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# YEPPER

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# Editorial

## Georgia's Fight for Freedom: EU aspirations and the battle for democracy

On October 26, Georgia witnessed a historic yet deeply troubling election, a moment that called its people to reflect profoundly. This pivotal event followed a period of societal unrest marked by the controversial introduction of the Foreign Agents Law, commonly referred to as the "Russian Law," and harsh crackdowns on protests. These tumultuous years left Georgian society yearning for renewal, with many, especially the youth, hopeful for a new chapter in the nation's story. Yet, these hopes were dashed by the actions of oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, who derailed aspirations for change at this critical juncture.

The ruling Georgian Dream party blatantly tampered with the election results, exposing their lack of integrity for all to see. In a subsequent and shocking move, de facto premier Irakli Kobakhidze announced a halt to Georgia's European integration process, rejecting financial aid and further isolating the nation. This decision struck a devastating blow, particularly to the younger generation, whose dreams and future now seemed uncertain.

The youth responded swiftly and resolutely. Thousands took to the streets, peacefully voicing their outrage at what they saw as a betrayal of their nation's democratic

values. In mere days, the protests swelled to between 100,000 and 200,000 participants, an inspiring demonstration of unity and resolve. Yet this peaceful uprising was met with brutal repression. The Georgian Dream government deployed tear gas, water cannons, and riot police against nonviolent demonstrators, indiscriminately targeting children, civilians, and journalists. Many suffered injuries, and some journalists narrowly escaped with their lives after being specifically targeted by security forces. More than 80% of those detained have sustained severe injuries.

A particularly harrowing incident occurred at the headquarters of our youth organization, Youth UNM. As riot police pursued demonstrators nearby, we opened our doors to offer shelter to those seeking refuge from the chaos. What followed was a night of threats and intimidation. Police officers hurled insults, attempted to force their way inside, and later conducted an unwarranted raid. They confiscated cell phones, forced individuals to stand facing the wall, and conducted a search without allowing party representatives to oversee their actions.

During the raid, a masked officer was seen carrying objects into our office, raising immediate suspicion. After their departure, we discovered our office in disarray, and shortly afterward, the Ministry of Internal Affairs released a video accusing us of harboring Molotov cocktails—a claim both absurd and unconvincing. Situated mere meters from a police station, any illegal activity at our office would be impossible to conceal. It was evident that this was a deliberate attempt to discredit our organization and silence dissenting voices.





Fortunately, the truth is on our side. We possess ample evidence, including first-hand accounts, that law enforcement planted the so-called "evidence" during their search. This misconduct not only violates our organization's integrity but also undermines the democratic principles that form the cornerstone of a just society.

Despite the oppressive actions of the government, we remain steadfast in our mission to build a democratic Georgia. Our generation will not stand idly by while our future is stolen. It is imperative for the global community to recognize these injustices and rally behind the people of Georgia. For us, Europe is not just a political and economic alliance. It's so much more than that. It's a family that we historically belong to, based on respect, tolerance, freedom, the pursuit of prosperity and enlightenment. It is a family that every great king of Georgia sought to join and that the youth grew up dreaming of.

Europe cannot abandon its most dedicated believers at this crucial time.

Together, we can resist authoritarianism and safeguard our nation's democratic aspirations. The road ahead is difficult, but we will not falter in our pursuit of justice and freedom.

**By Nikoloz Khosroshvili**



# Op-ed

## Ireland's general election shows that to stem rising populism European governments need to deliver economic growth

It is one of the greatest clichés in politics but that is because it is nearly always true. People vote with their pockets. General Election 2024 in Ireland was perhaps the most blatant global example of this truism for many years. Juxtaposed with a series of defeats across the Western world for incumbent governments struggling to respond to the post-pandemic surge in inflation and living costs, the Irish Government bucked the trend and won emphatic re-election. How? Quite simply by utilising Ireland's enormous budget surplus and one-off windfall of €14bn in unpaid tax from Apple to soften the cost-of-living rise for Irish households. Put more simply, the ruling centre-right coalition of Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, lavished an array of tax cuts, benefits, energy credits, pension and social welfare increases, and state allowances on the Irish electorate. They then increased these handouts as the country moved closer to an election, and became more strategic in who they gave them to, providing more generous packages to the key support bases of both parties.

The importance of this is that it proves that if European countries can get economic growth up, and then use that dividend to reduce the cost-of-living for their citizens, populism can be kept at bay. Ireland's left-wing populist nationalist party Sinn Fein saw its share of the national vote reduced by 5.5% compared to the last election in 2020. Not a single far-right candidate was elected, and the infamous Dublin gangland crime boss turned populist politician, Gerry Hutch, failed to win a seat in parliament.

Many in Europe are quick to level accusations at Ireland that it is simply a tax haven, but Ireland is not the Cayman Islands. U.S. multinationals do not operate empty offices in Ireland. Dublin's 'silicon docks' is a bustling, innovative place dominated by tens of thousands of well-educated Irish and European workers. Ireland did not only attract a boon in FDI because of its famed 12.5% corporation tax rate. Ireland's workforce is one of the best educated in Europe, English-speaking, and amongst the most productive. In 2023, the European Commission ranked Irish workers as the most productive in the EU, and nearly twice as productive as their German counterparts. Ireland's effective youth unemployment rate is zero. Ireland has managed to successfully combine an Anglophone work culture and looser, more flexible employment laws with a welfare state very much in the mould of other West European countries.

Even removing multinational companies from the equation, the Irish economy continues to roar to the top of the European league tables. The Irish Government now offers a second measurement of economic growth which strips out the

impact of U.S. multinationals on nominal GDP figures. This measurement shows that Ireland's economy will grow by 2.3% in 2024 and 3.1% in 2025. This is far above the Euro-zone growth rate of 0.8% and makes the domestic Irish economy one of the fastest growing in Europe.

What this strong macro-economic performance has meant is that the Irish Government is awash with revenue. Excluding the Apple tax money, Ireland will have a budget surplus of €11bn in 2024 and is projected to have a €12bn surplus in 2025. For a country of just five million people, that is remarkable.

It may not seem like a razor-sharp insight that if you give the electorate more money, they will be happier. However, too much of the debate around the causes of populism in Europe gets sucked into discussions about culture wars, immigration, and questions of national identity, while overlooking the key underlying trend – Europeans are comparatively poorer now than they were two decades ago. This is a simple fact with an unavoidable remedy. European governments must get serious about closing the transatlantic chasm that has emerged between Europe and the roaring U.S. economy. Ordinary Europeans might worry less about recently arrived migrants, or debates about how their national history is interpreted, if their real incomes were growing, their businesses were thriving, and their roads were being rebuilt. Ireland's recent election is a reminder that in politics above all else, money talks.

**By Eoin Scarlett,**  
**YEPP Vice President**



# Past Events

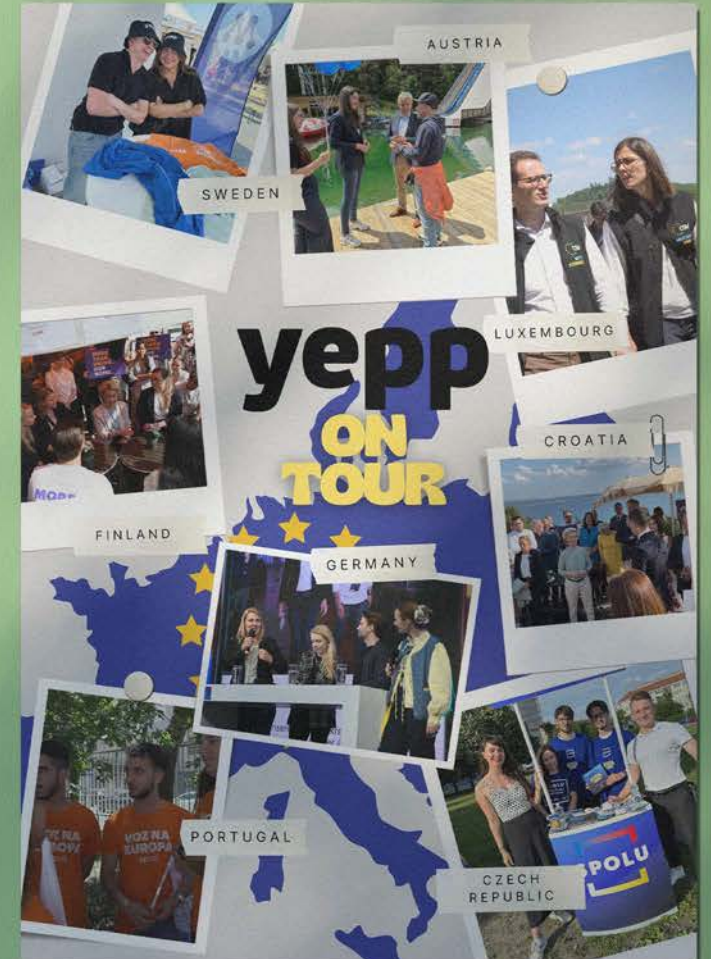
## YEPP on Tour Receives Global Education Youth Award 2024

YEPP is proud to announce that our *YEPP on Tour* initiative has been honoured with the prestigious **Global Education Youth Award 2024** by the Global Education Network Europe (GENE). This recognition celebrates our project as one of the leading efforts to promote global education and inspire young Europeans through innovative non-formal education practices.

During May and June 2024, *YEPP on Tour* embarked on a remarkable journey across **eight European countries**, supporting young political candidates in their campaigns. It was an inspiring experience to work alongside these passionate individuals, witnessing their dedication to shaping a brighter future.

We are particularly proud to share that **three of the candidates we supported were elected as Members of the European Parliament**, a testament to the power of youth engagement and political activism.

Together, we continue to drive change, championing a future shaped by the energy and vision of Europe's youth.



WORKSHOP  
WORKSHOP  
WORKSHOP  
HOP

# Past Events

## YEPP Workshop: Mastering the skills of writing effective resolutions

On December 4th, YEPP organized a workshop titled: "Mastering the skills of writing effective resolutions". The event was hosted by YEPP Vice President Edelmira Ferri, and featured Robert Golanski, former YEPP Board Member and EPP Policy Adviser for the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense (AFET) in the European Parliament.

Robert Golanski, with extensive experience in drafting resolutions, began by explaining the basic elements of a resolution.

Golanski emphasized that resolutions must be concise, clear, and focused, with a maximum of three key messages. He recommended focusing on major political goals to avoid getting in excessive detail.

Golanski explained that the body of a resolution consists of several interrelated parts. It begins with "citations", referencing relevant documents such as those from the European Parliament. This paragraph is followed by the "state of play" section, which provides the background and rationale for the resolution. For example, if the resolution is draft in response to a war, this part would outline the circumstances that led to it. Finally, the resolution includes "operative paragraphs", which clearly state the actions being condemned and the demands being made.

When addressing condemnation, Golanski suggested using "EU" or "EU and Member States" as the subject, as member states play a crucial role in policy making within the EU.

Resolutions in the European Parliament, comprising eight political groups, are often the result of negotiations between these groups. Attention was paid to the importance of using various sources of information when drafting resolutions, including media reports and think tanks.

The workshop concluded with a Q&A session, where participants had the opportunity to dig more into which solutions YEPP could implement to increase the quality of its resolutions, including a proposal to revise the resolution templates. For YEPP delegates the training session was another occasion to improve their skills as advocates of the youth perspective across Europe.



# Past Events

## YEPPERol Christmas Edition Reception

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> of December, YEPP hosted its second YEPPERol Reception, this time with a festive Christmas edition. The event brought together the YEPP Brussels network and Members of the European Parliament to celebrate the settlement of the new European Commission for a lively evening of networking, the perfect way to unwind before the holiday season.

The highlight of the evening was an inspiring speech by YEPP President, Lídia Pereira, who reflected on the progress made and the exciting journey ahead. Her words reminded everyone of how far YEPP has come in promoting youth engagement within European politics.

This event marked another significant milestone for YEPP and its members. Looking ahead to 2025, there is an eagerness for continued success and making an even greater impact together





# News from EU Bubble

## Highlights from the past weeks

**President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, has expressed openness to dialogue with US** administration regarding talks to end the war in Ukraine. Putin declared his intention during the end-of-year conference on Thursday. Consequently, president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, delivered an opening speech at the European Council Meeting, calling for unity between EU and US to save Ukraine.

**Last European Council for 2024.** At EUCO on Thursday, leaders discussed the EU's position on international challenges, including a potential new trade war between the U.S. and China, and the situation in the Middle East. Attention was drawn to discuss Washington's role in Ukraine.

**France's turmoil.** Last Wednesday, the French Parliament passed a law to avert a government shutdown, ensuring the administration can continue working on the next year's budget. In a bid to stabilise the political situation, President Emmanuel Macron appointed François Bayrou as the new Prime Minister last Friday.

## Legislative pipeline

**The Sakharov Prize 2024 has been awarded to Venezuelan opposition leaders** Edmundo González Urrutia and Maria Corino Machado. The ceremony took place on December 17th in Strasbourg and was attended in person by González and Ana Corina Sosa, the daughter of Maria Corino Machado, who is currently in hiding due to threats against her life. The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought honours and supports exceptional individuals and organisations that advocate for human rights, democracy, and fundamental freedoms.

**The European Parliament welcomed the President of Georgia,** Salome Zourabichvili, to discuss the current challenges facing her country. "We only ask for two things: give us our voice back due to the stolen elections, and give us our European future back," emphasized the Georgian President. She also called on Europe and the West to provide sustained political backing to Georgia's democratic voices, support for justice and the release of political prisoners, and firmly backing calls for new elections.

**The European Parliament has established a new special committee to address the EU's ongoing housing crisis.** Comprising 33 members, this committee received strong support during the plenary vote (480 votes for, 148 against, 20 abstentions) and will focus on solutions to this pressing issue. It will operate with a 12-month mandate, starting from January 2025.

## What's next

**Germany will hold new elections in February 2025** following Chancellor Scholz's loss in a parliamentary confidence vote. The collapse of the coalition has brought elections forward by seven months earlier than planned, resulting in a political crisis in the EU's largest economy. With more than 30% of votes, centre-right CDU/CSU (EPP) are polling to win the elections, followed by AfD (Sovereign Nations Group, 18%) and SPD (S&D, 16%).

**Donald Trump is set to take office at the presidential inauguration on Monday, 20 January 2025.** In preparation for his term, Trump has met with outgoing President Joe Biden to symbolize a peaceful transfer of power. He has also engaged with world leaders, including Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. His cabinet nominations include several controversial figures, such as Pete Henshaw for Defense Secretary and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for Health Secretary, alongside the appointment of family members to advisory and diplomatic roles.

# Get to Know: BM, Ukraine



## BATKIVSHCHYNA MOLODA

### Batkivshchyna Moloda: Uniting Ukrainian Youth for the Future of Ukraine

Batkivshchyna Moloda is a nationwide Ukrainian youth organization with the representation in all regions of Ukraine. Established in 2007 as the youth wing of the Batkivshchyna Party, the organization aims to foster youth development and create opportunities for active participation of young people in Ukraine's political, social, economic, and cultural life.

The organization is led by **Serhiy Mitrofan-skyi**, with **Serhiy Voronov** serving as Secretary General and **Oleksandr Afanasiev** as International Secretary.

Today, the organization unites over 30,000 members and supporters who share a common goal: to work for the future of Ukraine.

The core mission of **Batkivshchyna Moloda** is to create conditions for the development of Ukrainian youth in all areas of life: political, professional, social, and cultural. The organization believes that the younger generation is the future of the country, focusing on preparing new leaders capable of shaping a modern and democratic Ukraine.

Key Objectives of the Organization:

- Creating real opportunities for youth self-fulfillment in political, social, economic, and cultural life;
- Enhancing the political culture of youth through educational and training programs;
- Participating in the formation and implementation of state youth policy;
- Promoting youth civic and political engagement;
- Encouraging national-patriotic education among young people.

**Batkivshchyna Moloda** actively collaborates with European and international organizations, facilitating the integration of Ukrainian youth into the global community. Since 2011, the organization has been a full member of the **Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP)**. In 2023, the International Secretary of Batkivshchyna Moloda – **Oleksandr Afanasiev** was elected to the

YEPP Board as a Vice-President. Furthermore, the organization interacts with Ukrainian diaspora youth and cooperates with international institutions such as the **National Democratic Institute (NDI)**, the **International Republican Institute (IRI)**, and the **Konrad Adenauer Foundation**. Members of Batkivshchyna Moloda participate in international educational programs, conferences, and youth exchanges.

The organization implements numerous projects aimed at fostering youth leadership, raising civic awareness, and addressing pressing social issues. Its programs focus on enhancing the intellectual and professional capacities of young people, encouraging active participation in Ukraine's public life.

**Batkivshchyna Moloda** continues to grow as an organization that provides a platform for young people ready to contribute to Ukraine's future. With the support of international partners and active work across all regions of Ukraine, it remains a key player in shaping a conscious and active youth movement in the country.

The strength of youth lies in unity, and **Batkivshchyna Moloda** stands as a shining example of uniting Ukrainian youth to achieve a shared goal: building a democratic and prosperous Ukraine.

**By Oleksandr Afanasiev,  
YEPP Vice President**



# Social Media Highlights

**youthpepp**

GENE

# yepp

## ON TOUR

WINNER OF  
**GENE AWARD**

6 of December

We are thrilled to announce that YEPP on Tour has been awarded the Global Education Youth Award 2024

[View all 174 comments](#)

**youthpepp**

# WE STAND WITH GEORGIA

YEPP strongly condemns the recent violations during the parliamentary elections in Georgia and the use of violence...

[View all 89 comments](#)

3 of December

**youthpepp**

# Congratulations MARTINE KEMP

lected Member of the European Parliament

3 comments

ber

**Did you forget  
about the war  
in Ukraine?**

**6,8 million**

Refugees fled Ukraine  
since the war started

Number of  
Days of War

**1031**

Total Cost of  
Reconstruction  
and Recovery  
**486 bln**

# yepp

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*Wishes You a*

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

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