009



Board 2009-2011



Board 2011-2013

# Daniel Bautista

## YEPP President 2003-5

*'Politics, particularly European politics, is about passion. It is something vocational. I don't believe in politics as a profession.'*

*'We should not forget that YEPP is a youth organisation. We may talk about different topics and big political issues, but it is youth politics that we have to deal with in the first place, about what the youth expects the mother parties and the EPP to do.'*

*'YEPP doesn't work like a mother party, or like any other political organisation, because the whole Board is elected. This ensures a different approach. There is direct representation of many views at the top of the organisation.'*

*'Inside YEPP there are always different views about different issues. One has to learn about the different ways of doing politics, the different cultures and the different ways of understanding concepts in English.'*

*'You need to be very committed but you are part of a unique experience. You may not have another chance to meet different people with the same values from different countries.'*





# 'A school for European decision-making': YEPP's activities

During its 15 years of existence YEPP has organised more than 200 activities. Some were for internal purposes only, for example meetings of the Board. Others were deliberately organised to attract as many young political activists as possible, such as the annual Summer School. YEPP has a rather stable calendar with one or other activity taking place every two months. Board meetings, seminars, and so on all have their distinct characteristics and atmosphere. In the words of former YEPP President Laurent Schouteten: 'The Board is the most political body; the Congress is the most democratic body; and the Council is the most social body.'

The Congress is the supreme body of the organisation and it meets every two years. It elects the Board members and makes

decisions about the granting of full membership to applicant organisations. The Congress also takes decisions on statutory amendments and on the general political guidelines of YEPP. Voting takes place according to the number of members per organisation, the relative result of and the absolute number of votes received by the mother party in the last national election. This is recalculated in the run-up to each Congress. Changes to the statutes are made by a three-quarters majority. Specific regulations are laid down in the procedural rules of the Congress. With regard to the content, each Congress discusses one particular topic that is of broad interest to the national member organisations. So far eight Congresses have been organised. In 2007 and 2011 Board members have organised working days to prepare the Congress.

| City      | Country         | Date  | Month            | Year | Topic  |
|-----------|-----------------|-------|------------------|------|--|
| Brussels  | Belgium         | 31-2  | January-February | 1997 | Founding Congress                                      |
| Lisbon    | Portugal        | 4-7   | March            | 1999 | Europe: A Bridge to the World                          |
| Vienna    | Austria         | 5-8   | April            | 2001 | Working for a United Europe                            |
| The Hague | The Netherlands | 27-30 | March            | 2003 | Challenges for a New Europe                            |
| Paris     | France          | 17-20 | March            | 2005 | A Political Ambition for Europe                        |
| Stockholm | Sweden          | 10-13 | May              | 2007 | 10 Years of YEPP: Agenda Setting in Europe             |
| Rome      | Italy           | 2-5   | April            | 2009 | Europe at a Crossroad                                  |
| Berlin    | Germany         | 12-15 | May              | 2011 | How to Finance the European Union in the 21st century? |

Between Congresses several Council meetings take place. Unlike the Congress, the Council's composition and voting system is not proportional to the size of the national political youth organisations, rather each has equal rights. This rule has sometimes been challenged by the larger member organisations but attempts to change it have so far been unsuccessful. Equal representation has proven to be very important for a lot of organisations, including some influential ones. The Council makes decisions about the granting of observer status for applicants and about the exclusion of full members. It also approves the budget for the forthcoming year

and adopts the financial report of the previous year. The Council can only take decisions when a quorum of 50% plus one of its members is reached. The Council normally opens with a roll call in order to check if a voting quorum is present. The different Board members then report on the events that have been and will be organised. The external representation of Board members is also discussed. Another common matter for the Council's agenda is the budget (including membership fees), as well as membership questions, programmes and resolutions. Most of the Council meetings are held at the same time as a Congress, a Chairmen's Conference or a seminar.

| City       | Country     | Date | Month     | Year |
|------------|-------------|------|-----------|------|
| Warsaw     | Poland      | 28   | June      | 1997 |
| Bratislava | Slovakia    | 11   | October   | 1997 |
| Riga       | Latvia      | 6    | December  | 1997 |
| Kos        | Greece      | 11   | July      | 1998 |
| Winterthur | Switzerland | 26   | September | 1998 |
| Vienna     | Austria     | 5    | December  | 1998 |
| Brussels   | Belgium     | 6    | February  | 1999 |

|                   |                 |    |           |      |
|-------------------|-----------------|----|-----------|------|
| The Hague         | The Netherlands | 19 | June      | 1999 |
| Warsaw            | Poland          | 16 | October   | 1999 |
| Budapest          | Hungary         | 11 | December  | 1999 |
| Athens            | Greece          | 29 | January   | 2000 |
| Dublin            | Ireland         | 10 | June      | 2000 |
| Helsinki          | Finland         | 28 | October   | 2000 |
| Berlin            | Germany         | 13 | January   | 2001 |
| Oslo              | Norway          | 16 | June      | 2001 |
| Stockholm         | Sweden          | 29 | September | 2001 |
| Brussels          | Belgium         | 24 | November  | 2001 |
| Geneva            | Switzerland     | 26 | January   | 2002 |
| Belgrade          | Serbia          | 15 | June      | 2002 |
| Limassol          | Cyprus          | 19 | July      | 2002 |
| Vilnius           | Lithuania       | 14 | September | 2002 |
| Cracow            | Poland          | 7  | December  | 2002 |
| St. Julians       | Malta           | 18 | January   | 2003 |
| Prague            | Czech Republic  | 7  | June      | 2003 |
| Supetar           | Croatia         | 23 | August    | 2003 |
| Kiev              | Ukraine         | 25 | October   | 2003 |
| Vienna            | Austria         | 13 | December  | 2003 |
| Dublin            | Ireland         | 31 | January   | 2004 |
| Lisbon            | Portugal        | 27 | March     | 2004 |
| Turku             | Finland         | 15 | May       | 2004 |
| Rhodes            | Greece          | 31 | July      | 2004 |
| Oslo              | Norway          | 9  | October   | 2004 |
| Poznań            | Poland          | 11 | December  | 2004 |
| Larnaca           | Cyprus          | 5  | February  | 2005 |
| Paris             | France          | 17 | March     | 2005 |
| Belgrade          | Serbia          | 25 | June      | 2005 |
| Tbilisi           | Georgia         | 1  | October   | 2005 |
| Copenhagen        | Denmark         | 19 | November  | 2005 |
| Jihlava/Prague    | Czech Republic  | 29 | January   | 2006 |
| Chisinau          | Moldova         | 29 | April     | 2006 |
| Palma de Mallorca | Spain           | 17 | June      | 2006 |
| Zlatibor          | Serbia          | 15 | July      | 2006 |
| Budapest          | Hungary         | 14 | October   | 2006 |
| Bruges            | Belgium         | 9  | December  | 2006 |
| Rotterdam         | The Netherlands | 20 | January   | 2007 |
| Limassol          | Cyprus          | 29 | June      | 2007 |

|            |                        |    |           |      |
|------------|------------------------|----|-----------|------|
| Zagreb     | Croatia                | 8  | September | 2007 |
| Ljubljana  | Slovenia               | 8  | December  | 2007 |
| Strasbourg | France                 | 19 | January   | 2008 |
| Cork       | Ireland                | 8  | March     | 2008 |
| Porto      | Portugal               | 24 | May       | 2008 |
| Vilnius    | Lithuania              | 6  | September | 2008 |
| Athens     | Greece                 | 24 | January   | 2009 |
| Rome       | Italy                  | 3  | April     | 2009 |
| The Hague  | The Netherlands        | 5  | September | 2009 |
| Tirana     | Albania                | 5  | December  | 2009 |
| Sofia      | Bulgaria               | 20 | February  | 2010 |
| Paris      | France                 | 10 | April     | 2010 |
| Sarajevo   | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 18 | September | 2010 |
| Skopje     | FYROM                  | 4  | December  | 2010 |
| Caserta    | Italy                  | 5  | February  | 2011 |
| Limassol   | Cyprus                 | 9  | July      | 2011 |
| Kiev       | Ukraine                | 10 | September | 2011 |
| Marseilles | France                 | 10 | December  | 2011 |

Meetings of the Board are the most regular within YEPP. Often they take place alongside other activities. Depending on the leadership characteristics of the President, they either start late or begin early and can last for hours or be very efficiently organised. Generally speaking, the Board is responsible for the daily running of YEPP. It prepares the decisions that the Council has to take and executes the decisions that the Council has taken. The Board operates as the government of YEPP with the president in the role of prime minister. Moreover, it acts as a federal government, dealing with issues of general interest and not interfering in the internal organisation of the national members. In fact, the Board does not have either the authority or the power to do so. Decisions are mostly taken on the basis of a consensus among Board members. In cases where there is no clear or immediate consensus a vote takes place, with each Board member having one vote. The guidelines about what to do are provided by the work plan discussed and adopted by every new Board. This serves as a Bible for the Board's organisation and actions during the two-year term. It covers all possible issues with an emphasis on what the Board wants to change in the forthcoming years. After one year a mid-term review takes place.

The president of YEPP chairs the Board as well as the Council meetings and the Congresses. He or she leads the organisation through internal discussion, trying to find a consensus among many different views, in the first instance within the Board. These differences can be relatively noticeable since all the Board members are directly elected, unlike in most political organisations. In the words of former YEPP President Daniel Bautista, 'the president needs to manage the diversity'. This diversity is also reflected in opinions of what a youth organisation should do. As former YEPP President David Hansen puts it: 'YEPP covers almost extreme opposites of how you define the mandate of a political youth organisation vis-à-vis its mother party'. Within YEPP, the president needs 'the ability to compromise and strategise around common goals and to work on behalf of the organisation with a prioritised agenda'. Although from time to time Board members participate in events organised by national member organisations, the President has the responsibility of representing YEPP externally. He or she also develops his or her reputation by doing this.

| City       | Country  | Date | Month    | Year |
|------------|----------|------|----------|------|
| Brussels   | Belgium  | 2    | February | 1997 |
| Paris      | France   | 23   | March    | 1997 |
| Warsaw     | Poland   | 27   | June     | 1997 |
| Bratislava | Slovakia | 10   | October  | 1997 |



|                   |                 |       |           |      |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|------|
| Riga              | Latvia          | 4     | December  | 1997 |
| Madrid            | Spain           | 6     | March     | 1998 |
| Kos               | Greece          | 10    | July      | 1998 |
| Vienna            | Austria         | 4,5   | December  | 1998 |
| Brussels          | Belgium         | 5     | February  | 1999 |
| Lisbon            | Portugal        | 6,7   | March     | 1999 |
| Vienna            | Austria         | 4     | April     | 2001 |
| Naples            | Italy           | 9     | February  | 2002 |
| St. Julians       | Malta           | 17    | January   | 2003 |
| The Hague         | The Netherlands | 27    | March     | 2003 |
| Madrid            | Spain           | 12    | April     | 2003 |
| Prague            | Czech Republic  | 6     | June      | 2003 |
| Supetar           | Croatia         | 22    | August    | 2003 |
| Kiev              | Ukraine         | 24    | October   | 2003 |
| Vienna            | Austria         | 12    | December  | 2003 |
| Dublin            | Ireland         | 30    | January   | 2004 |
| Lisbon            | Portugal        | 25-26 | March     | 2004 |
| Turku             | Finland         | 13    | May       | 2004 |
| Rhodes            | Greece          | 30    | July      | 2004 |
| Oslo              | Norway          | 8     | October   | 2004 |
| Poznań            | Poland          | 10    | December  | 2004 |
| Larnaca           | Cyprus          | 4     | February  | 2005 |
| Belgrade          | Serbia          | 24    | June      | 2005 |
| Moss              | Norway          | 16    | April     | 2005 |
| Tbilisi           | Georgia         | 30    | September | 2005 |
| Copenhagen        | Denmark         | 18    | November  | 2005 |
| Jihlava/Prague    | Czech Republic  | 27    | January   | 2006 |
| Rome              | Italy           | 1     | April     | 2006 |
| Chisinau          | Moldova         | 28    | April     | 2006 |
| Palma de Mallorca | Spain           | 16    | June      | 2006 |
| Munich            | Germany         | 11    | November  | 2006 |
| Kortrijk          | Belgium         | 8     | December  | 2006 |
| Rotterdam         | The Netherlands | 19    | January   | 2007 |
| Brussels          | Belgium         | 30    | March     | 2007 |
| Limassol          | Cyprus          | 28    | June      | 2007 |
| Zagreb            | Croatia         | 7     | September | 2007 |
| Ljubljana         | Slovenia        | 7     | December  | 2007 |
| Strasbourg        | France          | 18    | January   | 2008 |

|           |                        |      |           |      |
|-----------|------------------------|------|-----------|------|
| Cork      | Ireland                | 7    | March     | 2008 |
| Porto     | Portugal               | 23   | May       | 2008 |
| Vilnius   | Lithuania              | 5    | September | 2008 |
| Athens    | Greece                 | 23   | January   | 2009 |
| Warsaw    | Poland                 | 28   | April     | 2009 |
| Neptune   | Romania                | 2, 3 | July      | 2009 |
| The Hague | The Netherlands        | 4    | September | 2009 |
| Tirana    | Albania                | 4    | December  | 2009 |
| Sofia     | Bulgaria               | 20   | February  | 2010 |
| Paris     | France                 | 9    | April     | 2010 |
| Riga      | Latvia                 | 2    | July      | 2010 |
| Sarajevo  | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 17   | September | 2010 |
| Skopje    | FYROM                  | 3    | December  | 2010 |
| Caserta   | Italy                  | 4    | February  | 2011 |
| Vienna    | Austria                | 19   | February  | 2011 |
| Brussels  | Belgium                | 9    | April     | 2011 |
| Berlin    | Germany                | 12   | May       | 2011 |
| Limassol  | Cyprus                 | 8    | July      | 2011 |
| Kiev      | Ukraine                | 9    | September | 2011 |

Seminars are organised on a regular basis to discuss different topical issues. Normally national member organisations offer to host them and are in charge of the event. High-level speakers with strong links to the topic are invited and working groups discuss various aspects of the issue, leading to the adoption of a final document. The programme often includes visits to sites that have a link with the topic of the seminar, as well as to national parliaments or other government buildings. Sometimes, however, debate is

lacking as most of the time is taken up by speeches from local politicians. In any event, there is also time for social activities. On just one occasion in YEPP's history has a seminar ended on a bad note. After a seminar in Kortrijk, there was a road accident in the early hours of 10 December 2006, in which a drunk driver hit a car taking four guests-one German, two Lithuanians and one from Moldova-to the airport. The Belgian driver, Pieter Ronsijn, was seriously injured, resulting in a long period of recovery and rehabilitation.

| City       | Country         | Date  | Month     | Year | Topic   |
|------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|------|---|
| Warsaw     | Poland          | 26-29 | June      | 1997 | The State of our Environment - Confronting the Global Challenge on a European level |
| Bratislava | Slovakia        | 9-12  | October   | 1997 | Human Rights in Europe: Do we still have to fight for?                              |
| Riga       | Latvia          | 4-7   | December  | 1997 | International Organised Crime - Threat for Economical Stability and Democracy       |
| Winterthur | Switzerland     | 23-27 | September | 1998 | Young Vision '98  |
| Strasbourg | France          | 5-10  | October   | 1998 | Minorities  |
| Vienna     | Austria         | 3-6   | December  | 1998 | Enlargement of the European Union   |
| The Hague  | The Netherlands | 17-20 | June      | 1999 | The Future of Europe  |
| Warsaw     | Poland          | 14-17 | October   | 1999 | Agriculture and it's Challenges in the 21st Century                                 |
| Budapest   | Hungary         | 9-12  | December  | 1999 | Impressions after NATO-Enlargement/Schengen Agreement Connected to Minorities       |

|                                  |                 |       |                   |      |  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|------|--|
| Dublin                           | Ireland         | 8-11  | June              | 2000 | Immigration and Asylum Policy  |
| Helsinki                         | Finland         | 26-29 | October           | 2000 | Post-Information Society and Politics  |
| Berlin                           | Germany         | 11-14 | January           | 2001 | European Identity  |
| Bilbao                           | Spain           | 24-25 | February          | 2001 | Europe, a Passion for Freedom  |
| Oslo                             | Norway          | 14-17 | June              | 2001 | Education  |
| Stockholm                        | Sweden          | 27-30 | September         | 2001 | Tearing down the Walls: the Consequences of the Idea of a United Europe                          |
| Brussels                         | Belgium         | 22-25 | November          | 2001 | Europe and Regions   |
| Geneva                           | Switzerland     | 24-27 | January           | 2002 | United Nations and the Challenge of Development  |
| Vilnius                          | Lithuania       | 12-15 | September         | 2002 | Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)  |
| Cracow                           | Poland          | 5-8   | December          | 2002 | The EU facing the Challenges of the XXI Century  |
| St. Julians                      | Malta           | 16-19 | January           | 2003 | The Mediterranean in an Enlarged European Union  |
| Prague                           | Czech Republic  | 5-8   | June              | 2003 | YEPP in the Heart of Europe  |
| Kiev                             | Ukraine         | 23-26 | October           | 2003 | Neighbourhood Policy: New "Iron Curtain" or New Changes for Border Countries                     |
| Vienna                           | Austria         | 11-14 | December          | 2003 | Enlarged Economies in an Enlarged Society  |
| Dublin                           | Ireland         | 29-1  | January-February  | 2004 | The Strongest Link: Assessing the Transatlantic Alliance in Global Security                      |
| Turku                            | Finland         | 13-16 | May               | 2004 | Information, Society and Globalisation   |
| Oslo                             | Norway          | 7-10  | October           | 2004 | Social Europe: More Freedoms - More Opportunities  |
| Poznan                           | Poland          | 9-12  | December          | 2004 | New Neighbourhood Policy   |
| Larnaca                          | Cyprus          | 3-6   | February          | 2005 | The EU - Middle East Relationship: Political and Cultural Aspects                                |
| Tbilisi                          | Georgia         | 29-2  | September-October | 2005 | Intercultural Dialogue as a Tool for Peace and Democratic Stability for South Caucasus Countries |
| Copenhagen                       | Denmark         | 17-20 | November          | 2005 | Shaping the World we want  |
| Jihlava/<br>Prague               | Czech Republic  | 26-29 | January           | 2006 | Wide European Market - Chance for Young Entrepreneurs and Employees                              |
| Chisinau                         | Moldova         | 27-30 | April             | 2006 | Perspectives on the New Neighbours of the European Union   |
| Budapest                         | Hungary         | 12-15 | October           | 2006 | Fighting Terrorism without Losing Sight of Human Rights  |
| Kortrijk/<br>Bruges/<br>Brussels | Belgium         | 7-10  | December          | 2006 | Innovation and Space   |
| Rotterdam                        | The Netherlands | 18-21 | January           | 2007 | Proving Europe's worth Transport: the Energy to drive Europe's Future                            |
| Zagreb                           | Croatia         | 6-9   | September         | 2007 | Climate Change   |
| Ljubljana                        | Slovenia        | 6-9   | December          | 2007 | Demography   |
| Strasbourg                       | France          | 17-20 | January           | 2008 | Cultural Diversity, a Priority for Young Europeans?  |
| Cork                             | Ireland         | 6-9   | March             | 2008 | Europe Fit for Future Generations  |
| Vilnius                          | Lithuania       | 4-7   | September         | 2008 | Parliamentary Elections 2008 in Belarus - A Democratic Choice?                                   |
| Rhodes                           | Greece          | 10-12 | October           | 2008 | How EU Decisions Affect National Public Administration: European Youth Programs                  |
| Athens                           | Greece          | 22-25 | January           | 2009 | Europe: Shaping a Better Future for all  |

|            |                        |       |           |      |  |
|------------|------------------------|-------|-----------|------|--|
| The Hague  | The Netherlands        | 3-6   | September | 2009 | 3D (Defence, Development and Diplomacy)                        |
| Tirana     | Albania                | 3-6   | December  | 2009 | Future of the EU Enlargement Process                           |
| Sofia      | Bulgaria               | 18-21 | February  | 2010 | The European Dimension of Youth Policies                       |
| Sarajevo   | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 16-19 | September | 2010 | The Future of the EU Enlargement in the Western Balkans        |
| Skopje     | FYROM                  | 2-5   | December  | 2010 | Youth Educational Programmes - Factor for Mobility of Students |
| Caserta    | Italy                  | 3-6   | February  | 2011 | Euro-Mediterranean Policies                                    |
| Kiev       | Ukraine                | 8-11  | September | 2011 | Democratic Process in Ukraine 1991-2011: Results of 20 years   |
| Marseilles | France                 | 8-11  | December  | 2011 | European Economy: Governance and Main Challenges               |

YEPP's first Summer School was organised by ONNED on the island of Kos in Greece. From 7-12 July 1998 many young people discussed issues relating to the technological revolution, the environment and ideology. Since then Summer Schools have been organised annually and are geared towards the training of young people, particularly those from Central and Eastern Europe. The schools take a rather low-profile, informal format, with plenty of leisure time. There are many spaces, enabling a lot of people to participate, even from the same national political

organisation. For the leadership of YEPP they also provide an opportunity to get to know applicant organisations. Normally between 50 and 100 people attend both the Summer Schools and the seminars. Recently, however, a limit of two persons per organisation has been introduced, Board members excluded. A lot of national organisations appoint new representatives after the Congress which means that the Summer School is often a good place for the new ones to meet and learn about YEPP.

| City              | Country  | Date  | Month       | Year | Topic   |
|-------------------|----------|-------|-------------|------|---|
| Kos               | Greece   | 8-12  | July        | 1998 | Europe in 2020  |
| Bucharest/Neptun  | Romania  | 26-1  | July-August | 1999 | Impressions after NATO-Enlargement/Schengen Agreement Connected to Minorities                     |
| Rome/Tuscania     | Italy    | 24-30 | July        | 2000 | Intergovernmental Conference/Italian Politics   |
| Halkidiki         | Greece   | 25-30 | August      | 2001 | The Balkans and European Integration  |
| Limassol          | Cyprus   | 16-21 | July        | 2002 | Expansion of Europe - Growth of Democracy - Advancement of Economies                              |
| Supetar           | Croatia  | 19-25 | August      | 2003 | The Role of Small Countries in an Enlarged European Union   |
| Rhodes            | Greece   | 28-1  | July-August | 2004 | Challenges in the Enlarged "New" EU: Immigration, Minorities and Promotion of Youth Participation |
| Belgrade/Zlatibor | Serbia   | 12-17 | July        | 2006 | Campaigning for Europe  |
| Limassol          | Cyprus   | 27-1  | June-July   | 2007 | European Neighbourhood Policy - The Case of the Middle East                                       |
| Varna             | Bulgaria | 2-6   | July        | 2008 | European Young Consumers - The Future is Ours   |
| Neptune           | Romania  | 1-5   | July        | 2009 | Young People - Present, Future and Perspectives   |
| Riga              | Latvia   | 1-4   | July        | 2010 | Sustainable Development as Viable Post-Crisis Strategy  |
| Limassol/Nicosia  | Cyprus   | 7-10  | July        | 2011 | The Future of the Common Foreign and Security Policy  |

Chairmen's Conferences are organised in every year in which there is no Congress, that is, once every two years. They are specifically meant to bring the leaders of the national political youth organisations closer to YEPP. The idea is that the chairs of YEPP's member organisations, as well as the international secretaries, are involved in its activities. At the Chairmen's Conference organised

in Salamanca-then European Capital of Culture-from 7-10 March 2002, YEPP's fifth anniversary was celebrated. All former Board members and former YEPP activists were invited to debate with representatives of other youth organisations (EDS, DEMYC, ECOSY, LYMEC and JEF) and to listen to a panel of former and then current presidents, Fredrik Reinfeldt, Michael Hahn and Rutger-Jan Hebben.

| City              | Country  | Date  | Month   | Year | Topic   |
|-------------------|----------|-------|---------|------|---|
| Madrid            | Spain    | 5-8   | March   | 1998 | Europe Challenges Towards the 21st Century                      |
| Athens            | Greece   | 27-30 | January | 2000 | Democracy in the 21st Century: Virtual Reality?                 |
| Salamanca         | Spain    | 7-10  | March   | 2002 | YEPP, a European Star   |
| Lisbon            | Portugal | 25-28 | March   | 2004 | Europe: Road to Social Cohesion                                 |
| Palma de Mallorca | Spain    | 15-18 | June    | 2006 | Europe Alive?   |
| Porto             | Portugal | 22-25 | May     | 2008 | The Future of Europe  |
| Paris             | France   | 8-11  | April   | 2010 | Europe's Political Future and Emerging Technologies in Politics |

At the 2008 Chairmen's Conference in Porto, the chairs of all YEPP's members, as well as YEPP's Board, signed a 'Charter of the principles for the 2009 European elections'. One of its appeals is still relevant: 'The Youth of the European People's Party calls upon European leaders to maintain a certain budgetary discipline in order to ensure a lifetime of justice and welfare

both for the younger generations and the generations to come.' YEPP also made a strong case for more young MEPs: '... YEPP strongly believes that all EPP mother parties in each EU member country should give at least one young person a realistic chance of gaining a seat in the European Parliament.'



#### CHARTER OF PRINCIPLES FOR THE 2009 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

More than a half-century after its foundation, European integration leading to the creation of the European Union remains a creation that is a developing polity and that we intend to develop further. However Europeans of all ages often feel more indifference than enthusiasm, which reflects the fact that Europe remains insufficiently rooted in the hearts and minds of the people.

This lack of enthusiasm for Europe should and can be tackled through a better understanding of the positive influences of European policies on the Europeans' everyday lives. European integration has offered the young generation the chance to travel, study, work and interact more freely across Member States more than at any other time in the past.

Concerns about the so-called "democratic deficit" of the EU, combined with the perception that European governance is opaque and inaccessible, has made many young Europeans disillusioned with the integration process.



That's why it is necessary to implement structures and processes that replicate at the European level the habits of governmental control and parliamentary accountability that are common in the Member States.

The last European election in 2004 resulted in the lowest turnout since 1979. We, the members of the Youth of the largest political group in the European Parliament are determined to do everything possible to change this trend. Therefore, we the political youth leaders of the YEPP organisations believe it is essential for the European elections in 2009 to have a joint effort and common guidelines in order to bring the campaign and the EU institutions closer to the Europeans – and most particularly to the Youth.





## PRINCIPLES

### THE LISBON TREATY

The Lisbon Treaty should be regarded as a good opportunity to revive the "European Spirit" as it introduces important new amendments to the Treaties that will strengthen the accountability of the European institutions. In this context, the new role of the national parliaments in the decision-making process and the strengthening of the link between the President of the European Commission and the parliamentary elections should be seen as positive steps towards a more democratic EU. The youth leadership of the YEPP organisations strongly supports the ratification and the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty and the structural changes that it will bring.

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

"The environment is not something we inherit from our parents; it's something we borrow from our children." In this sense development should be approached with the understanding that the same technology that increases our well being and human productivity should be used to obtain environmentally friendly solutions for mankind's demand for



energy.

YEPP believes it should not be a political priority to enquire about the factors that started or boosted global warming, it is time to acknowledge the problem and look for a global solution within the framework of the initiative begun with the Kyoto Protocol.

YEPP endorses the conclusions of the IPCC concerning climate change and states that Europe has to play a leading role to limit global warming by maximum 2 degrees by 2050. This challenge must be considered as an opportunity to increase well being, health, independence and socio-economic development.

### INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE

Over time we have come to acknowledge the necessity to ensure equal participation in terms of gender as well as a balanced participation of those of different creeds and ethnic groups. As a youth organisation, YEPP also realizes the necessity of having different age groups actively contributing to society. In many situations experience and maturity are fundamental, others where the contribution of new and irreverent ideas



are vital. If the new generation can call upon itself the task of innovating and making a difference, the older generation cannot abstain from the responsibility of educating the new generation and share acquired knowledge. One without the other would result in an incoherent community.

The justice and solidarity that exists within our European societies should also exist across different generations. With an ageing population and a de-greening of European societies, the current models of intergenerational solidarity are under a lot of pressure. The Youth of the European People's Party calls upon European leaders to maintain a certain budgetary discipline in order to ensure a lifetime of justice and welfare both for the younger generations and the generations to come.

### EUROPEAN VALUES

The public debate on the future of the EU is frequently polarized either around the specific functioning of the EU and its efficiency and/or democracy, or around the older debate: "state sovereignty versus federalism". It is high time to bring the focus back to the fact that the EU is a unique project, *a sui generis*; one that is built on very specific



values. The EU was created in order to defend and protect a way-of-life set on a bedrock of ideals – principle among them freedom, solidarity, democracy, humanism, Christian heritage and the rule of law. YEPP acknowledges that the EU should be clear when stating its values and strict in defending them. In this regard it is a priority that all the members of the European Union develop a policy to respect the European Youth Pact as per the White Paper already signed in 2005

In order to implement these principles and to combat Euroscepticism and EU alienation that grows amongst the younger generation, YEPP strongly believes that all EPP mother parties in each EPP member country should give at least one young person a realistic chance of gaining a seat in the European Parliament. Such a young European parliamentarian would be an active voice for the youth perspective on policies, but also, importantly, will attract interest among the younger generation and therefore mobilize this demographic in the upcoming European elections.

It is our duty to provide young citizens with someone whom they can relate to. Young people should be given the opportunity to influence politics at all levels – especially the European level. In our view, the European Parliament,



the highest legislative body in the European Union, can, and should, benefit from the knowledge, experiences and vigor of young women and men.

YEPP believes that this is the right moment to reconnect the European Union with its citizens. The implementation of the Lisbon Reform Treaty and the participation of young people in next year's European elections are two ways to meet this objective. Europe cannot afford to miss another opportunity.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of May of 2008, in preparation for the European Parliament elections of 2009, the youth leaders of the YEPP organisations, gathered in Vila Nova de Gaia (Portugal), at the YEPP Chairmen Conference, clearly state these as the guiding principles for their campaigns and fundamental ideas for the future of the European Union.

We the The undersigned do hereby Endorse this  
Charter

Ioannis Smyrils (Chairman of YEPP)

Pedro Rodrigues (JSD, Portugal)

Silvia Fuhrmann, MP (JOVP, Austria)

Rodolphe Sagehomme (Jeunes cdH, Belgium)

Miroslav Mihov (MSDP, Bulgaria)

Mislav Banek (MHDZ, Croatia)

Christoforos Fokaides (NE.DI.SY, Cyprus)

Petr Jiricki (MKD, Czech Republic)

Robert Ilc (MSI, Slovenia)

Rok Ravnikar (NG SLS, Slovenia)

Simon Oberbeck (JCVP, Switzerland)

On behalf of YEPP Organisations:

JONG-od&v Belgium

KNP Finland

Jeunes UMP France

SADP Georgia

JUG Germany

Simon Bjerre (KDU, Denmark)

Giorgos Papanikolaou (ONNED, Greece)

Barry Walsh (YFG, Ireland)

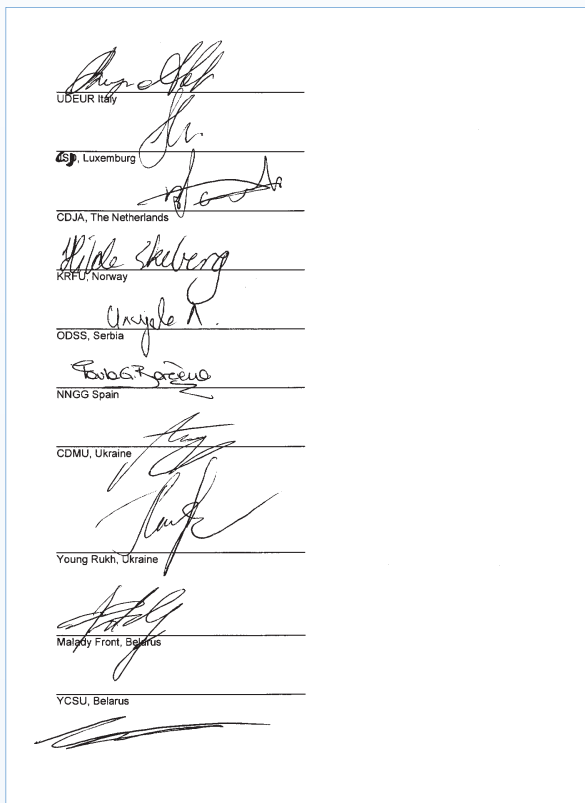
Francesco Pasquari (FIG, Italy)

Piersante Morandini (Giovani UDC, Italy)

Edgars Elksnis (YtPP, Latvia)

Inga Auguniene (JKP, Lithuania)

Peter Markovic, MP (NG, Slovakia)



#### YEPP Balkans Conference Sarajevo 16-19 March 2000

Arriving at the airport of Sarajevo, participants were picked up by a bus from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. On the way to the hotel it became immediately clear how disastrous the war had been: it was a miracle that what was left of some buildings was still upright. On the other hand, a lot had been rebuilt already again, even so much that at night with heavy snowfall, one could have the impression to walk around in a normal city.

On Thursday afternoon, a bus trip around the city was scheduled, in order to get a general overview of the situation in Bosnia's capital. Our guide showed us what a beautiful place Sarajevo was and still is, but brought us as well to the most destroyed place of the whole city, ironically called "Hiroshima".

After the bus trip, there was a welcoming reception at the hotel, with a speech of Dr. Gregor Rysse, Director of the Adenauer Foundation in Sarajevo, of Michael Hahn, YEPP President, and of Mr. Rasim Gacanovic, Mayor of Sarajevo. After dinner, participants were free to go out in the city.

On Friday morning, the seminar started with three discussion groups. During the first session, everybody got the chance to present himself. After lunch the second and third session of the discussion groups took place. There was a rotation system with four topics: public affairs, youth organisations, education and economics. Mr. Mirsad Fazlic, reporter of "Slobana Bosna", gave us a good impression on how difficult the situation in Serbia is for the press. Journalists are intimidated and loose their job if they show any criticism towards the government.

Mr. Tibor Jona, an activist from the Democratic Party of Serbia, gave us some concrete examples on what opposition means in Serbia. Particularly interesting was to see how they try to involve as many people as possible, and how everybody in a certain way can be helpful. What is motivating them to go on in spite of all threats is that they know that they're fighting for the right cause and that what they do is of historical importance: they feel that Milosevic is getting weaker and weaker.

Mr. Irfan Polimac from "Inicijativa mladih" explained that the whole school system in Serbia is organised in order to support the regime and to bring students as little as possible in contact with abroad, which is not motivating at all for them.

Finally, professor Dragoljub Stojanov gave an overview on the economical situation in Bosnia. The convertible mark, which is linked to the German mark, brought price stabilization in the country, but on the other hand killed the economical life because Bosnian products are not competitive with foreign products. What Bosnia needs most of all for the moment are investments.

After lunch on Saturday, there was a plenary discussion with Mr. Barry, OCSE ambassador in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After dinner, a BBC documentary film "The Balkans Crisis" was showed, which gave a very shocking impression on the situation during the war.

The involvement of national member organisations is also further enhanced through their participation in different working groups, sometimes called Permanent Forums. These also serve as follow-up sessions between different meetings and seminars. There are at least four long-established working groups: Defence and Foreign Security Policy, Economic and

Social Policy, Central and Eastern European Policy (including the Enlargement of 2004-7) and Sustainable Development. Ad hoc working groups are sometimes established, such as the one for the 2004 European elections. Working groups are normally led by one or more Board members. They mainly prepare documents for Council meetings or Congresses.

| City      | Country                | Date  | Month   | Year | Topic  |
|-----------|------------------------|-------|---------|------|--|
| Sarajevo  | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 16-19 | March   | 2000 | Enlargement of the European Union in the Balkan                                |
| Halkidiki | Greece                 | 25-30 | August  | 2001 | The Balkans and European Integration   |
| Belgrade  | Serbia                 | 13-16 | June    | 2002 | From Milosevic to Europe: the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Transformation |
| Belgrade  | Serbia                 | 23-26 | June    | 2005 | Facing the Future Together   |
| Sarajevo  | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 24-26 | October | 2008 | Youth Politics and Youth Party Organisations in South-East-Europe              |

The attention given to the Balkans led to the organisation of a series of Balkan Conferences. Between 2000 and 2008 five conferences were organised, often in collaboration with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS). Given the sensitive political situation in the area, these conferences were ambitious in

their goals and brave in that YEPP did not want to lose sight of this particular part of Europe. They often brought people together who otherwise would not have spoken with each other. The conferences also demonstrated a belief in peace and reconciliation, especially among the younger generation.

At all these meetings an impressive number of presidents, prime ministers, ministers, European commissioners, MEPs, members of national parliaments and other high-level politicians have addressed the YEPP audience. YEPP has taken activists and leaders of national political youth organisations to places they would never otherwise have had the chance to go, especially not at such a young age. YEPP's activities have so

far been a success, offering much to young politicians who are starting to cooperate at the international and European levels. Through YEPP young politicians can acquire skills and learn how to deal with the complexity and diversity of Europe and its integration process. As former Board member Jyrki Katainen put it, YEPP 'is a school for European decision-making'.





# David Hansen

## YEPP President 2005-7

*'It is important to understand that you are not just in YEPP because you are between 18 and 33 or so years old. You are involved with something that is about more than just your age. There are the ideas you believe in, the chance to run new eyes over old and contemporary issues.'*

*'You can plan a YEPP event as much as you like, but the most valuable dimension is the unorganised part of it, where you exchange ideas and interact.*

*I don't say you don't need to plan, but you also need space for that unorganised interaction.'*

*'If you are elected as a representative of YEPP, you need to come with something other than your national voice. That mandate needs to be something political.'*

*'It would be a true tribute to Europe as a political space if young politicians were given a real opportunity to influence the process.'*

*'YEPP is something uniquely European and makes it possible to develop a sphere or arena or dimension or channel, in which national organisations can focus their efforts in order to influence things that they cannot influence alone.'*

*'YEPP needs to be efficient in how it allows young people to work in the European arena and it must be autonomous and self-confident in how it works.*

*YEPP should keep its agenda straight; there needs to be a usefulness to the money and the time invested. That's how one gains respect within the EPP and back home in the national parties.'*





# ‘Playing the political game’: YEPP’s agenda

Since its foundation YEPP has made political statements on a wide range of issues. Programmes and position papers have been prepared and discussed in Board and Council meetings, in working groups, at seminars and Chairmen’s Conferences, and in Congress working sessions. Most of them have been adopted by the Council or the Congress and have, therefore, become the official positions of YEPP. Board meetings have circulated press releases on urgent matters and at Council meetings and Congresses member organisations have submitted numerous resolutions for adoption by YEPP after a formal vote. Some of these resolutions have dealt with regional problems, for example the Balkans. Purely local issues have had to be avoided as YEPP opposes its use for domestic purposes. Resolutions have been both reactive and proactive. The frequency with which they are proposed by national member organisations also varies a lot. On some occasions collecting support in favour of a particular resolution has been used to build coalitions among national political organisations. As with the themes of the Seminars, a wide number of issues have been covered by the resolutions. The context of a European or an international organisation is indeed broader than that of a national political organisation. YEPP has often expressed its views in advance of everyone else, including the EPP. Topics such as sustainable development and intergenerational justice had been on YEPP’s agenda for a long time before they became fashionable in EU circles.

At the Founding Congress in 1997, YEPP issued two statements: one on the future of Europe and one on European security. What was discussed 15 years ago is still worth reading today. With regard to European integration, YEPP declared that ‘the EU must become more relevant to its citizens and more responsive to their concerns’. It appealed to European leaders to adopt an institutional reform package more than 10 years before the Treaty of Lisbon came into force—consisting of introducing ‘QMV as a rule in the Council of Ministers, double majority system (of votes and of population), continuing application of the principle of subsidiarity which organises responsibility at the most effective lowest level, a smaller European Commission with one Commission seat per Member State, the Commission President to be directly elected by the European Parliament and confirmed by the European Council, members of the Commission to be personally and politically responsible before the EP, an enhanced role for the Committee of the Regions, and a Parliament limited in size to 700’.

Later on, YEPP continued to take part in the discussion on the future of Europe and on how the EU should be organised institutionally. In November 2001, for instance, a couple of weeks before the Laeken European Council meeting that was to decide on the establishment of a European Convention, YEPP adopted ‘13 theses on the future of Europe’. It also played an active role in the Youth Convention. Between 9 and 12 July 2002, 210 young people got together in the European Parliament to take part in a broad discussion of Europe’s future. A final text was adopted and presented to the European Convention. In order to be as influential

as possible, YEPP pooled its resources with DEMYC and EDS and formed one YEPP-ED Group for the Youth Convention, with ED (European Democrats) referring to the members of DEMYC and EDS that were not affiliated with YEPP.

The other big topic on YEPP’s agenda was the EU enlargement with countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This is not surprising as, even at the time of its foundation, YEPP was not exclusively oriented towards Western Europe (with founding members from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine). Moreover, a few years after its foundation, YEPP took a proactive role in terms of its own membership policy. At its Vienna Congress in 2001, YEPP took a position that was strongly in favour of EU enlargement. Given the gap between the broadly shared goal of enlargement and the state of affairs within the applicant countries, it urged political leaders from all sides to speed up the first round without relaxing the strict criteria. Everything needed to be done to ensure enlargement was a success: ‘A bridge needs to be built. Our political concept has to combine the vision of a progressive integration with pragmatism. We want to combine responsibly the deepening with the historic chance of enlargement and not to play them off against each other. The objective is security and prosperity, peace and freedom for the whole of Europe. This can only be achieved by a concrete roadmap for enlargement and an enlargement scenario.’

YEPP also took positions with regard to general issues in the EU’s economic, social and environmental fields, but more topical issues like migration and energy were also touched upon. No topic was left behind. At times a proactive strategy was chosen; at others YEPP reacted to the position of the EPP. In addition, YEPP developed a strong tradition of formulating statements on highly salient topics. Numerous resolutions were issued on topical national or European issues. Some of them discussed problems that had a wider impact on European or even world politics, such as the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. At its Council meeting in Stockholm on 29 September 2001, YEPP adopted a resolution in which international terrorism was strongly condemned. It took a mitigating attitude vis-à-vis the Arab world and called for more European integration in the area of freedom, security and justice, closing with, ‘freedom and democracy, which are founding values of the EU, can only be built on peace, tolerance and respect of cultural, religious and ideological differences. Any attempt of declaring western superiority is irresponsible. Thus YEPP condemns any irresponsible statements made by politicians and public figures that may offend Muslims and Arabs, and any instrumental misuse of political declarations to undermine the unity of the European forces engaged against terrorism.’ Most recently, the YEPP Board issued its position about the continuing crisis in the euro area and the long road towards economic governance in Europe. In the run-up to the EPP Congress in Marseille it shows how up-to-date the statements of YEPP are and that YEPP does not fear to contribute to contentious and highly technical discussions in the EU.



#### YEPP at the end of 2011

The economic turmoil that followed the 'credit-crunch' and the collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008 presented new challenges for YEPP as an organisation, just as it presented the people of Europe with new difficulties. As a non-profit organisation we faced economic difficulties, but our primary challenge has been political and this in itself has presented YEPP with new opportunities to have our voice heard and our policies implemented.

In the last four years, YEPP has developed carefully structured and considered economic policies for Europe on a wide range of matters, from how to deal with struggling European banks and respond to eurozone nations requiring financial support, to developing a European critique of the Basel III Banking Accords and policies to stimulate youth employment through entrepreneurship incentives. The latter two policy proposals were presented at the 2011 EPP Congress in Marseille.

While YEPP has not shied away from controversy with its policy proposals, nearly all were well-received by our member parties, the EPP and other respective organisations. YEPP has taken strong positions on developing sustainable green economies, the promotion of renewable energy and the minimisation of carbon emissions. More recently, YEPP has been an outspoken critic of the political turmoil in Belarus and Ukraine and held a demonstration outside the Belarusian Embassy in Berlin during the recent Congress.

YEPP will continue to be a voice for innovative, sometimes critical and positive policies on economic growth, youth employment and developing a stronger Europe for future generations. Challenges and obstructions will be faced, but a coherent and collective centre-right voice for the benefit of Europe's youth was our founding goal and we believe, having achieved this, that our activities will make Europe better for future generations.



#### Resolution on the Presidential Elections in Ukraine

##### Recognising

- The genuine efforts of a majority of Ukrainians to establish a workable, institutionalised and lasting democracy in their state.
- The outcome of forthcoming presidential elections and the findings of the international community regarding the way the elections have been held as a vivid demonstration of Ukraine's direction to follow the European standards and values.

##### Believing

- As a Christian democratic and Conservative youth organisations in the principles of democracy, rule of law and parity of esteem being of paramount importance in political discourse, as well as the import of the confident participation of civil society in any democracy.

##### *The Youth of the European People's Party calls on:*

##### 1. The Ukrainian authorities:

- to satisfy the calls, both domestic and international, for ensuring free, fair and transparent elections and mainly sufficient election monitoring which can conduct itself unimpeded during the campaign and on polling day.
- to stop the practice of civil servant participation in the campaign, the use of administrative resources and the use of public resources for the purpose of campaigning;
- to stop the practice of sending the instructions from the Administration of President to TV-channels and the manipulation of information;
- to provide an equal and impartial access to the media for all candidates;
- to provide an equal opportunities to vote for Ukrainian citizens living abroad and to create enough polling stations abroad.

- 2. The government of Ukraine to establish a greater culture of judicial independence as well as greater objectivity and impartiality on the part of the public administration.

- 3. The freedom of media, as the hallmark of any developed democracy, to be respected by all authorities in Ukraine so as to ensure freedom of speech and not undermine voter confidence at election time.

*Approved at YEPP Council, Oslo, 9 October 2004*

Youth politics has obviously been an issue of particular interest for YEPP but it has never been a dominant issue on its agenda. One notable exception is the participation of YEPP in the drafting process of the EPP's political programme for the 2004 European Parliament elections. YEPP provided a draft chapter on European Youth Policy, presented to the EPP Amendment Committee in 2003 and unanimously adopted at the EPP Congress on 4-5 February 2004 in Brussels. In 2009 this was not repeated, as YEPP had taken a different path to the EPP. The EPP's 2009 electoral congress took place in April, whereas YEPP had only elected a new Board a couple of weeks previously, at its Rome Congress.

The youth perspective, or the importance attributed to the impact of current policy decisions on future generations, has of course always been present in the positions that YEPP has taken. This is particularly true of YEPP's long tradition of fighting for the rights and liberties of all European peoples and supporting democracy worldwide. When freedom of speech is not respected, when political liberties are suppressed or when minority rights are being violated, the younger generations are often the first victims as their future is endangered. It is often also the younger generation that takes the lead in protests against undemocratic regimes. YEPP has always stood firmly behind them. Moreover, YEPP has regularly organised public events to support its member organisations in Eastern Europe, particularly those in Ukraine and Belarus. On 9 October 2004, for instance, at its Council meeting in Oslo, YEPP adopted a resolution on the presidential elections in Ukraine. In the run-up to what later would become known as the Orange Revolution, it asked

for free and fair elections, and, during the 2011 Congress, YEPP held a protest in front of the Embassy of Belarus in Berlin.

By trying to influence the agenda, YEPP 'plays the political game', in the words of former YEPP President Yannis Smyrlis, together with many other actors in the field. The impact of all its documents should not, of course, be overestimated. Sometimes they make a difference, particularly for the national youth organisation involved, but this is not always the case. In any case, writing resolutions, statements, papers and programmes; trying to get as much support as possible; and negotiating and deal-making, both during formal meetings and in corridors, are a full part of what YEPP has to offer to its own leadership and

the representatives of its member organisations. YEPP offers its members the chance to gain a better understanding of certain topics, to deepen and widen knowledge in a number of areas, and to get in touch with new issues, different traditions and other political cultures. The effect is often greater than expected as young people are more open to new ideas and new challenges. It also acts as preparation for what many of those involved in YEPP will do in their future careers. In the words of Michael Hahn: 'YEPP offers people a training field'. YEPP may not change Europe, let alone the world, but it does change the people of YEPP.





# Yannis Smyrlis

## YEPP President 2007-9

*'YEPP offers a unique experience: you cannot find similar anywhere else.'*

*'The advantage of YEPP is that you can speak openly. You can say things that, for political reasons, national parties or the EPP cannot.'*

*'YEPP makes you understand why we want a European Union.  
Even if we have a lot of differences, we also have a lot in common.  
YEPP reminds you that we are all Europeans.'*

*'YEPP puts together some small pieces of the big puzzle called Europe.'*

*'YEPP should travel around Europe and put the spotlight on local problems everywhere.  
It should help the national youth organisations when they need it. YEPP is not a Brussels thing.'*

*'YEPP stays with you forever.'*



# YEPP's relationship with the EPP and other organisations

YEPP has been an association of the EPP since its foundation. Moreover, it is the only youth association formally recognised by the Political Assembly of the EPP. Since the EPP's 2009 Bonn Congress, YEPP's official title has been 'Member Association'. One of the requirements for recognition is that an Association must be composed of national sections that are linked to an EPP member party in at least half of the EU Member States. Recognition gives Member Associations the right to participate in party bodies, as well as access to substantial grants from the party budget. Yet, provided they operate in accordance with the party statutes and programme, the Associations remain largely autonomous as far as their internal affairs and activities are concerned.

Indeed, YEPP operates as an independent organisation and has always maintained its autonomy vis-à-vis its mother party. YEPP is legally separate from the EPP. Politically, it elects its own leadership, has its own bodies, organises its own activities, and issues its own resolutions, statements and programmes (on its own website). In other words, YEPP speaks for itself and acts on its own. However, this does not preclude a strong mutual relationship. YEPP substantially increases the number of young people directly involved in the political work of the EPP. In turn, young people engaged with the EPP's bodies improve their knowledge and experience of European politics. Connections are forged and opportunities created for building trust and solidarity within the EPP family. Equally, the involvement of young people representing a particular interest enlivens and enriches party work as YEPP wants to spread understanding and exercise influence in order to make a difference in the EPP. YEPP also provides a link between the EPP and the world of young people. YEPP's influencing of EPP proposals is of great importance for a people's party whose power is derived from being able to unite divergent interests.

The foundation of YEPP was strongly welcomed and supported by the EPP. This was particularly true of EPP President Wilfried Martens and the then EPP Secretary General Klaus Welle. Welle was very familiar with the precarious situation prior to the founding of YEPP, having been president of DEMYC between 1991 and 1994, before Fredrik Reinfeldt. By enlarging the party with non-Christian Democratic members and merging with the European Democratic Union (EDU), the mother party of DEMYC, the EPP had set a firm example. YEPP followed suit.

As a Member Association, YEPP has guaranteed representation in the EPP's Congress, Political Assembly and Working Groups. It uses these forums to express the interests of young people and to let their voice be heard. It does so by making oral interventions and proposing amendments to congress and other party documents. In other words, YEPP is in frequent communication with the EPP. At the EPP Congress in Estoril on 17 and 18 October 2002, for instance, YEPP took a clear position in favour of the direct election of the president of the European Commission. Although YEPP's amendment was not accepted, '... the YEPP Board was satisfied with YEPP's performance, as YEPP was a player in the political

game and was taken serious [sic]. YEPP said what others were thinking, and dared to be critical. A lot of respect was paid to YEPP. Even EPP-ED Group President Hans-Gert Pöttering apologised twice behind the scenes for not being able to support YEPP's positions, which he personally preferred; others were talking for the first time to YEPP, like Commission Vice-President Lloyola de Palacio.' YEPP is not always part of the majority within the EPP, nor does it always pursue exactly the same strategy. YEPP opposed, for instance, the proposal to grant a special status for DEMYC within the EPP after the fusion with EDU, for obvious reasons.

Over its 15 years of existence, it has become clear that YEPP also provides a very strong recruitment base for the future political elite, particularly within the EPP family. The best examples of former YEPP Board members who have reached top positions in their respective countries are of course Fredrik Reinfeldt, Prime Minister of Sweden, and Jyrki Katainen, Prime Minister of Finland. Former Board members Jan-Kees De Jager (CDJA, the Netherlands), Lucinda Creighton (YFG, Ireland), Leo Varadkar (YFG, Ireland) and Mikolaj Dowgielewicz (MD, Poland) are currently Minister of Finance, Minister for European Integration, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and State Secretary for European Integration, respectively. Daniel Bautista (NNGG, Spain) was an MEP in the period prior to the 2009 elections and Sidonia Jedrzejewska (MD, Poland) has become one since. Many other former Board members now work in senior positions in the public or private sectors. Some continue their political work as staff members of the EPP, the EPP Group in the European Parliament or in one of the political foundations affiliated with the EPP family. YEPP offers the EPP a wide and impressive network indeed.

In addition to the EPP, YEPP follows closely the EPP Group in the European Parliament – particularly the EPP network of young MEPs – and has always maintained good relations with political foundations active at the European level. With its extensive network and offices in Central and Eastern Europe, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) has been a natural partner to work with, especially in terms of YEPP's eastward enlargement. YEPP has also profited from the support of other foundations, including the Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung (HSS), the Eduardo Frei Stichting (EFS), the Konstantinos Karamanlis Institute for Democracy (KKID) and the Robert Schuman Foundation (RSF). Within the framework of specific activities or initiatives taken by YEPP, they have given financial and organisational support. They have also offered training opportunities and helped to organise visits, particularly fact-finding missions, to a number of European countries. Most recently, the Centre for European Studies (CES), the official political foundation of the EPP, has proved to be a strong supporter of a number of activities YEPP has organised.

Still within the EPP family, the European Democrat Students (EDS) is a natural ally when it comes to defending the rights of young people, particularly those of students. YEPP and EDS often submit common resolutions to the EPP or support each other's initiatives.



By joining forces within the various EPP bodies, and sometimes also with other EPP Member Associations, both have gained stronger positions. Relations, however, depend a lot on who is actually in charge of the organisation, as EDS changes its leadership every year. The chair of EDS is regularly invited to attend YEPP activities, while EDS invites the president of YEPP to its events. The same applies to DEMYC, although, naturally, linking with DEMYC was not a priority in the early years. Since 2000 the relationship has become less tense and both organisations have started to send each other invitations to their congresses. Things went a lot smoother when Ines Prainsack (JVP, Austria) – who had been active in YEPP before – became Chairwoman of DEMYC in 2006.

YEPP has also allied with European youth organisations from other political families. Overall, YEPP's relationships with the European Community Organisation of Socialist Youth (ECOSY) and the Liberal Youth Movement of the European Communities (LYMEC) have been relatively respectful. ECOSY and LYMEC are both smaller organisations than YEPP, which is much more oriented towards the centre-right, has greater autonomy, more exposure, closer involvement with the mother party, a stricter membership policy and operates on a voluntary basis. YEPP also differs in terms of organisation and communication. ECOSY, for instance, has a much more outspoken 'leftist' discussion culture, which is often ritualised and is less interested in outcomes.

On occasions YEPP has joined forces with the other major youth organisations in Europe. In the run-up to the 2009 European Parliament elections, for instance, YEPP, ECOSY and LYMEC supported the campaign against youth abstention during a meeting with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso and Commissioners Margot Wallström and Meglena Kunevas.

Good working relations with ECOSY and LYMEC are important as the three European political youth organisations need each other's support within the Youth Forum (YFJ). Initially, this umbrella for all European youth organisations was somewhat side-lined by YEPP as it was considered too left-wing, similar to many national youth councils which act as the official voice for national youth vis-à-vis national governments. A couple of years after its foundation, YEPP changed course and tried to influence the policies of the YFJ from within. This strategy proved to be successful. On a YEPP proposal, Board member Sidonia Jędrzejewska was elected as vice-president of the YFJ, occupying this position between 2000 and 2002. Later, DEMYC Chairwoman Ines Prainsack became bureau member of the YFJ in 2007. She was successful, unlike her candidacy in 2005, because she was supported by YEPP, DEMYC and EDS. After her term the interest of YEPP in the YFJ began to deteriorate again, but has since improved. In this way, YEPP has continued to send its representatives to the YFJ, maintaining its policy of providing a presence and actively engaging with European youth politics. Following this strategy, the common candidate of YEPP, DEMYC and EDS, Mia Magazin (ODSS, Serbia), a former DEMYC bureau member, was on 24 November 2011 elected as member of the Advisory Council of Youth Issues of the Council of Europe. Moreover, for the first time in the history of the YFJ, a centre-right candidate got most of the votes.

YEPP has even been active in the larger world of youth politics, trying to establish worldwide youth organisations. It also took part in the programmes of young decision-makers of the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and YFJ's Young Leaders' Meetings. These conferences, study trips and missions brought Board members representing YEPP to Washington D.C. (U.S.), Beijing (China) and Kampala (Uganda), for instance.







# Laurent Schouteten

## YEPP President 2009-11

*'YEPP is a truly democratic organisation, proceeding along the democratic lines set out in the statutes.'*

*'What makes the EPP political family unique is the balanced approach it puts forward: it is not only driven by a doctrine, it is also driven by the interests of the community, of the people in general. YEPP should train new generations of politicians to put these values and principles into practice, turning them into policies at the European level.'*

*'You can hardly compare the political cultures from all over Europe: the very stable versus unstable landscapes in the West and the East respectively; the straight, sharp and adversarial approaches in the south; and the moderate and mitigated approaches in the north, whatever the party. The overall culture makes people behave differently in an organisation like YEPP.'*

*'If we accept one cannot always win within YEPP, we can only grow and learn.'*

*'An international organisation like YEPP is meant to look across borders; it is the right place to look beyond the borders of Europe.'*

*'We are aligned with each other as far as the basic principles are concerned, but we might differ on which way to go.'*

*'YEPP is an opportunity, a great tool to take part in European history. Once you have participated in a YEPP activity you are convinced of that.'*



# Closing remarks



The previous chapters prove that the Youth of the European People's Party has fulfilled the commitments of those founding the organisation in 1997. YEPP has gradually become the biggest centre-right political youth movement in Europe, involving members from Norway to Cyprus and from Portugal to Georgia.

While becoming a large organisation, YEPP has also guaranteed balance in many respects. First, it guarantees balance between the generations. The permanent rotation of leadership has ensured that fresh ideas and new energy are permanently injected. Second, balance has been ensured in geographical terms as well. Although members come from countries of different sizes, all of them have been given an equal opportunity to shape YEPP's activity. Third, the organisation has found a balance between European and domestic political issues.

YEPP has played a significant role in bringing EU issues closer to young centre-right activists, as well as raising awareness of political developments in Member States.

YEPP has given many young people the opportunity to take their first political steps. Proof of this should not only come from the sheer number of heads of government or ministers with backgrounds in YEPP, but from the simple fact that most of those who were once active in the organisation now play a part in their home countries' political lives. The value of the YEPP network will be even more visible in the decades to come.

YEPP is an organisation that represents more than one million young people. However, it does not focus purely on youth politics. It plays a proactive role, especially in the fields of EU enlargement, energy and the environment, and EU foreign policy, and in the fight against dictatorships. In doing so, YEPP has not shut itself up in the European Quarter of Brussels. Seminars and Council meetings are held in various locations, ensuring visibility and openness in almost all European countries.

This valuable heritage places a great burden of responsibility on the current and future generations of YEPP. It is obvious that with such a huge network, YEPP is expected to exert more influence upon the EU agenda, with a special emphasis on closer relations with the European Parliament and the European Commission. YEPP is committed to a more political role when it comes to proposals aimed at strengthening common economic governance. Furthermore, YEPP must continue its fight against political extremism within and beyond Europe, no matter in which part of the political spectrum it arises. Last but not least, YEPP will continue its battle against political apathy among the young.

We can perhaps agree that YEPP might not change the world, but it changes the people taking part in it forever. The most important asset YEPP provides is not the quantity of meetings, resolutions or press releases, but the strong solidarity it creates among its members from all parts of Europe. Preserving solidarity in an era when it is threatened from many directions remains our duty in the years to come.

*Csaba Dömötör,  
YEPP President*

*Budapest, 25 January 2012*

# Sources

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## Notes

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## Notes

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