

T1 Lena Zehne

Agenda item: 2. Candidates for Treasurer

## Introduction

They stole my f\*cking smile!

With frustration fuelled, I am applying to become part of the EC.

Why?

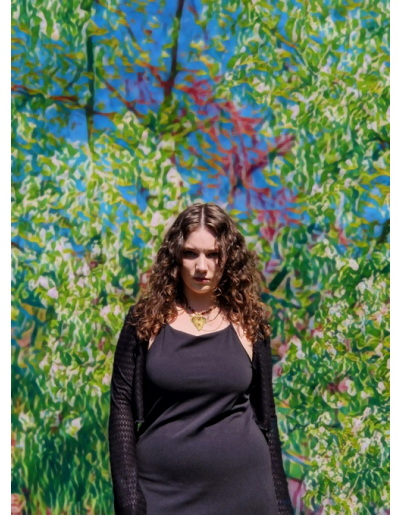
Because you, the ones reading my application, are not responsible for my lost smile. The opposite is the case. You and the countless other young activists are the sole reason I am writing this application.

The ones of you knowing me personally, get it, that the award for the loudest laugh used to go to me. But to my 10-year anniversary with the young greens, I had had enough of the news about \*them\* stealing our future, upholding war, human rights violations, fascism, and the exploitation of mommy nature simply because it is profitable.

I am Lena, 25, from Germany, lived in the Netherlands, Austria, Greece, Lebanon, and Sweden, studied International Relations and Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, and I am someone who has had enough and now it is my time to make a true difference.

xoxo

Lena (she/her)



Member Organisation:  
Grüne Jugend (Germany)

# Letter of Motivation

Lena Zehne (she/her)



Dearest delegates, dearest friends, dearest people who never lose hope,

I want to be your next treasurer of our FYEG family because I will not allow those who sent Katy Perry into space or those who want to ban the Budapest Pride to hinder you from fighting for joy! I want to contribute to the kind of change that brings us closer together, that protects our nature, and that eliminates oppression.

During the global climate protest in 2023, I noticed a sign that said “systematic change by design or by disaster” in the streets of Lund in Sweden. This message resonated so deeply with me that my desire to contribute to “the design” has prevailed with me since. If you ask me, the disaster is already here – planetary boundaries are crossed, the fascists are back/ still in governments, and people are exploited. We do not have any time to lose! So here is my offer: Let me contribute to our design of change, and I will do my part in limiting the disaster.

Why would I want to bring positive change to the position of the treasurer, you may ask? Easy question to answer. My motivation is deeply rooted in my experiences with the Green Party. I have been a member of the Grüne Jugend now for 10 years, and I have had my fair share of sending and receiving reimbursements and participating in and organizing fundraising activities. Within those 10 years, it was more than apparent that money rules everything about party politics. How many people get to be invited, how much reimbursement is fair to adjust for social inequalities, can the BGP find a source of funding to participate in the International Degrowth Conference, and make a difference on-site? Don't worry, I want to take care of those questions!

I am highly motivated to bring my experience – from the fundraising committee of Amnesty International Den Haag, from going through the funding procedure for the educational trip for the International Team of the Grüne Jugend, from planning and executing my campaign for the city council elections, from my job as scientific advisor for a Member of Parliament (where, surprisingly, funds are also limited for events), and from going to countless congresses – to the table. Additionally, I want to give the biggest shout-out to my dad, who indirectly politicized me. Heiko has been treasurer for our local rowing club for as long as I can remember, and do you know what he said to me when I told him the great news that I was now running for treasurer myself? “It will be a great challenge, but an even greater honor.” – And I'll take that! Challenge accepted, my dear friends! Let me be responsible for our budget planning this year!



Besides the proud look in my dad's eyes, FYEG is one of the main reasons I am still an active member of the Green Party. After the decision to agree to CEAS during one of the German party congresses in 2023, many members left. In 2024, the Grüne Jugend lost its national board and most regional boards because the progressive youth could no longer stand this neo-liberal paradigm of the German Green Party board. After the EGP congress in 2024, I, as part of the German delegation, was judged for posing in a group picture that FYEG initiated for solidarity with the people of Palestine by a member of the German Green board. I am sick of those cheap excuses of “we have to act according to our responsibility in government” or “we agree to tighten the European asylum law but with a stomach ache”! But FYEG and its members, my friends, are there to listen to my rants. What FYEG does – giving young people all over Europe a chance to unite and express their frustration – channels my personal anger into pure motivation. And I want to give back! I want to be there for you in return.

Without further ado, I am more than excited to see you all in Paris and bring my offer to the table.

Your Lena

# Anti-Vision Vision Statement

Lena Zehne (she/her)



Dearest people who are angry about the world right now, dearest friends who are struggling to find the energy to keep up with this nonsense of those greedy, corrupt, and right-wing f\*ckers, dearest representatives of FYEG's MOs,

I'm not going to give you a vision, because the world is full of visions already. Visions that sound great until someone asks, "But who's paying for it?"

In a world in which my favorite non-techno band (ABBA) accurately captures the dilemma "money money money - It's the rich men's world", I have an offer for you.

So, here's my anti-vision:

## More digital working groups and workshops

FYEG is full of members with ideas, experiences, and energy. But not everyone wants to apply for a structured position or wait for the next event to be involved. That doesn't mean they aren't ready to contribute, it means we need more spaces where contribution feels natural and accessible. While being part of the FYEG Comms Team, I just got more convinced by the idea to implement more digital workshops and new online working groups, to empower and engage our community while learning from each other. Additionally, the lovely members of the Beyond Growth Platform (BGP), demonstrates every to me during every single general meeting, that working groups can achieve so much.



That's why I want to focus on making the Green Base an even more active space for political organising. I envision new thematic and regional working groups taking shape directly on our Discord server. These could organise online workshops, produce shared campaign tools, or run small-scale educational sessions. Whether those working groups form under the topic of eco-anxiety, rural campaigning, or fighting right-wing rhetoric, our members should be able to plug in and get moving.

More working groups and digital workshops mean more engagement, more capacity building, more education, and ultimately more mobilisation. I want our political planning to reflect that this is not a hobby for us. I want to make FYEG even more accessible and responsive.

## Continuing FYEG's commitment to accessible and inclusive participation

FYEG has already done incredible work in making political participation more accessible and inclusive. I share this commitment fully and want to commit to strengthening it.

Time brings change; And guidelines and structures need to continuously be adapted to new opportunities and challenges. What I want to focus on, as treasurer, is reviewing where our current structures may still place a heavier burden on some members.

While all MOs are equally valued, the realities they face are not the same. Some deal with complex travel logistics, limited internal capacity, or bureaucratic obstacles that others don't. That's why I want to contribute to continuously improving how we assess and respond to these different needs by strengthening our internal capacity to recognise where support is needed and how we can offer it most effectively.

With that I want to make sure our guidelines and financial conditions continue to respond to real situations in a fair and inclusive way. How? With lending everyone an open ear. As your treasurer I want to listen to your concerns and actively react to any worries and comments.

## **Clear and usable financial information for our political planning**

FYEG already has a strong financial structure, thanks to the excellent work of the Office, past FCACs and EC members. I want to contribute to the work and contribute to FYEG's political planning with fresh ideas for increasing our transparency and efficiency.

I want to develop regular financial updates that highlight what funding is available, what's already committed, and which areas can still be activated. These updates will support the EC in making fast and confident decisions about campaigns, events, and strategy, without having to second-guess the numbers. My goal is to ensure that everyone around the table can work with the same level of clarity, no matter how familiar they are with financial documents.

When political planning and financial awareness are connected, we stop asking "Can we afford it?" and instead start planning for when we act.

## **Strengthening continuity and planning for what comes next**

FYEG has always found ways to do more with less, even after less positive election results in European Parliament elections. We have never played it safe while being a thorn in those conservative eyes. We concentrated on what matters, we invested in what kept us going, and we grew stronger through intention. I want to continue this tradition while planning with focus. I want to build on the groundwork laid by past treasurers by contributing to the continuity of our financial planning.

That includes working with the Office and the FCAC to document how and why we make budgetary decisions throughout the year, so that future teams have context and direction when they take over. Concretely, I will also support the ongoing effort to review our internal structure and map out which budget lines are crucial to daily functioning, which ones drive political impact, and which have flexibility if things change. I want to explicitly build on the amazing financial frameworks that made our inclusivity support what it is today — and make sure those systems are not only preserved, but actively carried forward into the next phase. This includes thinking beyond a single mandate: if elected treasurer, I want to help FYEG start preparing financially for the next European elections now. Because if we want to stay a step ahead of those conservative and egoistic f\*ckers, we need to plan for that future today.



The European Union, as our co-funder, but especially every single MO puts trust in us with their money. That trust deserves clarity, care, and accountability. I want to be part of making sure every decision we take now helps FYEG stay ready for what comes next.

## **Staying proactive in the search for new collaborations**

FYEG is right there, when it comes to building powerful collaborations and fundraising links and I want to take that momentum further with my own ideas and direction. As treasurer, I want to actively support this process by dedicating time to identifying new actors who align with our values and might be open to support our work.

This includes smaller grant-giving organisations, foundations working on policies that move us, or partners in grassroots activism. Every additional source of support gives FYEG more space to grow politically.

To give you an example: The Beyond Growth Platform (BGP) managed to become a full member of the International Degrowth Network this year. With that we opened the doors for FYEG to a network of experts outside of Europe and our typical age-range. That kind of connection is essential, since it gives us new reach and brings in perspectives that make us sharper and more future-oriented. These collaborations and outreach activities are the kind of political groundwork I want to expand for FYEG as treasurer. They give us access to new conversations, potential resources, and legitimacy across movements that share our purpose and that's exactly where we need to be.

So, no - this is not a vision. It's a commitment:  
To fund the fight. To budget like we mean it.  
And to never confuse responsibility with playing it safe.  
I'm ready. Let's do this together.




Your Lena





# Curriculum Vitae

Lena Zehne (she/her)

lena.zehne611@gmail.com   
@notcreativeenoughforusername (Discord)   
@lenazehne (TikTok & IG) 

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## Working Experience

Since 10.06.2024

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

- Responsible for the constituency, press and public relations, coordinating appointments, internal and external communication with his party, governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as substantive and scientific input on the topics of environment, agriculture, mobility and disaster control

03.07.2023 – 04.08.2023

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

- Co-responsible for the EU-funded study on food and nutritional safety and risks in relation to environmental aspects

10.04.2023 – 30.06.2023

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

- Coordinator of German language courses for refugees

16.05.2022 – 16.08.2022

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

- Responsible for coordinating appointments and providing input on the MP's topics

10.01.2022 – 30.04.2022

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

- Responsible for event organization, external communication with the members of the organization and content-related work on the topics of European culture, European law and legislation.

01.04.2021 – 15.06.2021

**Intern / Ministry for Science, Energy, Climate Protection and Environment in Saxony-Anhalt, Halle & Magdeburg (Germany)**

- Responsible for coordinating appointments and providing input on the Minister's topics, as well as campaign manager of the Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen state office for the state and federal elections

01.10.2020 – 19.12.2020

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

- Responsible for coordinating appointments and providing input on the MEP's topics

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## Education

September 2022 – June 2024

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

- Masterthesis: „Prosperity in Transition: Unravelling the Synergies of the EU's Post-growth Policies for Socio-Environmental Harmony”
- Boroli Award awarded by the London School of Economics, Hertie School, Sciences Po Paris, Bocconi University, and Central European University for the policy brief “The European Central Bank as a key for reaching European Green Deal targets”
- Selected participant with the Collaboration for Rural Sustainability (CORUSUS), that enabled my contribution to the AUB

August 2018 – January 2022

## **B.Sc. International Relations & Organizations / Leiden University (Den Haag, The Netherlands)**

- Graduation with honours degree
  - Founder of the 'Studentenvereniging van Duitse Studenten Den Haag'
  - Vice-Chairwoman of the European Union Study Association (EUSA)
  - Volunteer at WWF The Hague
  - Founder and president of the Greenpeace student association in The Hague
  - Member of the fundraising and PR team of the Amnesty International Student Association The Hague
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## **Green Activities**

- Coordinator of FYEG's working group 'Beyond Growth Platform (BGP)'
  - Member of FYEG's Comms Team
  - Spokes-person of the old German Greens' working group on Europe and international relations in Saxony-Anhalt
  - Member of the Grüne Jugend Board's task force on International Affairs
  - Lead candidate for the old German Greens in Halle (Saale) during the municipal elections in June 2024
  - Social-Media manager, mental health officer, and member of the press-team of the Grüne Jugend Halle (Saale)
  - Happy Birthday to green-me: In 2025 I am Grüne Jugend Member for 10 years!
  - Delegate for the Grüne Jugend to the European Green Party Congress
  - Delegate for the old German Greens (Saxony-Anhalt) for the European Green Party extended Congress
  - Participant in a couple FYEG events and candidate for the EC elections in 2024
  - Co-coordinator of the Eastern Europe exchange event series "CDN x East Germany" (stay tuned)
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Dear delegates to the General Assembly of FYEG,

hereby we would like to express our deepest support for Lena Zehne applying as treasurer for the FYEG EC for 2025/2026 on behalf of the Grüne Jugend.

We are proud to point out her technical and intangible qualifications for this position after her being member of our family for 10 years now. She contributed to the values of FYEG in various ways, for instance with her coordinatorship of the Beyond Growth Platform (BGP) and her membership of the Comms Team. Furthermore, she dedicated intensively to her regional Grüne Jugend (Halle/ Saale) as part of the Social Media- and Press Team, even when living abroad. Now she is selected member of the national Team on International Affairs and contributes massively to our understanding of FYEG and our other umbrella organizations.

Her commitment and impressive interest in European affairs led her to be elected as delegate to the European Green Party (EGP) Congress during our General Assembly. During the last EGP congress, she demonstrated successfully her authority to voice the concerns of the young greens in Germany over those of our mother party while balancing our commitment to FYEG's values and her role as representative of the German Greens.

Her leadership qualities were ever present when she ran as one of the lead candidates for the city council elections in her hometown. The right is on an ever high, especially in East Germany, and still, she managed to mobilize almost one thousand people from an AfD-led neighborhood to vote for her and the Greens. Amongst other things, this is what convinced the Grüne Jugend Board to give her our nomination to become FYEG's next treasurer.

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.

With her ideas for the role of FYEG's treasurer, including her link to the degrowth movement, the proactive approach against structural disadvantage, and to further engage and mobilize young European greens, 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 MOs, we believe that Lena will bring a good and inclusive work dynamic to FYEG.

All of the above, in particular 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 treasurer of FYEG.



Zeliha Durmus  
International Secretary of Grüne Jugend