

**european liberal youth**  
rue d'idalie 11 6th floor PO box 2  
1050 brussels, belgium  
+32.484.644.068  
office@lymec.eu



www.lymec.eu  
f: /EuropeanLiberalYouthLYMEC  
t: @LYMEC  
app: lymec.mobapp.at  
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# Secretary General's Report

**October 2017 – April 2018**

Dear delegates, members, young liberals,

I'm hereby presenting you my last Secretary General report for this mandate. As you all hopefully know, the Bureau has unanimously decided to extend my contract for another mandate, but it is up to the Congress to approve that and I am not one to celebrate anything on beforehand. I am obviously hoping for your support, in order to provide some continuity when the Bureau changes.

As my previous report, this too is divided into three parts: Administration, events and policy and outreach. I hope this is a comprehensible format, providing you with the best possible overview.

## Administration

The time since we last met at the Congress in Sofia has for my part mainly evolved around writing applications and reports. The weeks after the ALDE Congress my time was mainly devoted to the Erasmus+ application in order to secure the European Commission grant for the upcoming three-year period. We applied for a renewed multiannual framework partnership, meaning the application this time was not only for the upcoming year, but we also provided a plan for the three-year period 2018-20.

It was quite challenging creating a plan that will outlive the current leadership, and restrain the incoming one, keeping it detailed enough for the Commission to be content and broad enough not to tie the hands of the incoming Bureau too much and still leave them some room for manoeuvre.

With input from mainly the President and Vice President we however managed to put together a plan that should be just that. I also wrote a detailed plan for 2018, mainly using the outline of the already approved ELF project plan as that one sets the pace for the whole year. When writing this report, we still have not received any information on whether the applications were accepted or not, but they should be available in March so hopefully I can report about the outcome at congress.

The last months of 2017 also meant that the final reports and reimbursement requests had to be compiled for ELF and ALDE Group, which kept me busy until the very last days before Christmas. Especially the hunt for people's boarding cards was exhaustive, and I do hope you all take the deadlines for sending in travel reimbursement requests seriously because leaving it to the last minute creates a lot of unnecessary stress for everyone involved.

The new year started with yet another recruitment process, as the assistant is employed under an internship scheme that only allows us to employ an intern for maximum 6 months. While the internship is an amazing learning opportunity that we are happy to offer to as many young people as possible, it is not very sustainable to have 50% of the secretariat change every 6 months. I repeat my comment from my last report regarding the fact that we really need to investigate ways of engaging

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one more person in the office, also because we are at the very limits of what we can manage on only 2 people.

The beginning of the year is also the time for closing the books of the previous year and conducting both the internal and external audit. You can read more about the audits in the respective reports, I just want to take this opportunity to thank the Treasurer for all his help and taking the time to come to both audits, and the internal auditors for a thorough job.

The beginning of the year is also the time for the annual IMS elections, where the individual members elect the three people who will represent them as congress delegates with voting rights for the year. The elections are organised by the office and take place online for three days. My congratulations once again to Benjamin Fievét, Spyridon Monastiriótis and Marina Sedlo for their election and to all candidates for good campaigns and interesting discussions ahead of the vote.

The first event of the year, a workshop on European Electoral Systems, took place in mid-February in Zagreb, Croatia. Despite some flight delays and re-routings due to bad weather all participants and organisers made it to Zagreb in the end and the event was received very well by the participants. I want to underline that we simply could not have done this event without the logistical support of the International Educational Center and Goran Neralic in particular.

The end of February is always the deadline to submit the Erasmus+ grant report to the European Commission (DG EAC), and that is also quite a challenge as both the written reporting and the gathering and submitting of signature lists, payslips, proofs of payment, minutes, agendas etc. is quite time consuming. After finishing the Erasmus report my main tasks have been preparing the congress and wrapping up the reporting for the Zagreb event.

## Events

As I've said before, the events are the more visible part of what we're doing as an organisation. We try to assess all events we're doing both by oral feedback at the end of the events as well as by sending out satisfactory surveys after the events, and we try to take the feedback from previous events into consideration when planning future ones. Please also feel free to approach the office directly with any feedback or ideas, but keep in mind that due to our partners' project proposal deadlines the events for the following year have to be more or less decided upon already in June/July.

While preparing the agenda for this upcoming congress I went through documents from previous congresses and realised while reading the SG report from 2013 just how much the number and scope of events we do has increased in only a few years. Going from 5 events per year (including congresses) to closer to a dozen without any changes in the human resources is quite extraordinary.

As for which events we have managed since the last congress, there are quite a few! Just a few days after returning from the congress in Sofia we organised the book launch of the publication *the New Europeans* in Brussels, with Angelika Mlinar MEP, two authors and a representative from the NGO Refugee Tandem as panellists discussing the themes of the book.

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In the beginning of November, it was finally time for the kick-off event for our own Mentorship Programme “Building the Best”. The programme pairs up promising young liberals with the ambition to run in elections with an experienced mentor (MEP, MP, former minister...). The event was organised in Brussels with the kind logistical support of Studiecentrum Albert Maertens and Jong VLD.

The first weekend in December LYMEC rocked the ALDE Party Congress – and I really mean rocked it. You can read more in detail about all our successes in the congress report and the article on our website, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lena for guiding the delegation and the entire delegation for their hard work. It is a pleasure overseeing the work of such a dedicated delegation and I’m really proud of you!

The last event for 2017 was the IMS Training Days that we organised at the office in Brussels the weekend after the ALDE Congress. We gathered individual members from all over Europe for a two-day capacity building in skills they themselves had indicated as important to develop.

The first event of 2018 was the already mentioned event in Zagreb.

#### Policy and Outreach

The most important thing I’ve been working on since the past congress is the joint statement of political party youth organisations (PPYO) on the youth priorities for the 2019 elections. This exercise was initiated last summer and after some negotiating back and forth we agreed upon a final text in late October. The text basically recognises some topics all PPYOs agree are important for young people in Europe: Democracy that engages youth (the Spitzenkandidaten process, transnational lists, citizenship education with a European dimension etc.), youth at the centre of political parties (young candidates in electable positions on the party lists, youth perspective in campaigns and manifestos, more young MEPs in strategic positions), a sustainable future for Europe (implementation of the 2030 Agenda, fighting climate change, energy transition) and real freedom of movement (Erasmus+ funding, reducing barriers for free movement, geo-blocking etc.). The topics and text were negotiated by secretary generals, policy officers and presidents during our bi-monthly PPYO meetings at the European Youth Forum and communicated jointly on our respective websites and social media and through an op-ed in EURACTIV in February.

The very invisible but nonetheless important part of LYMEC’s policy work is the contact we have with MEPs and the ALDE Group. I am very proud to tell you that during the past year we have been contacted more than ever before by both MEPs and policy advisors interested in LYMEC’s input on different files. What used to be quite one-sided communication where we push our policies towards the MEPs have now become a genuine dialogue and that is something worth noticing. This is the result of several years of continuously more professional advocacy both in bilateral meetings as well as ALDE Bureau meetings, Councils and Congresses, but I also believe that the Setting the Agenda for EU campaign has helped raise our profile within the Group.

I apologise for the somewhat lengthy report but hope you will now have an insight into what has preoccupied the office the past six months. I would like to end this report by thanking my previous

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assistant, Rick Brans, and current one, Chris Giapitzis-Papandreou, without whom I'd been completely overwhelmed in the office. This organisation is very lucky to have so engaged and skilful interns! It was/is a pleasure working with you and I hope you also have some fun and not just work hard. A very big thank you to the Bureau for your support and encouragement, but most of all for your engagement. Not many youth organisations have so dedicated people volunteering. I also want to thank the previous and current IMS delegates who I have the pleasure of working with, as well as the internal auditors.

But most of all and beyond all possibilities of fitting it into a short thank you note I want to express my enormous gratitude towards our outgoing president, Sissel. You've been the solid rock; the guiding star and the political strategist these past two years and we have both grown a lot during this mandate. Thanks for everything and all the best in whatever you may take upon yourself after LYMEC.

Liberal regards,  
 Danica

#### Events visited

Dates	Place	Event / Purpose	Organisation(s)
<b>11 October 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Meeting with politicians from the Western Balkans programme of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs	NDI, ALDE Party
<b>12-13 October 2017</b>	Sofia <b>Bulgaria</b>	Pre-congress seminar "Transatlantic Partnerships"	ELF, LYMEC, LIF
<b>13-15 October 2017</b>	Sofia <b>Bulgaria</b>	LYMEC Autumn Congress	LYMEC, ALDE Party, ALDE Group
<b>15 October 2017</b>	Sofia <b>Bulgaria</b>	Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
<b>18 October 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Book Launch "the New Europeans"	ELF, LYMEC
<b>23 October 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Jeunes MR Social Media Training	Jeunes MR, ALDE Party
<b>27 October 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Erasmus+ Information Day	European Youth Forum, DG EAC
<b>8 November 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Meeting with Bright Armenia president and	EuFOA

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		European Friends of Armenia	
<b>10-11 November 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	ELF and LYMEC seminar "Building the Best"	ELF, LYMEC
<b>11 November 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
<b>22 November 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	SAAB Annual Dinner Seminar "Innovation in EU Defence"	SAAB
<b>29 November 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Women of Europe Awards Ceremony	European Women's Lobby, European Movement International, YFJ
<b>1-3 December 2017</b>	Amsterdam <b>Netherlands</b>	ALDE Party Congress	ALDE Party
<b>3 December 2017</b>	Amsterdam <b>Netherlands</b>	Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
<b>8-10 December 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	IMS Training Days	LYMEC, ALDE Group
<b>18 December 2017</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	United European Federalists Christmas Reception	UEF
<b>9 January 2018</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	ALDE Group New Year's Reception	ALDE Group
<b>10 February 2018</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Internal Audit	LYMEC
<b>10 February 2018</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	Jong VLD New Year's Reception	Jong VLD
<b>16-18 February 2018</b>	Zagreb <b>Croatia</b>	LYMEC and ELF workshop "Vote, vote, vote: Exploring European Electoral Systems"	LYMEC, ELF, IEC
<b>18 February 2018</b>	Zagreb <b>Croatia</b>	Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
<b>19-20 March 2018</b>	Brussels <b>Belgium</b>	European Government Business Relations Council ("Ad Hoc Council") Brussels Meeting	Ad Hoc Council

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#### Visits to the LYMEC office

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event / Purpose</b>	<b>Organisation(s)</b>
<b>18 October 2017</b>	Study trip to Brussels for debate winners	Svensk Ungdom
<b>31 October 2017</b>	Study trip to Brussels for members	Ógra Fianna Fáil
<b>29 November 2017</b>	Study trip to Brussels for members	LUF
<b>22 March 2018</b>	Nordic Center Youth EU study trip	NCF
<b>28 March 2018</b>	European Union study trip	Dutch Government Management students