

23.01.2020

Dear LYMEC Bureau,

We are writing this letter on behalf of Estonian Reform Party Youth with the request for a membership fee reduction.

ERP Y is a liberal political youth organisation in Estonia. In late 2016, our mother party, the Reform Party, was ousted from the government and the seat of the prime minister. Although the Reform Party won the parliamentary elections in March of 2019 as well, the resurgence of extreme right wing nationalism has shifted the course of some of the parliamentary parties. Reform Party is giving an effort to fight daily for the course of liberal politics (and liberal democracy overall) in Estonia. This reflects mainly in strongly opposing the views by which parties in the government list their own members for public positions, heads of state agencies (e.g. Police and Border Guard Board) are attempted to be fired, and minorities such as those who identify themselves as members of the LGBT+ community, different nationalities, and even disabled people are being publicly mocked by ministers in the government.

Due to all this, the focus of the party has changed to regaining the seat in the government and so has the allocation of funds been rethought. ERP Y is fully dependent on the mother party, Estonia does not have any permanent funding for political youth organisations - the funding relies on project-based requests and the support of the mother party. We as well do not have any employees and the General Secretary is employed by the party, also taking tasks related to such work. At this point we cannot form a legal body to support our efforts and goals as this would mean additional costs for bookkeeping, legal issues etc and a shift to project-based funding.

The daily work of ERP Y consists of activating our members for the fight of our ideals. We are represented in local youth councils, municipal councils, but also the parliament as our previous Chairman became a Member of the Parliament in 2019. We stand strong representing our values in debates and opinion articles published by our members.

ERP Y remains committed to the idea of a bigger Europe. Therefore we have made big efforts to participate in as many LYMEC events as possible, including forming a Baltic and as well an Eastern European partnership network. In the past we have for example provided our insights and expertise in campaigning and outdoor campaigning. Together with the Academy of Liberalism we are working to provide a new generation of Estonian youth with liberal ideas and knowledge of campaigning in order to achieve a high number of young liberal-minded candidates in the upcoming municipal elections in 2021. This is done with

organising for the 3rd time a Youth Academy, which meets in every couple of months to provide the participants with the opportunity to hear valuable knowledge from independent political analysts and consultants, but also speakers from ALDE and Reform Party.

We would kindly like to present current information on the following requested details regarding the state of ERPY:

- The main office of our organisation is at the party headquarters and there is no definite size. The organisation is run by the Chairman, a board of 8 people, and the General Secretary who is supported by a Bureau consisting of 4 positions.
- We do not have any permanent staff, the General Secretary is employed by the party and works as well on other party-based projects.
- We do not have any direct permanent state funding. The Reform Party receives state funding, but also is reliant on membership fees and donations of supporters.
- We do not have any membership fees as it would limit the number of people who would like to be a part of the organisation, most of our members are students themselves.
- Our international work is limited to the funding received from the party and contributions made by individual members and relevant position holders. Most LYMEC-related trips are directly funded by members themselves.
- Our finances are directly dependent on the party, which has just come out of a rough financial situation by direct efforts from the new leadership.
- The banking system in Estonia is overall fine, but as we are not a separate legal entity, we do not hold any bank accounts of our own.

Taking into account the poor financial situation we are in, we would like to request a membership fee reduction to 200 euros for the calendar years of 2020 and 2021. The request for a membership fee reduction is made in order to avoid any delays in payments or accumulation of possible debt towards LYMEC. We are very eager to work with international partners and organisations and would feel extremely ashamed when not making a fair financial contribution to the overall organisation.

Should you have any further questions or comments, we are more than delighted to provide additional information.

Yours sincerely

Karl Olaf Loog
Secretary General
Estonian Reform Party Youth

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