R2 Younger institutions for a greener future

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Agenda item: 1. Resolutions

Motion text

Current situation:

We, the younger generations, are the future of any democracy, as we are the future leaders that will bring new ideas to solve our world's problems. But it seems our ideas and proposals will only be relevant when we are not young anymore. The young population is underrepresented in our parliaments and in the decision-making processes. The reluctance to a generational change means the impossibility to bring new ideas, new policies, and new ways of doing policies, which carries great threads for democracies, and for the greatest challenge of our time: the climate crisis. Thus, while youth stays out of the table when it comes to decision-making, it is the older generations of decision-makers, the ones who overlook science, mock activists and prioritise private profit over people, the ones who will deal with the consequences of inaction.

Being climate change the most pressing and intersectional crises of all times, future generations should be protected from the worst-case scenario, but the current situation shows that our claims are not being listened to, in some sort of paradoxical logic, they are regarded as radical and naive at the same time. What's more, climate activists and our reasoning are also disregarded due to the ageist nature of our system: our experiences, concerns and proposals are ignored because we are young.

According to Eurostat, the percentage of young people (15-29 years old) in the European Union (EU) in 2021 was 16,3%. And in 2023 the majority of Member States of the EU count with 0-9% of representatives who were 30 or younger. Therefore, we can see youth is underrepresented in national parliaments. The European Parliament does not stay out of this trend: while around 20% of the Europeans are between 18 and 35 years of age, roughly 10% of the MEPs are younger than 35. This constitutes a stark underrepresentation of the young (Stockemer & Sundström).

Percentage of MPs 30 years of age or younger in 2023 in national parliaments: https://data.ipu.org/compare?field=chamber%3A%3Atotal_younger_30_percentage&region=europe&structure=any__lower_chamber#map

In accordance with the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, there is a need to prevent and counter all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on age. For the correct functioning of a democracy, there is a need for the participation in politics of all social groups, so that decisions made are legitimate. But the functioning of political parties and our political systems leave out young candidates, with a corresponding effect of decreasing youth engagement in politics because of a lack of ownership of the decisions and the ways in which decisions are taken.

The increase of representativeness of the younger population in parliaments also helps closing the gender gap. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, there are more women parliamentarians in younger age groups. The older the members of parliament, the fewer women MPs in the chambers. For example, within the 21-30 age group, the male to female ratio among MPs is approximately 60:40. For the 31-40 age group, the ratio decreases to approximately 2:1.

Acknowledging the state of the situation, and in the scope of the European Parliament (EP) elections of 2024, as young greens we call on taking action to increase the number of young representatives in candidate lists to the EP, so that the overall percentage of young MEPs increases.

We believe that mother parties of young wings do not make enough room for young candidates by not putting them in electable positions. So, we call on them to reflect on their progressiveness when they do not take into consideration younger and future generations' needs.

For all that, the Federations of Young European Greens **calls**:

- On the European Green Party to take one step further on young candidates, expanding and updating on the spirit of the resolution “Renewing and Rejuvenating the Greens” approved in 2017, with clear objectives to have an impact in the national candidacies of its member Parties in elections at all levels, and especially towards the EU elections 2024.

- On the European Union to create a directive for vote at 16 at least in the European elections.

- On the European states, its governments and decision makers, to work to increase the number of young people in legislative and representative chambers at all levels, and change their electoral laws to include the right to vote at 16.

- On stakeholders, political, social and cultural leaders contribute to put an end to the stigmatisation and invisibilisation of young people, our demands and our experiences.

- Parties need to have a percentage of young and diverse candidates (15-20%)
- FYEG can push green parties to have this mandatory percentage so they are really progressive.
    - We are the future, let us take part/ co-create to work on creating the future we want.

References:

Stockemer, D., Sundström, A. Young deputies in the European Parliament: a starkly underrepresented age group. *Acta Polit* 54, 124–144 (2019). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-018-0078-0

Reason

To help the voices of the youth heard by incresing our representation in the democratic institutions.