

Aislinn Hughes

Proposer: Soesha Sandker (DWARS GroenLinkse Jongeren)

Agenda item: 3. Candidates for Executive Committee

Introduction

Hi! I'm Aislinn Hughes, and I care deeply about activism, sustainability, and making politics more inclusive and accessible. I've been involved in grassroots movements, youth political organizations, and volunteer projects—whether that's organizing climate protests, supporting refugee students, or working with elderly care programs. Alongside my studies in English and International Relations at Leiden University, I've had the chance to intern with the Greens in the Dutch parliament, and currently work as a policy advisor to the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management. I love combining fun and vulnerability in communication—especially through social media—to bring people together around shared causes. I was raised in the Netherlands, but through my upbringing I've had the pleasure of meeting likeminded people across Europe! What motivates me most is being part of communities that want to build a more just and sustainable world - which I hope to do in the EC!



Member Organisation:
GroenLinks/DWARS

AISLINN HUGHES

Dear Member Organisations of the Federation of Young European Greens,

I'm just a girl, standing in front of the MO's, asking them to elect her the Executive Committee of FYEG. This decision comes from a mix of timing, ambition, and—above all—my deep passion for this movement. FYEG has always felt like a perfect match with my core values: an intercultural community, green activism, non-formal learning, and a safe and empowering environment.

Since I became active in FYEG in April 2023, I've contributed to three Prep Teams, been involved in the Beyond Growth platform, the EU24 campaign, and supported the Community Crew. I'm incredibly grateful for the friendships, knowledge, and skills this organisation has given me—and I'm eager to give back to FYEG and its MOs by committing my energy and experience to the Executive Committee.

What drives me even more to take this step is a strong sense of urgency. I don't need to convince you how critical it is for Greens to actively shape the political landscape—especially as we see the far right push agendas rooted in neo-colonialism, dehumanisation of migrants, militarisation, economic protectionism, and the rollback of LGBTQIA+ rights and reproductive freedom. At the same time, public focus on the climate crisis is shrinking—despite the rising toll of extreme weather and environmental injustice. The Green voice must be science-based, progressive, inclusive, and loud. I want to do my part to help shift the narrative back to where it belongs. Importantly, our resistance to these regressive systems can't stop at EU borders. This is the moment to extend our platform to activists beyond the EU—especially those on the frontlines, who need support, solidarity, and space to fight injustice, disinformation, and corruption. If we truly believe in systemic change, we need to organise around shared goals and collective action. There's no 'I' in system change—nor is there a 'u'—but I think you get my point.

My own 'Green Base'

My background combines both formal and informal experiences that I believe align well with the competences required for this position. I've been active in DWARS (the Dutch Young Greens) for nearly four years. During that time, I contributed to writing our political platform, helped organise General Assemblies, served on a local chapter board, ran outreach efforts, and facilitated various activities. A key priority for me throughout my involvement has been securing the role of international politics within our board structure. Together with Srish (former EC member), we successfully passed an amendment reinstating the position of International Chair—a step I'm still proud of.

Professionally, I currently work as a policy advisor to the Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management. My work focuses on creating spatial capacity in the physical environment—for transport, circular economy, water and soil systems—and coordinating the rollout and development of the Environmental Planning Act. Prior to this, I completed an internship with the Green Party in the Dutch Parliament, where I worked closely with the first hijabi MP in the Netherlands. Through that role, I assisted on several parliamentary tasks and attended two court hearings involving individuals who made violent online threats against her. That experience deeply shaped my understanding of politics—not only the risks involved, but also the strength required to persevere. Beyond our formal working relationship, I've learned a great deal from her about resilience, self-care, and uplifting communities. She remains a key inspiration to me—a powerful example of what it means to navigate and challenge a system that wasn't built to serve you.

The skills I bring to the table include policy writing, political strategy, and media communication. Interestingly, my experience within government has only sharpened my activism. Seeing how slow and bureaucratic progress can be has reminded me exactly why we need activists to push the system forward.

How I put my singular braincell to work:

If you haven't met me, you may imagine my working style as a mix of my Dutch and Irish heritage. On the one Dutch hand, I'm pragmatic, direct, and thrive under pressure and deadlines. On the other Irish one, I'm committed to creating enjoyable, welcoming working environments. What I bring to FYEG is a combination of the social and the practical—grounded both in strong organisational ties and a genuine, ongoing effort to carve out my space in FYEG beyond any potential Executive Committee (EC) role.

Due to my experience withing FYEG, I'm deeply familiar with the structures and inner workings of Member Organisations. I understand that each MO has its own dynamics, and that tailored, personal attention can make all the difference. My main driver is simple: I care. I care about the cause we share, the people we serve, and the volunteers and staff who keep us going. I care that MOs function as safe and empowering spaces, and that everyone involved feels supported.

This perspective shapes my priorities—particularly in communication and interpersonal connection, even when distance or language poses challenges. I make it a point to maintain open, reliable communication, to meet needs and expectations, and most importantly, to make people feel heard. I believe this (sometimes excessive) care can strengthen FYEG internally, and help build bridges beyond our current network.

Over the past four years, my involvement in the Green movement—through DWARS and FYEG—has grown steadily. Through committee work, campaigns, volunteering, and my professional journey, I’ve gained the skills and perspective that I believe prepare me for this next step. The timing feels right, and I’m motivated to deepen my commitment, continue learning, and build meaningful connections along the way.

At the end of the day, the people make the movement—and the movement shapes the people. I’m inspired daily by our community, and I hope to inspire others in return. If elected, I would be honoured to contribute to the EC, to FYEG, and to all MOs and individuals involved. I’m ready to take on the responsibilities of this role—with energy, accountability, and the openness to fail, adapt, and improve.

In a movement as bold, resilient, and passionate as ours, I’m confident we’ll continue building communities, sharing stories, and kicking ass. Regardless of the outcome, I’m proud to be here—and I’ll continue contributing with the same spirit, whatever form that takes. I hope this overview has given insight into my values, skills, and experience—and that you see in me what I see in myself: a committed, capable candidate, ready to serve.

**(consensual) hugs and kisses,
Aislinn**



AISLINN HUGHES



* From the streets to the Parliament: Pressuring policy through activism *

We live in a society- jokes aside, it's obvious that European societies are facing both internal and external crises. From the war in Ukraine to rising right-wing extremism, from unaffordable rent to mass disinformation—things are shifting fast, and not always in the right direction. Instead of steady progress, we're witnessing rollbacks in LGBTQIA+ protections, abortion rights, and the treatment of migrants. Now that I've sufficiently scared you, let's turn that fear into fuel.

Heading into this mandate, the pressure to grow our movement and make a tangible impact is higher than ever. But I genuinely believe that diamonds are made under pressure, and now is the time to shape the future we want. If we envision a political reality that protects our planet, defends human rights, and uplifts equality, we can't afford to stay silent. We must be present—not just at protests, but in political spaces too—turning our slogans into concrete demands.

I see activism as the foundation of our power—it's how we build momentum and refine our politics. I want FYEG to remain a bold, visible presence in both grassroots movements and institutional arenas. We must keep up the pressure until politics works for society, not against it. Until children can grow up with equal rights, regardless of where or how they're born. Until climate justice means social justice. Until Europe is a place where freedom and fairness are non-negotiable.

At the heart of my motivation is a deep care for social policy—especially when it comes to issues like affordable housing, and ensuring that people have equal opportunities whether they grow up in a busy metropolis or a small rural town. Access to basic rights and resources shouldn't be determined by your postcode, and that's a battle I'm ready to take on politically.

The P-word: Make Policy Sexy Again

Let's be honest—policy doesn't sound glamorous. You might picture an old grey bureaucrat hunched over a keyboard. And to some extent, that's real. But here's the twist: policy is our power move.





Policy is one of the most effective tools we have as political youth. It's how we speak the language of institutions, gain credibility, and claim our seat at the table. When we take to the streets or organise events, we're not just protesting—we're shaping ideas. Ideas don't just belong on protest signs — they can and should evolve into real, transformative policy. That's how we influence our mother parties and help shift the entire political spectrum in a more progressive direction. So yes, let's make policy sexy again — because it's not just about what we believe, it's about how we translate those beliefs into action that makes change real.

Beyond impact, policy is also a powerful learning tool. It helps members understand how politics functions, develop concrete skills, and prepare for future leadership - which is also why I really want to look into the efficacy and structure behind Prep Teams, and Working Groups. Since Greens often ahead of the curve on major issues — like climate justice, reproductive rights, or education — our policy work can directly influence the broader political conversation and therefore be part of the core of our events: what action is someone inspired to take after coming home from a FYEG event? Put simply: by shaping positions through our campaigns and events, we empower our MOs and help push our mother parties toward meaningful action.

Norms and Values Don't Stop at Borders: International Solidarity

The crises in Ukraine and Gaza have made it painfully clear: the challenges we face are symptoms of larger, systemic issues — with modern colonialism and failing international institutions as key culprits. The fact that actors like Russia and Israel are allowed to commit atrocities without meaningful consequences shows just how broken our current systems are. As Greens, we must be honest: colonialism in all its forms is something we must actively resist.

But we also know that in a movement as broad as FYEG, with its diverse set of Member Organizations, reaching consensus is not always easy. These are emotionally charged, historically complex issues. They require us to have hard conversations — even if they're uncomfortable or lead to tension. Still, I believe that short-term discomfort is worth it for long-term unity. Because in the end, we agree on more than we disagree on. When we create space for these conversations — rooted in respect, honesty, and empathy — we build a movement that is more resilient, more inclusive, and better positioned to fight for justice. Internal solidarity is a prerequisite for external credibility. The stronger and more united we are within FYEG, the more powerful our message becomes beyond it.





Community, Ideology, Communication: Call a Spade a Spade – and Then Improve

Who we represent, and how we present ourselves, determines who feels welcome in our spaces. FYEG still struggles to reflect the full diversity of the communities we claim to fight for. That's a problem – because we can't build a future for everyone without hearing from everyone.

If we want our movement to be grounded in true inclusivity, we need diverse voices helping to shape our ideology and direction. This starts with making our spaces genuinely accessible – physically, socially, and emotionally. FYEG must be a place where everyone, regardless of background, feels safe and empowered to participate. That means practicing transparent and honest communication, both internally and through our public platforms. It also means partnering with organizations that share our values, co-creating campaigns that reflect the stories and struggles of marginalised groups, and reaching out to communities who feel distant from the Brussels Bubble.

I especially want to help strengthen the role of MOs in Southern and Central-Eastern Europe, and foster new connections with youth organisations in the MENA region. True solidarity is about showing up, not just listening. But in order for people to speak, they need to feel safe enough to be heard. That trust – that sense of belonging – is something I care deeply about building within FYEG.

TLDR for my fellow brainrots:

- **I want to strengthen the connection between our activism into policy to pressure the systems from both sides**
- **I want to make sure there's a clear takeaway from events, trainings and working groups: how do we inspire participants to take action after an FYEG event?**
- **I want to make sure that alumni, speakers, and outputs from events are kept in the loop, and used to further the quality of our work.**
- **I want to make sure we pay attention to 'secured rights' - we can't let the far right silently chip away at trans rights, abortion rights, and immigrant rights.**
- **I want to continuously have the 'tough conversations' so we can focus on what we DO agree on as a movement.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this braindump! I hope it will have convinced you to give me the chance to serve as EC member, and give back to FYEG all that FYEG has given me.

Best,
Aislinn





Aislinn Hughes

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EXPERIENCE

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management Policy Officer for Physical Living Environment and Environment Act

March 2024 – Present

- Providing advice to the Minister and State Secretary, Secretary-General, and Director-General of the ministry regarding the Spatial Planning Memorandum and the NOVEX area approach.
- Policy areas of expertise: water, soil, environment, mobility and spatial planning.

GroenLinks, House of Representatives Faction

Jan 2023 – Nov 2023

- *Policy Intern* – Responsible for the portfolios of circular economy, climate, and energy: preparing parliamentary questions, debates, roundtable discussions, lobbying meetings, and legislative initiatives. **MP: Kauthar Bouchallikht**
- *Back Office Staff for Parliamentary Elections* – Contact with undecided voters, organizing 4 campaign activities, including the congress at Ahoy Rotterdam.

EU&U, Social Media Movement for EU Politics

Jan 2022 – Present

- Social Media Team Member – Creating content for the Instagram (reach 32k) and TikTok (reach 6k) accounts.
- Partnerships Coordinator – Applying for funding for the EU24 campaign: project budget €32k.

Study Abroad Office, Leiden University

Oct 2023 – Feb 2025

- Student Assistant – Logistical support and website maintenance for the exchange program for Bachelor students.
- Organising partner events between Universities and study programs.

EDUCATION

Propaedeutic Diploma: Teacher of English (Secondary Education)

- **Utrecht University of Applied Sciences | 2018–2019**

BA English Language and Culture (cum laude)

- **Leiden University | 2019–2022**
 - Minor in Global Affairs (grade: 8.2), Honours Programme 'Humanities Lab'
 - Essay prize "EU in Practice"
 - Thesis: "The Changing Use of Nationalism, Identity and Trauma in Irish Literature of the Great War" (grade: 8.9)

MA International Relations: Global Conflict in the Modern Era

- **Leiden University | 2022–2024**
 - Thesis: "Graffiti Scrawls: 'This is not your country': Belfast Murals as Modern Ideological Battlefields"
 - Honours Track: Leiden Leadership Programme – corporate sustainability consultancy project at Arcadis.
- **Summer Schools**
 - Research on Greek Dynamic Heritage, Netherlands Institute Athens | 2022
 - Crisis of Democracy – the State of Europe, EUROPAEUM | 2023

COMMITTEE WORK

DWARS, GroenLinks Youth Organization

- Board Member Leiden-Haaglanden Chapter: Promotion and Member Engagement – Responsible for contact with 700+ members and managing social media channels.
- Various committees: Congress Committee, Search Committees, DIRT, Campaign Committee, Program Committee, Activities Committee

Federation of Young European Greens

- Various committees: Summercamp, Influenceelections, EU24 Campaign, COP Baku Event, Community Crew

ISSA, MA International Relations Study Association

- Board Member 'Social Chair' – Organized 12 networking and educational events for ~150 students

De Jonge Ambtenaar

- Board Member 'sustainability' – Organising events for young policy advisors across all levels of Dutch government, with a focus on applying sustainable practices into policy writing.

SKILLS

Event Organization

Social Media Management

Financial Administration

Policy Development

Fundraising

Graphic Design

Stakeholder Management

Analytical Research

CRM Systems

Political Strategy Development

Digital Marketing

Data Analysis

VOLUNTEERING

- **Researcher, LGBTQIA+ Library** – Developed educational material about the lives of senior LGBTQ+ individuals for vocational training programs in Healthcare and Welfare.
- **Local Team, Milieudefensie** – Organized protest actions.
- **Student Buddy, Senior & Student** – Weekly visits to elderly living alone.
- **Buddy, InCLUision Leiden** – Supported refugee students with learning Dutch, finding housing, and job seeking.
- **Palliative Care Volunteer, Alrijne Hospital** – Supported patients declared terminally ill.
- **Volunteer, European Solidarity Corps** – Available for projects across various EU member states, such as camps and trainings.
- **SPRNT Program, National Youth Council** – Attended self-development trainings and contributed to political strategy “Vote for a Young Person.”
- **Volunteer, Refugee Council Netherlands** – Supported refugees at the Municipality of Leiden.

LANGUAGES

- **C2:** English, Dutch
- **B1:** French, German, Gaeilge, Icelandic

The Hague, The Netherlands, 22 April 2025

Letter of Support for Aislinn Hughes, Candidate Executive Committee Member

Dear fellow International Secretaries and delegates,

DWARS, GroenLinkse Jongeren, fully endorses the candidacy of Aislinn Hughes as candidate for the Executive Committee of the Federation of Young European Greens.

Aislinn has been a well-known and highly valued member of both DWARS and FYEG for quite some time. At this point, it might be easier to list the activities Aislinn hasn't taken part in than those she has. She has made a tremendous impact on the political direction of DWARS through her involvement in developing and drafting the renewed political programme, as well as in her role as political advisor on international affairs. In addition, she served on the candidacy committee, which interviews and advises the General Assembly on suitable candidates for the Executive Committee. She served on a local chapter board, organised multiple General Assemblies, and facilitated too many activities to mention — all while remaining actively involved in FYEG. Aislinn has consistently been one of FYEG's strongest supporters and advocates within DWARS.

Aislinn is incredibly dependable. Whenever we need someone remains committed when it's hard, brings a voice of reason, thinks outside the box, and can be counted on without hesitation, she is the first person who comes to mind. Aislinn is almost always the most selfless person in the room and rarely seeks the spotlight — one of her qualities that makes her exceptional to work with. She is driven, guided by strong values, and consistently stands up for what she believes in.

Aislinn is running for member of the Executive Committee since she feels that now, more than ever, meaningful change is urgently needed. She is deeply passionate about building movements not only within Europe, but also beyond its borders. Her activism spans a broad range of issues, including the fight against climate change, the defence of LGBTIQ+ rights, the protection of reproductive freedoms, resistance to the dehumanisation of migrants and the pursuit of decolonisation.

With her experience in DWARS, FYEG, all her other work and her dedication to the green movement we think Aislinn is extremely qualified for this position and are proud to support her candidacy.

In green solidarity,

Soesha Sandker
International Secretary of DWARS, GroenLinkse Jongeren