**R15 Decolonising Europe starts with us: Breaking the chains of colonialism within the Green movement**

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| **Proposer:** | FYEG |
| **Agenda item:** | 1. Resolutions |

**Motion text**

# Defining decoloniality

Decoloniality as a concept, an ideology, a movement, only exists due to the entrenchment of a hegemonic system of domination and oppression, a system of colonialism and imperialism (hereinafter often simply colonialism). Although ‘formal’ structures of state colonialism of the Global South has - debatably - ended in the period of decolonisation of the 20th century, colonial asymmetries and inequalities, and structures and systems of subjugation, oppression, and exploitation continue to be perpetuated, if not exacerbated, through the political, social, and economic hegemony of the Global North in the neoliberal global capitalist system. Thus, the Global North - the ‘core’ - is able to supply its pursuit of constant economic growth through the exploitation of resources and labour of the Global South - the ‘periphery’.

Is it therefore essential to acknowledge that capitalism and colonialism are closely intertwined. The roots of capitalism lie in colonial history and capitalism continues to reproduce such colonial asymmetries. The Global North’s sociopolitical and economic hegemony is only made possible through the continued oppression and exploitation of the Global South. Capitalism thus relies on a system of unequal exchange, as the Global North continues to benefit from these unequal power relations and perverse international division of labour and flow of resources, at the expense of the Global South - which also experiences the worst impacts of the consequent worsening climate crisis.[1]

These colonial asymmetries are not simply between states. Within states exists a sometimes loud but often invisible status quo of White superiority institutionally, systemically, and socially. **Colonialism**, therefore, as a social definition, is the occupation, exploitation or a guardianship of these structures by specific ideas, values and principles of a more dominant class. Colonisation can take different forms: social, cultural, financial, ethnic, educational, political, etc. It is thus important to take this into account when trying to tackle decoloniality, as through its interweaving in so many facets of life, it can be manifest in very subtle ways. This makes coloniality so complex

and difficult to see and recognise, and also what makes it such an essential struggle to wage.

Thus, in order to truly strive for social justice and equality, decoloniality must therefore be central in any effort for progress. **Decolonialism** is the process of freeing an institution, a sphere of activity, and so on, from the chains of colonialism, and its cultural or social effects.

In so doing, a complementary process of **interculturality** can be empowered, a process striving towards the building of a radically different society, of an "other" social ordering based on a plurinational state. A constant process of dialogue and interrelation, of bottom-up structural economic, social, political, and cultural transformations, for the full and permanent participation of racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities.[2]

## What is decoloniality's aim?

The aim would then be first to recognise those beliefs and concepts that shape these structures today without our being aware of them. The key notion would be to understand and identify such mechanisms, to be aware of their existence, and to analyse why they exist and continue to exist today.

The second step would be to implement actions to dismantle these mechanisms.Once we understand what binds institutions to perpetuate such notions of dominance, we must pursue the common objectives of breaking the chains of colonialism.

For example, production of knowledge has often been a tool of domination, oppression, and exploitation due to unequal power relations. Western knowledge, conveyed as 'universal' or 'objective' truths, imposed a monolithic worldview that gave power and control to the White European. Educational institutions today, from primary to tertiary education, continue to perpetuate this implicit Whiteness of knowledge through the materials and methods of teaching. Thus, decolonising schools and universities through incorporating knowledges of the Global South in content and teachings, platforming Global South scholars, and actively breaking the explicit or implicit chains of colonialism is a powerful and crucial decolonisation tool for the emancipation of racialised and culturally and ethnic-minoritised peoples.[3]

## Why do we need decoloniality in ecology?

It is impossible to strive for a socially just ecology without decoloniality. Acknowledging the finiteness of our planetary boundaries, an ideology of capitalist expansion eventually requires expansion to the periphery and the exploitation of resources and labour therein. This unequal exchange of not only resources, but externalities, as mentioned above, results in the Global South

impacted the worst by the climate crisis. Even within Western states, indigenous peoples and communities of colour are amongst those that suffer the most from this crisis. The climate crisis is inherently racist, and right at the forefront are racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities.

And yet, indigenous peoples and communities of colour continue to not only be unheard or forgotten, they are often erased from climate movement. We must acknowledge the reality that the history of environmentalism is racist, and that striving for ecological sustainability without first prioritising decolonial justice perpetuates neocolonial asymmetries through imperialist environmentalism. Without the reversal of this unequal exchange and perverse flow of resources, we end up powering the Global North's transition through continued exploitation of the Global South.

## Why do we need decoloniality in the Green movement?

In short, there is no climate justice without racial justice.

- We need a critical decolonial framework to broaden our ‘core’ (Eurocentric, Western, White) perspectives towards those of the ‘periphery’, and to broaden our understanding of environmentalism through knowledges and understandings from the Global South.

- We need to truly listen to those most impacted by our histories, by the neo-imperial system of capitalism today, and by the climate crisis - to platform and fight for their voices and interests to be heard in the Green movement.

- We need to accept that we may need to critically analyse and rethink much of what we thought to be true about the world and what it means to be inclusive, and reckon with the roles we have played in perpetuating exclusion, discrimination, or inequality, within FYEG, within the Green movement, and within broader society.

## Why do we need decoloniality as we head into EU24?

#BrusselsSoWhite.

- As we head into these elections, we need substantive representation - the incorporation of racial justice and the interests of racialised and ethnic-minoritised peoples within party manifestos, campaigns, and the agenda of European politics.

- At the same time, we need descriptive representation. 4% of Members of the European Parliament are White, and much of the rest of its apparatus. Studies show politicians of minoritised identities are more likely to advocate for the rights of minorities. In any case, people of colour deserve to see themselves reflected in the political structures that represent them.

## Therefore, the Racial Justice Task Force demands that FYEG and its Member Organisations:

**Politically:**

- **Increasingly include, platform, listen to, and work more closely with racial justice organisations and activists** in Europe and from the Global South. We should actively strive to collaborate with and highlight the work of indigenous activists and young greens of colour at the forefront of this movement, especially those in the Global South;

- **Incorporate and emphasise racial justice, inclusion, representation, and a broader decolonial framework of thinking** in setting up their campaigns for EU24;

- **Actively encourage bold, young greens of colour** to run for the European Parliament via their respective mother parties, and to provide sufficient support and mentorship to do so and to be placed in electable positions;

**Organisationally:**

- **Take steps to assess the practices, policies, and cultures of their internal organisation** and on how this excludes or fosters an atmosphere of exclusion for people of colour;

- **Work more actively to make their organisations more inclusive**, for example by working on meaningful diversity and inclusion plans that address the lack of young greens of colour in their respective organisations.

## We demand that FYEG:

- **Ensures diverse representation of young greens of colour in the Young Candidates Platform**, to the extent possible.

- **Especially considers the disparities and barriers to accessibility** faced by young greens of colour in politics, and, where necessary and possible, to ensure the Young Candidates Platform considers these intersectionalities in the support and trainings it provides young

candidates of colour.

## We urge that:

- **This be the first of one of many future steps** to expand FYEG's work on decoloniality, interculturality, racial justice, representation, and inclusion as we work towards making FYEG a Federation that is truly antiracist, racially just, and inclusive.

- **Future steps actively expand on decoloniality, interculturality and racial justice** in specific areas of policy, where possible.

- **All components of FYEG** aim to place decoloniality, interculturality, and racial justice at the very heart of our collective movement.

## Last words

Decoloniality and interculturality is more than social justice. It is a constant process in envisioning a different world - anti-colonialist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and anti-segregationist, with a different social ordering and relationship between peoples.

We do not want this resolution to use decolonisation as a metaphor, but a starting point for radical change. "Decolonisation is not an 'and'. It is an elsewhere."[4] As a progressive organisation, it is about time we work to create this 'elsewhere.'

## References

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[2] Mignolo, W. D. & Walsh, C. E. (2018). Interculturality and Decoloniality. In *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (pp. 57-80). Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11g9616.7.

[3] Akena, F. A. (2012). Critical Analysis of the Production of Western Knowledge and Its Implications for Indigenous Knowledge and Decolonization. *Journal of Black Studies, 43*(6), 599-619. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934712440448.

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## Reason

This resolution was drafted by the Racial Justice Task Force. It aims to be a starting point for FYEG and for any mainstream political organisation to tackle decoloniality, and to set the foundation for future work on decoloniality within FYEG. Decoloniality is an important, essential, and necessary framework of antiracism, and part of FYEG's efforts to make FYEG truly a Federation of antiracism and racial justice, one in solidarity with and inclusive for racialised and ethnic-minoritised communities.