

Bureau Member Report

Pau Castellví Canet, Capacity Building and Coordination Officer
Friday, 6th of March, 2020

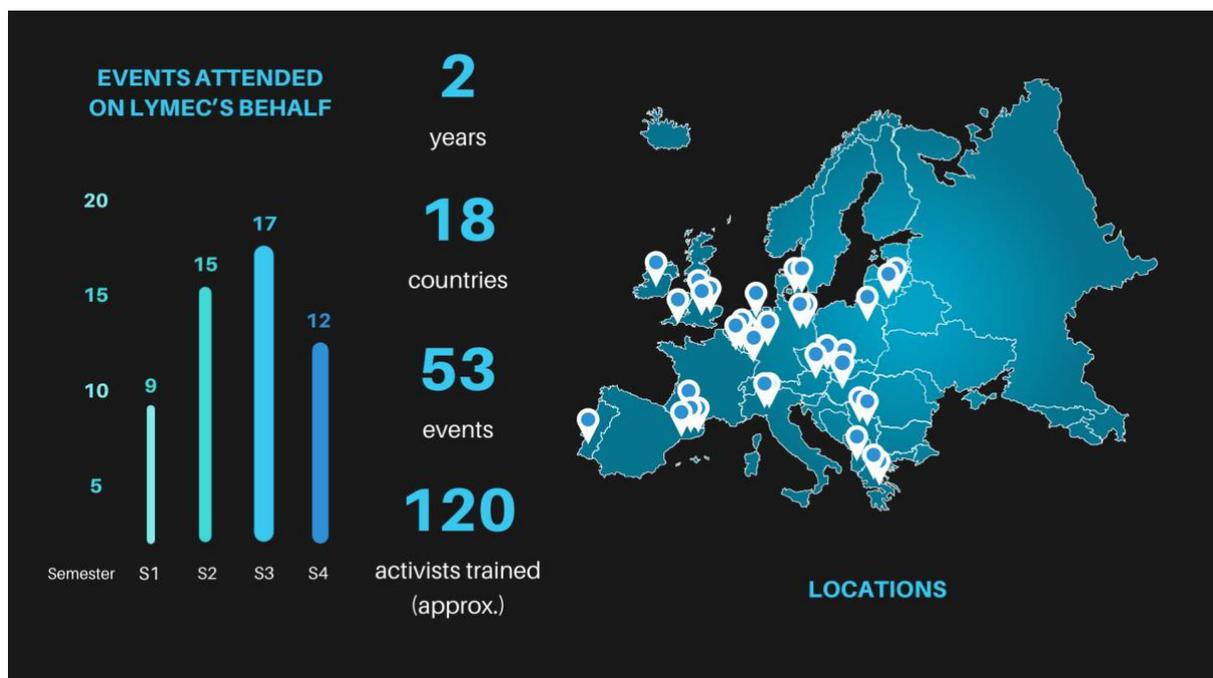
Dear delegates,

Thank you very much for taking the time to read through my report. This one is a special report as it is the last one of this 2018-2020 mandate, marking an end to my time as a Bureau Member for this organisation.

Let me thus start by thanking everyone who entrusted me with the mission to help lead LYMEC at a very vital time for Europe and liberalism. It has been one of the greatest honours of my life. I regret not having been able to deliver on all of my electoral objectives for this mandate (those of you running for the Bureau in the upcoming Congress will find that to be an almost impossible task), but I am very proud of all the work that has been done in the last couple of years by all of us at LYMEC.

In this report, I will try to shed light on where we are at the moment in the area of capacity building and coordination, as well as on a number of lessons learned I would recommend Congress and the next Bureau to bear in mind in the near future. At the end, I am also attaching the table of events attended this last semester, as is conventional for Bureau Member reports.

Brief statistical summary of my activity as a Bureau Member



** This excludes online LYMEC Bureau meetings, conference calls with MOs and ordinary events by the MO I am affiliated with (JNC).*

Capacity building and training

As the leading liberal political youth in Europe, LYMEC's main way to translate good will into reality-changing activity is training. Making sure all sides of our movement get support, either from other MOs, experts or the organisation directly, is essential for the change we want to promote. Delivering training allows us to help build capacity for liberalism all over the continent, strengthening current and future youth leaders. All of our events are also designed to generate a multiplier effect; our aim is not only to contribute to participants' learning, but also to empower them to influence others in their own local and national contexts.

Throughout this 2-year mandate, different members of our team have been key to organising and delivering over 25 different training events: 19 scheduled events plus multiple trainings tailored to specific needs by MOs, often using ordinary Bureau visits to deliver in-person training. Our efforts, especially the Secretariat's and the Treasurer's, have also been invested into securing support for even more events in the upcoming years; from ELF, Erasmus+, FNF, ALDE, [new!] the Council of Europe and others. It has been a team effort.

As the Bureau Member in charge of capacity building, I have monitored all of our training events closely. In LYMEC, the task of coordinating events has traditionally been rotational, falling to different Bureau Members for each event. So, my job was not policing everyone else, but rather ensuring that trainings had the necessary support for success, in the framework of our goals. As a consequence, I often had to jump in to take up (or take over) tasks for events under short time frames if requirements or standards were not being met.

The biggest heads up I would give this Bureau on this front, based on my responsibility, is the creation of the Young Changemakers Academy (YCA) and the success securing further funding for 2021. My greatest disappointment in this area relates to the Policy Summer School that was supposed to happen the summer of 2019, in collaboration with FNF. Following, I will elaborate on these and others considerations.

Young Changemakers Academy

The YCA of 2019 was composed of three different events; two ELF events and one FNF event. Ten members of LYMEC MOs were selected and trained in a number of skills and fields. The events were designed as an introduction to different political, PR and marketing skills. All training was hands-on. All trainees had in common that they had all been selected on a matter of need of the desired learning outcomes.

This allowed us to strengthen political activists who really needed the support. Many ended up using these skills in political campaigns. We received very positive feedback, overall.

Despite all of this, I am afraid that this event may be put be in jeopardy in future years if future Bureaus do not work towards securing alternative funding in case the increasingly restrictive European Parliament funding regulations imposed on European party foundations impeded its funding by ELF (foundation associated with ALDE Party). These restrictions are designed to prevent foundations from funding political candidates' campaigns, among others. The YCA isn't a form of campaign aid, we all know this, but fear of these restrictions and potential fines is something we should be mindful of.

More funding, more events

As will be indicated in the financial report, we are expecting further funding in the upcoming year. As a cautionary note to future bureau members: more funding does not automatically mean more discretion by the Bureau on how to spend it, as mostly all events have to be agreed months or a year in advance with the sponsoring organisation.

Nevertheless, it will mean more opportunities for training and capacity building. My recommendation to future bureaus is to prioritise skills over content, even more than we have done in the past. ELF already spends over €1M on events targeting specific issues. What really makes a difference is equipping our members with tools allowing them to increase their capacity and improve areas of their organisations.

E-learning platform

In this mandate, we began investing in an e-learning tool. This was one of my colleague Deimante Rimkutė's responsibilities. The platform in use is called *ClickMeeting* and it does not completely fit our needs, as we have been able to assess in the pilot phase we launched at the beginning of 2019. For this reason, we have started to liaise with the European Liberal Forum (ELF) and IDI (foundation associated to D66) to influence the development of an ELF-funded e-learning platform. The next Bureau will be transitioned into this joint project.

Engagement of members

At the outset of this mandate, it became clear to me that my ideas to further improve membership engagement (especially my *policy groups* idea) were not shared by LYMEC leadership. I can only hope this changes in the future, as two years later I still believe engagement represents one of our main opportunities for improvement. As a movement with 60 different MOs, encompassing up to 100,000 different young activists all over Europe, I strongly believe we *must* continue to strive to engage as many of them as possible in our activity. Not doing so is a waste of talent that I believe we should not be willing to afford. I am not saying it is going to be easy. In fact, our experience with working groups shows just how difficult it is to keep WG participants involved. But try we must.

Coordination

I am happy to confirm that after over a year of working on this, we have managed to secure the use of ALDE's Nation Builder license, for LYMEC. Details are being finalised but in short this will bring a number of great improvements to our database systems; key to the administration of the IMS and our relationship with MOs and other stakeholders.

Regional responsibilities

As the Bureau Member in charge of the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Andorra, I have a diverse set of situations under my purview. The MOs that are doing best within this spectrum are Ógra Fianna Fáil (R. of Ireland), Young Liberals (UK) and Joves Liberals d'Andorra (JLA). In the past couple of years, Youth Alliance (Northern Ireland) has also been increasingly becoming more involved in our activities. Considering they had not been involved for a number of years before the start of the mandate, I consider this to be one of the successes of this Bureau in my regional area.

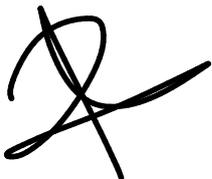
Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of Gibraltar Liberal Youth (GLY). We tried to resume contact with them up to three different times during the mandate, each encompassing multiple message attempts. In one occasion we managed to get in touch with some success with the help of the Young Liberals in the UK. Unfortunately, however, we have not managed to secure their active participation. This is mainly due to their own unstable situation and the prolonged absence of an international officer in their ranks.

A more political LYMEC

Approaching the end of this reflection, I would like to use this opportunity to encourage the next LYMEC Bureau to be courageous. And I do not mean it as a critique to the current Bureau, but rather as a recommendation for the future based on my experience as a Bureau Member. Not all political positions taken by the organisation need to emerge from Congresses directly; the Bureau's role is also to adopt positions ad hoc for the organisation, on key external events, always —of course— based on liberal principles and in the spirit of previous decisions by our congresses. Caution is an asset in politics but it is easily overrated. We are a liberal youth; by youth, for youth. Strategic caution should always be tempered by courage. We cannot fight the enemies of freedom through caution only, as caution will do nothing to denounce and remedy the severe violations occurring recurrently in Russia, Hungary, Poland, Italy or Spain, among others. I wish for LYMEC to have a Bureau that is not afraid of releasing statements on issues challenging the values we hold most dear. This is, in my opinion, what it means to be a leading organisation.

That said; mindful that I could only share so much in this report, let me encourage you to get in touch with me should you have any questions. You may do so at pau@lymec.eu.

With best wishes,



Pau Castellví Canet

Main events attended (from November 2019)

Dates	Place	Event/purpose	Organisation(s)
8-10 November 2019	London, UK	LYMEC Fall Congress	LYMEC
15-17 November 2019	Portlaoise, Republic of Ireland	Attendance and speech at ÓFF Congress	Ógra Fianna Fáil
22-24 November 2019	Lisbon, Portugal	Supported organisation of event (could not attend on the ground due to illness)	LYMEC IMS
25 January 2020	Solsona, Catalonia	JNC National Council	JNC
31 January 2020 - 2 February 2020	Brussels, Belgium	In-person Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
6 – 8 March 2020	Luxembourg	ELF book event “Values First”	ELF, LYMEC
8 March 2020	Luxembourg	LYMEC in-person Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
21-22 March 2020	Barcelona, Catalonia	40-year celebration	JNC
27 – 29 March 2020	The Hague, The Netherlands	European Trainers’ Academy	ELF
3-5 April 2020	Skopje, North Macedonia	LYMEC Spring Congress	LYMEC
5 April 2020	Skopje, North Macedonia	LYMEC transition Bureau Meeting	LYMEC
29 – 30 May 2020	Strasbourg, France	LYMEC-ELF delegation at the European Youth Event (EYE)	ELF, LYMEC