

EC4 Lena Zehne

Agenda item: 3. Candidates for Executive Committee

Introduction

Hello everyone! I'm Lena a 24-year-old politically active person, freshly graduated from an environmental politics master's degree, and currently working as a scientific advisor in the German Parliament. I've been active in green politics since 2015 with the German Young Greens, and I'm passionate about environmental justice – particularly post-growth.

My work, academics, and interests have taken me across Europe and beyond, from research in Lebanon to volunteering in Greece and being a delegate for several congresses – and I have enjoyed every bit of living abroad and fighting for what I think is essential for a greener future.

I'm running for the FYEG Executive Committee to amplify young voices and foster collaboration across Europe. I believe in the power of learning from each other and spreading awareness to engage our community on crucial topics like sustainability and social justice.

See you in Dublin! xoxo
Lena (she/her)

Supporters

Egle Olesk (Noored Rohelised); Kristiana Bruce (Protests); Anna Winkelmann Larios (Joves Ecosocialistes); Iason Paschalidis-Gerostergiou (Νέοι Πράσινοι); Mariia Patrul (Green Youth of Ukraine); Axel Grima (Kollettiv Żgħażaġħ EkoXellugin)



Member Organisation:
Grüne Jugend - Germany

My Motivation

Dear Member Organisations of the Federation of Young European Greens,

I am thrilled to put myself forward for the FYEG Executive Committee for the 2024 term. Basically, I'm driven by my passion for environmental justice, my commitment to FYEG's values, and my eagerness to share and amplify these principles. But let me elaborate on this.

FYEG is a source of inspiration and a big driver for change in Europe. Throughout my involvement in Green politics, I have seen the power in collective action in addressing environmental and social issues. My experiences working and studying abroad have provided me with a broad perspective on the diverse challenges and opportunities our communities face. This has reinforced my belief in the importance of unity and collaboration across borders.

One of the key perspectives I bring is my work with the Beyond Growth Platform (BGP), one of the working groups of FYEG. Post-growth policies, which focus on sustainability, equity, and quality of life rather than continuous economic expansion, are vital for our fucking future. However, this definition of post-growth and my statement of motivation are just umbrella terms to summarize what I want for our future, and our FYEG. I understand the complexities involved in redefining wealth, especially for regions with differing economic realities. This understanding helps me appreciate the diverse perspectives within FYEG and work collaboratively towards inclusive solutions that align with our values of sustainability, justice, and democracy.

Inclusivity and diversity are at the heart of everything I do. My experiences as a queer and female politically active person have shaped my understanding of the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces where all voices can be heard and valued. Through my roles as, for example the mental health officer for the green youth organization of my hometown, I have focused on promoting mental health awareness and social justice, reinforcing my dedication to fostering an environment where everyone feels welcome and empowered to contribute.

FYEG is composed of several member organizations, each with its own unique passions and manifestos. This diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and I am dedicated to lending an open ear for everyone. By listening to and understanding the varied perspectives within our network, we can unite our efforts to achieve our shared goals. Ensuring that all voices are heard and valued will help us build a stronger, more cohesive movement that can drive significant change across Europe.

One of my most rewarding experiences was running as one of the lead candidates in my hometown city council election in 2024. This role honed my skills in campaign strategy, public engagement, and teamwork. It also deepened my motivation to continue working towards a greener, more equitable future. I want to contribute more! The support and collaboration I experienced during this campaign further convinced me of the importance of giving more people the opportunity to become active with us.

The green Base has demonstrated the power of engaging volunteers across Europe, providing a platform for young people to participate actively in our campaigns and initiatives. I believe every individual who wants to be active with and for FYEG is our most valuable resource. Together, we are strong, and I am committed to giving more people the opportunity to get involved and make a difference.

Looking ahead, FYEG has the opportunity to shape the future of our continent. I am driven by a desire to innovate and strategize for impactful campaigns that resonate with young people across Europe. My professional and academic experience in policy advising and strategizing equips me with the skills necessary to contribute to these efforts. I am excited about creating more spaces for eager activists to join our team, to engage and mobilize our base, ensuring that our message reaches and inspires as many people as possible (more on that in my vision statement).

My commitment to FYEG is strong and I am truly inspired by the everyone who I met in our green bubble. Over the years, I have seen the incredible work that FYEG and its member organizations have accomplished, and I am eager to be a part of this dynamic team. I believe that together, we can continue to push the boundaries of what is possible and achieve our shared vision of joy.

Let's go and thank you for your time,

Lena (she/her)

My Vision

Dear Member Organisations of the Federation of Young European Greens,

I am excited to share my vision for FYEG and my candidacy for the Executive Committee. I want to make sure we are raising awareness about the critical issues we face, getting even more people involved in our movement, and taking our green base to new heights of activism and impact. Let's make it happen!

Amplifying Our Community Strength through Workshops

FYEG is a beacon of progressive change, and I believe that our strength lies in our community. My vision is to amplify this strength by organizing practical workshops, improving our existing working groups and creating new working groups that address a broad range of topics relevant to our mission. By leveraging platforms like the green base, we can bring together members from all over Europe for workshops, fostering a culture of continuous learning and active participation.

Organizing more workshops offers numerous opportunities to deepen engagement and learning within FYEG. This practical approach equips our members with the skills needed to be effective activists and leaders. By bringing together members from different regions, we foster a sense of solidarity and community, allowing participants to exchange ideas, share experiences, and build lasting connections.

Workshops can also cover a wide range of topics, from the technical aspects of green policies to broader social issues, ensuring our members are well-informed and prepared to tackle multifaceted challenges. Regular workshops keep members actively involved in FYEG activities, helping to retain current members and attract new ones, thus maintaining a vibrant and dynamic movement. The interactive nature of workshops encourages creative problem-solving and innovation, allowing members to develop new initiatives and strategies that enhance FYEG's impact. Utilizing online platforms like the green base for workshops makes it easier for members from all over Europe to participate, breaking down geographical barriers and ensuring inclusive participation.

Expanding Our Horizons with New Working Groups

Having coordinated the Beyond Growth Platform (BGP), I have seen first-hand the positive impact that well-organized and targeted working groups can have. The BGP's focus on sustainability, equity, and quality of life over continuous economic growth has been instrumental in spreading awareness, to utilize our members diverse skill-sets, and to continuously learn from each other. Inspired by this success, I propose expanding our working groups to cover a wider array of topics that reflect our members' interests and passions.

A survey could be conducted to identify the most relevant and engaging topics for new working groups. Potential topics include Green Finance, Sustainable Food Chains, Intersectional Feminism, and Sustainable Energy Transitions. These areas not only align with FYEG's mission but also offer fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to the challenges we face. By establishing these new groups, we can provide more opportunities for members

to engage deeply with subjects they care about, fostering a more vibrant and active community. And again, more eager and motivated young people would have the chance to come on board!

Empowering and Engaging Our Community

To ensure the vitality of FYEG, it is crucial to reach out to new members and keep them engaged. Workshops and new working groups play a pivotal role in this effort. By leveraging social media and FYEG's communication channels, we can promote our initiatives and invite new members to join. Hosting online introductory sessions will make it easy for new members to understand the goals and activities of each working group, encouraging their participation. Establishing continuous feedback loops will allow us to gather input from members, ensuring that our activities remain relevant and engaging, and that we are always adapting to meet the needs and interests of our community.

To ensure the success of our workshops and working groups, it is essential to cultivate a supportive and collaborative environment. This means fostering a culture where every member feels valued and empowered to contribute. Encouraging feedback and open communication will help us understand the needs and ideas of our members, allowing us to continuously improve our initiatives. While we may not be able to provide all the resources needed for every project, we can focus on connecting our members with valuable networks and opportunities. By leveraging our partnerships and reaching out to external experts, we can enhance the impact of our working groups and provide members with access to the knowledge and tools they need to succeed. Additionally, we can facilitate resource-sharing among members, promoting a cooperative approach to overcoming challenges.

Strengthening Internal Solidarity and Learning from Each Other

I vision FYEG's MOs coming even closer together, therefore, I want us to learn from each other. Workshops, working groups, or whatever you want to call it – we need to sit together, listen to each other, and discuss why e.g. Sweden was more successful in the EU-elections than Germany and what regional difficulties there might be from strategy to strategy. I am convinced, that this will allow us to become an even bigger thorn in the flesh of this prevailing system!

Mobilization is at the heart of this vision. I believe that every individual who wants to be active with FYEG is our most valuable resource. To harness this potential, we need to create more spaces for eager activists to join our team. By doing so, we can ensure that our message reaches and inspires as many people as possible, driving forward our collective mission for a more environmentally just Europe.

FYEG has a bright future ahead, and I am eager to be a part of it. I am committed to using my experience, passion, and dedication to help steer our collective efforts towards meaningful and lasting change. By working together, we can create a more connected, informed, and active community that is ready to tackle the challenges ahead. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to this journey and help FYEG continue to be a driving force for positive change.

Without further ado – all the best,

Lena (she/her)

Lena Zehne

(she/her)

lena.zehne611@gmail.com 

Lena Zehne 

@lenazehne (TikTok & Instagram) 

Working Experience

Since 10.06.2024

Scientific Advisor / Member of German Parliament Leon Eckert, Berlin & Schrobenhausen (Germany)

03.07.2023 – 04.08.08.2023

Research Assistant / American University of Beirut (AUB), Beirut & Beqaa (Lebanon)

10.04.2023 – 30.06.2023

Volunteer / Refugee African Dance (RAD) Music International, Lesbos (Greece)

16.05.2022 – 16.08.2022

Intern / Member of German Parliament Leon Eckert, Berlin (Germany)

10.01.2022 – 30.04.2022

Intern / Union Internationale des Cinémas (UNIC), Brussels (Belgium)

01.04.2021 – 15.06.2021

Intern / Minister of Environment of Saxony-Anhalt Prof. Dr. Claudia Dalbert, Halle & Magdeburg (Germany)

01.10.2020 – 19.12.2020

Intern / Member of European Parliament Anna Cavazzini, Brussels (Belgium)

Education

September 2022 – June 2024

Erasmus Mundus M.Sc. Environmental Science, Politics & Management / Central European University (Vienna, Austria), Lund University (Sweden), University of the Aegean (Lesbos, Greece)

- Thesis: „Prosperity in Transition: Unravelling the Synergies of the EU’s Post-growth Policies for Socio-Environmental Harmony”
- Boroli Award issued by London School of Economics, Hertie School, Sciences Po Paris, Bocconi University, and Central European University for addressing EU’s major policy challenges with the Policy Brief “The European Central Bank as a key for reaching European Green Deal targets”

August 2018 – January 2022

B.Sc. International Relations & Organizations / Leiden University (The Hague, the Netherlands)

- Graduated with an honours degree

- Founder of the 'Studentenvereniging van Duitse Studenten Den Haag' (Student Association for German Students in The Hague)
- Vice-Chair of the European Union Study Association (EUSA)
- Volunteer at World Life Fund The Hague
- Founder and Chair of the Greenpeace Student Association in The Hague
- Member of the Fundraising and PR Teams of the Amnesty International Student Association of The Hague

Further Activities

- Lead candidate for the German Greens in Halle (Saale) during the municipal elections in June 2024
- Coordinator of the Beyond Growth Platform (BGP) of FYEG
- Social-Media manager and mental health officer of the German Young Greens Halle (Saale)
- Member of the German Young Greens since 2015
- Member of the Young European Federalists (JEF) in Germany
- Member of the Green Base of FYEG
- Delegate for the German Young Greens to the EGP Congress and for the German Greens to the EGP extended Congress

Dear fellow Member Organizations,
Dear friends in FYEG,

hereby we would like to express our deepest support for Lena Zehne applying as a general executive board member for the FYEG EC for 2024/2025.

Her technical qualifications have been trained in various experiences. She is the coordinator of the Beyond Growth Platform (BGP) of FYEG, she actively participated in the EU campaign as a member of the Green Base, and being a scientific advisor to a Green parliament member

She also has extensive political experience having been an active member in Grüne Jugend. She was Grüne Jugend's delegate to the EGP Congress, an outreach officer of Grüne Jugend Halle Saale and has held many positions in the Green party in Germany. She also founded, led and actively participated in several student organizations such as the European Union Study Organization Leiden, WWF Student Organization Leiden and Amnesty International. Furthermore, she volunteered for a refugee organization in Greece and led the city council elections in her hometown in 2024.

Moreover, Lena's political experience proves to us her capabilities to help steer FYEG's political agenda. With her extensive political and technical knowledge we believe that she will be able to steer political processes within FYEG. With her dedication to connect and mobilize members with awareness-raising and education-sharing strategies, her vision is clear. We are convinced that lending an open ear to anyone in her role as EC-member will allow her to contribute to FYEG's journey to become an even stronger political force.

Her focus on educational work, inclusivity and with her valuable perspective as a woman from Eastern Germany we fully believe that she will work for pushing FYEG core values of equality, climate justice and diversity for the entire federation. With her perspective of pushing smaller MO's, we believe that Lena will bring a good and inclusive work dynamic to FYEG. Specifically, her insights into the Beyond Growth Movement will add a valuable perspective to the decision-making body of the Young European Greens.

With her truly international experience - having lived, studied abroad in the Netherlands, Austria, Greece, Sweden, Belgium, and Lebanon, she will represent all members of FYEG perfectly!

With her skills and personal qualities, her knowledge about and contacts within the international green movement, and her past engagement and experiences with FYEG, we, as Grüne Jugend wholeheartedly support Lena's application as a general board member of the FYEG EC.

We recommend you Lena as a general board member of the FYEG EC with the highest regards.



Julia Bernard, International Secretary of Grüne Jugend Germany