

# NEWS YEPPer

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## EDITORIAL 03

By Dóra Emese Szilágyi and László Szepessy

### Another Far-Right Savior

"Călin Georgescu's economic vision is built on false claims and illusions. Instead of fostering growth, his policies would isolate Romania, hinder progress, and threaten decades of prosperity."



## THE YEPP SHOW 05

### YEPP Podcast

This podcast is more than just a communication project, it's a platform where young leaders, MEPs, and experts discuss key issues.



## GET TO KNOW OUR MEMBERS 09

By Maria Miala

### KNL, Finland

"Our slogan 'Two Steps Ahead' reflects the forward-thinking positions we have taken, such as our early support for EU and NATO membership, and our proactive stance on managing public debt."





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# Editorial

## Another Far-Right Savior

Things have become turbulent in Romania since December last year when the Romanian Constitutional Court canceled the second round of the Presidential Elections. This historic and unprecedented decision has led many to question the state of democracy in the country.

2024 has been a true political marathon: European Parliamentary and local elections on 9th June, followed by a three-weekend-long electoral "feria," the first round of presidential elections on 24th November, parliamentary elections on 1st December (Romanian National Day), and the second round of presidential elections on 8th December.

On 24th November, following the closure of polling stations, everyone asked: Who is Călin Georgescu? The candidate barely registered in opinion polls, didn't take part in major TV debates, and didn't even belong to a political party. Yet, he was leading the race to become Romania's next president.

Since then, we have learned that he is a far-right TikTok star embracing both communist and fascist ideas. He claimed the 1989 revolution was a coup d'état by the West to steal Romania's resources and insists the country is enslaved by the West. Georgescu was investigated for statements in 2022 praising Ion Antonescu, Romania's World War II prime minister who facilitated the Holocaust, and Corneliu Zelea

Codreanu, a violent, antisemitic nationalist. He also promotes conspiracy theories, such as Pepsi and Fanta containing nanochips.

However, the independent far-right candidate remained silent about campaign financing, declaring zero costs to the national electoral authorities. The case is under criminal investigation.

Moreover, the Constitutional Court annulled the presidential elections, citing Georgescu's use of "non-transparent and election code-violating digital technologies, as well as artificial intelligence, during his campaign." Intelligence documents suggested a mass influence operation—conducted from abroad—interfered with the vote. New elections are scheduled for May. The interim president reaffirmed that annulment was necessary due to external interference.

Nevertheless, Romanians are losing faith in national authorities, while Georgescu's conspiracy theories remain popular. What does his economic programme promise?

A new day, new extreme statements emerge regarding Georgescu's campaign. From his views on Pepsi to his rhetoric on water, he mixes nationalism and anti-Western sentiments. His economic vision is equally contradictory. He claims Romania's economy collapsed after 1989 and proposes a "new" economic model based on misleading arguments.

**Below, we analyse some of his most outrageous claims:**





## 1. "Romania no longer produces anything."

False. Romania's production index rose from 80.53 in 1992 to over 141 in 2021. In 2023, the industrial sector contributed 306 billion RON to GDP. (Source: World Bank)

## 2. "Romania has no domestic banks!"

Incorrect. Two of the country's three largest banks—Banca Transilvania (privately owned) and CEC Bank (state-owned)—are majority Romanian-owned. The banking sector has grown through acquisitions and organic expansion.

## 3. "What happened after 1989 is not an economy, just consumption."

Misleading. GDP growth includes investments, exports, and government spending. Romania has modernised its industry, agriculture, and services, with growth in industrial production and foreign investment.

Sovereignist, Protectionist, Distributive, Spiritual Economic Policy: What Does This Mean? Călin Georgescu uses these four terms to define his model, but they serve more as a political slogan than an economic strategy:

- Sovereignty emphasises economic independence.
- Protectionism shields the domestic market but risks economic stagnation.
- Redistribution suggests unsustainable state intervention, contradicting free-market principles.
- Spirituality is an ambiguous term with no economic meaning.

### Why Is Protectionism Harmful? Protectionist policies lead to:

- Higher prices for consumers.
- Reduced foreign investment, limiting job creation and technology transfers.
- Fewer export opportunities, threatening competitiveness.
- Loss of EU funding (€90 billion contributed to Romania's development). Without these funds, GDP per capita would be 60-70% lower. (Source: BNR)

The European Perspective: Why This Matters for Young EU Politicians Călin Georgescu's economic vision is not just a Romanian issue—it challenges the European Union. His nationalist and protectionist policies oppose the EU's single market and free trade principles. If implemented, they could destabilise regional cooperation and weaken Romania's role in the EU.

Young European politicians must counter economic populism and ensure policy discussions are based on facts. The EU thrives on open markets and collaboration, making it crucial to combat misinformation.

Furthermore, history shows economic populism often leads to democratic backsliding. Weakening ties with the EU could result in political isolation and reduced accountability.

Călin Georgescu's economic vision is built on false claims and illusions. Instead of fostering growth, his policies would isolate Romania, hinder progress, and threaten decades of prosperity.

**By Dóra Emese Szilágyi  
and László Szepessy**



# The YEPP Show must go on!

## What is our new podcast and how it all started

A critical factor in making communication impactful is framing our message in an engaging way. For politicians and political parties, creating engagement with young people can be a challenging task. Even for YEPP, the largest political youth organization in Europe, reaching out to young people in a fresh and dynamic way while addressing the most pressing challenges of our time is not always easy.

With this in mind, the YEPP office, in collaboration with the Executive Board, began exploring ways to promote its values and positions while delving into current issues affecting young Europeans—and making it fun. In September, our creativity and ideas came together like never before, resulting in months of hard work culminating in a brand-new podcast: ***The YEPP Show!***

Podcasts have gained popularity in recent years due to their ability to engage audiences—especially young people—while delivering informative content in an entertaining way. While many podcasts succeed

with audio alone, others have embraced video recording to maximize engagement on social media, particularly through YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram Reels.

Building on this trend, YEPP launched a new communication project aimed at helping young Europeans learn more about YEPP and EPP's young Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and their efforts to shape legislation on key topics such as housing, sustainability and competitiveness, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, defense, mental health, and violence against women.

*The YEPP Show* is produced and recorded in the European Parliament in collaboration with the EPP Group Press Directorate trainees, who host the podcast alongside YEPP representatives. Each episode features an MEP, YEPP leaders, and experts, bringing interviews with EU policymakers and engaging debates among the podcast hosts. And you can be part of *The YEPP Show* too! Before each episode, YEPP's

social media channels will open the floor to questions on a specific topic. So #stay-tuned if you can't wait to ask an EU Parliament member a question!

In Episode 1, released on February 11, our first guest is EPP MEP Sebastião Bugalho, a 29-year-old politician who led the EPP list in the last European elections in Portugal. Together, we discussed the urgent issue of affordable housing in Europe and the creation of the new Special Committee on Housing in the European Parliament, where he serves as a member.

*The YEPP Show* is available for free on Spotify (audio) and YouTube (video). Additionally, short clips will be shared on our social media channels, including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Curious about our next guest?

**Follow us to find out!** ←





# Past Events

## YEPP Council Meeting in Rabat, Morocco

From January 30th to February 2nd, young delegates from across Europe gathered in Rabat, Morocco, for YEPP's first Council Meeting of 2025. The event focused on key issues such as youth opportunities, green energy, Mediterranean cooperation, and education, featuring insightful discussions with EU and Moroccan leaders.

The Council opened with remarks from Lidia Pereira, MEP and YEPP President; Steven Hofner, Director of KAS Morocco; and Lahcen Essady, Secretary of State for Handicrafts and the Social and Solidarity Economy, as well as President of RNI's Youth, with Marouane El Hajjaji EL Idrissi, director of cooperation of RNI, as a moderator.



The event opened with a special video message from Dubravka Šuica, the European Commissioner for the Mediterranean. She emphasized key regional issues and the importance of strengthening EU-Mediterranean relations. We were also honored to hear from Mariya Gabriel, First Vice President of the EPP, and Doris Pack, Honorary President of the Robert Schuman Institute. They shared their insights on the challenges and opportunities facing young people in Europe and beyond.

Mariya Gabriel emphasized the need to expand Erasmus+ to the Mediterranean region, fostering greater collaboration in education and vocational training. She highlighted Morocco's leadership in Erasmus+ mobility programs and youth exchanges, stressing the importance of bridging the gap between young people and policy-makers. She also called for more collabo-



ration, particularly in strengthening youth participation in politics and increasing the presence of women and girls in both politics and the economy. Innovation was another key theme, as she noted that young people bring fresh, transformative ideas that Europe can learn from.

Doris Pack addressed common misconceptions about Morocco's democracy, urging a shift away from outdated preconceptions. She highlighted Morocco's potential as a crucial bridge between Europe and Africa and a key player in strengthening EU-Maghreb relations. She called for deeper cooperation between the EU and Morocco, positioning the country as a strategic partner in the region.

The first panel featured Amina Benkhadra, RNI Women President and General Director of the Office of Mine and Hydrocarbon Office, alongside Anis Birou, former Minister and member of the Political Bureau. They provided valuable insights on political leadership, economic development, and regional cooperation.

Daniele Dotto, Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union, also shared his expertise on EU-Mediterranean relations, emphasizing the importance of fostering

strong diplomatic and economic ties between both regions.

Another key highlight was our discussion with Saad Berrada, Morocco's Minister of National Education, Preschool, and Sports, who provided valuable insights into the country's educational policies and future plans.

A highlight of our visit was meeting with Speaker Rachid Talbi Alami at the House of Representatives, where we discussed EU-Morocco relations. He outlined Morocco's current and future plans in agriculture, green energy, and national security, as well as the country's significance on the international stage, tourism, and the upcoming World Cup. Discussions focused on the empowerment of women in Morocco, globalization, and the relationship between the EU and Morocco, along with his vision for the future.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our RNI colleagues and KAS Morocco for their warm hospitality and for welcoming us to their beautiful country. This Council Meeting was an inspiring and productive experience, reinforcing the importance of collaboration between young leaders across Europe and the Mediterranean.



# News from EU Bubble

## Highlights from the past weeks

**The centre-right has won the elections in Germany**, initiating government negotiations to appoint Friedrich Merz as the next chancellor. The CDU/CSU bloc (EPP) secured first place with 28.6%, followed by the far-right Alternative for Germany (ESN), which achieved its best-ever result with 20.8%. Meanwhile, incumbent Chancellor Olaf Scholz's SPD (S&D) saw its support drop to 16.4%, and the Liberal Party FDP (Renew) failed to surpass the 5% threshold required to enter the Bundestag.

**Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council**, with a decree signed by President Zelensky, has taken steps that could lead to the arrest of Petro Poroshenko, former President and leader of the European Solidarity party. The move has sparked concerns over political motivations and its impact on Ukraine's democratic stability. YEPP strongly condemns this decision, calling for national unity and respect for democratic principles.

The European Parliament marked the **first anniversary of Alexei Navalny's death**, condemning the Kremlin's ongoing repression. MEPs honoured his fight against corruption and for democracy in Russia, with President Roberta Metsola stating that his legacy remains a beacon of hope.

## Legislative pipeline

On 11 February 2025, the European Commission approved its **work programme** for the year, setting priorities aimed at boosting the EU's competitiveness, reinforcing security, and strengthening economic resilience. A central objective is regulatory simplification, aiming to ease administrative burdens on businesses and individuals while ensuring more efficient policy execution.

The European Commission is set to present the **Clean Industrial Deal**, an initiative aimed at promoting the decarbonisation of Europe's industrial sector. The plan seeks to encourage the adoption of clean technologies and enhance the competitiveness of European industry in the green transition.

During the February plenary session, MEPs debated the **EU-Mercosur trade agreement**, highlighting economic opportunities and concerns over agriculture and environmental standards. While some welcomed the deal for boosting trade, others warned of its impact on European farmers. The deal is now under legal review before heading to EU institutions for approval.

## What's next

After President Trump announced plans to **introduce reciprocal tariffs**, the European Commission warned that the move could strain trade relations and disrupt global markets. The EU, which maintains some of the world's lowest tariffs, rejects unjustified US increases and remains committed to open, fair trade, vowing to counter unfair barriers.

Amid reports of **potential U.S. - Russia negotiations**, Ukraine and European leaders have stressed that no peace deal can be reached without Kyiv. President Zelensky reaffirmed that Ukraine must be directly involved in any talks, rejecting any agreement decided by external powers alone.



# Get to Know: KNL, Finland

**The Youth of the National Coalition Party**, also known in Finnish as Kokoomuksen Nuorten Liitto (KNL), was officially founded on May 22, 1927. However, it began operating at the national level on November 4, 1928, when local groups united into a single organization. The first local association was established in Helsinki in 1925—two years before the national organization was formed.

Even though KNL is a youth organization, we have always tackled issues affecting the whole society, not just young people. While many other youth organizations in Finland focus on matters like free school snacks or school strikes, KNL is widely known as the first political organization in Finland to support EU and NATO membership. During the 1980s, our position was considered more left-leaning compared to our mother party, but after 1985, we shifted towards a more Western- and right-leaning position.



## KOKOOMUSNUORET

A major turning point came in 1990, when KNL became the first large political organization to call for Finland to join the European Union. After Finland joined the EU in 1995, we saw NATO membership as the natural next step. Since then, NATO membership has been one of our main goals, first partially realized in 2006 when our mother party adopted it as an official policy, and finally fulfilled in 2024 when Finland joined NATO.

Our slogan “Two Steps Ahead” reflects the forward-thinking positions we have taken, such as our early support for EU and NATO membership, and our proactive stance on managing public debt.

As an organization, we are committed to individual freedom, the market economy, Western values, the rule of law, and democracy. Our core values are freedom, responsibility, and patriotism. For us, patriotism means respecting Finnish traditions, history, and Finnish nature, especially our forests, which are our national treasure.

Our activities are organized into 12 district associations, each following Finland’s electoral district divisions. These districts have local associations that manage grassroots efforts.

KNL provides young people with opportunities to influence society and to build successful political careers. We are often called a “broiler farm” for politicians and many of our former members have become key figures in our national politics. Currently, four of Finland’s ministers and several Members of Parliament have KNL backgrounds.

In the 2021 municipal elections, under the leadership of our former Chair, Matias Pajula, we won more than 50 council seats across Finland. In the upcoming elections in April, we aim to secure over 60 council seats nationwide.

***By Maria Miala***



# Three Years of Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine

(Government support in numbers)

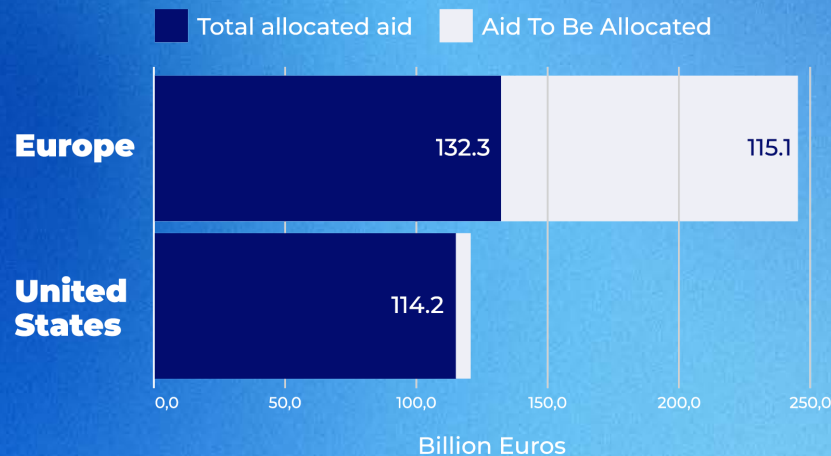
## How Europe Is Taking the Lead in Supporting Ukraine

Since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion, global support for Ukraine has reached an impressive €267 billion, averaging approximately €80 billion per year. While the United States remains the largest individual donor by a considerable margin, European countries, including the European Union, have collectively outpaced American contributions. To date, Europe has allocated €132 billion in aid, surpassing the €114 billion committed by the United States.

Germany stands as Europe's largest donor, providing around €17 billion in financial, humanitarian, and military assistance, excluding funds distributed through EU mechanisms. The United Kingdom follows closely with €15 billion, while Denmark ranks third in its contributions. This robust support highlights Europe's commitment to Ukraine's defense and reconstruction efforts.

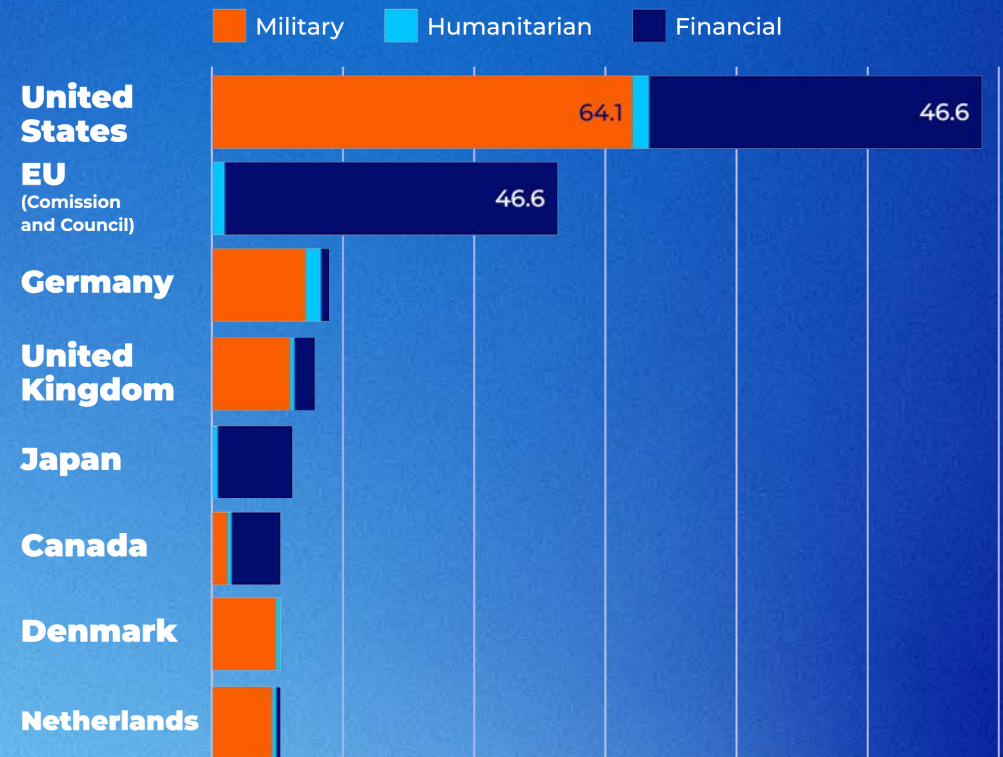
## Government support to Ukraine: By country group, € billion

Allocations and commitments January 24, 2022 to December 31, 2024



## Government support to Ukraine: Type of assistance, € billion

Allocations January 24, 2022 to December 31, 2024. Data on 42 donors





# Three Years of Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine

(Government support in numbers)

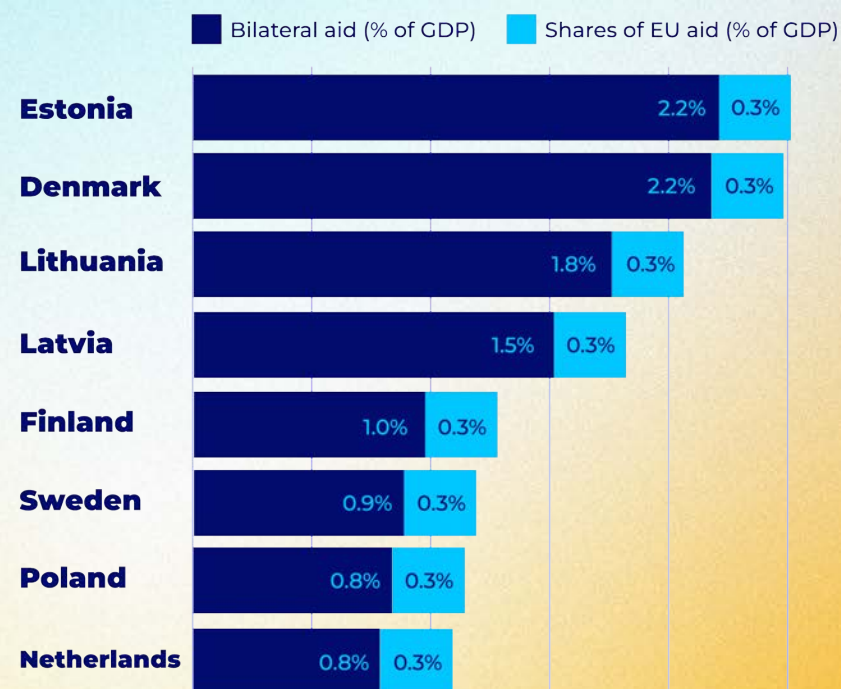
However, despite these substantial contributions, Europe's largest economies have the capacity to do much more. The annual commitments from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States equate to just 0.2% of their GDPs. In contrast, the Baltic and Nordic nations demonstrate a more significant commitment relative to their economic output. Estonia and Denmark, for example, have each allocated over 2% of their pre-war GDP to bilateral aid for Ukraine, showcasing their unwavering dedication to supporting Kyiv.

As Ukraine continues to defend its sovereignty against Russian aggression, international support remains crucial. While Europe has collectively taken the lead in aid contributions, there is still room for its largest economies to enhance their commitments. The Baltic and Nordic countries set an example of meaningful support relative to economic capacity, underscoring the need for continued and expanded assistance. Maintaining and increasing this support will be essential in ensuring Ukraine's resilience and long-term stability at the European continent.

By Oleksandr Afanasiev,  
YEPP Vice President

## Government support to Ukraine: By donor country GDP, incl. and excl. EU share

Allocations January 24, 2022 to December 31, 2024. Data on 41 donor countries





# Social Media Highlights

**y** youthepp



**yepp** CONDEMN  
THE SANCTIONS AGAINST  
THE 5TH PRESIDENT OF  
UKRAINE AND LEADER OF  
THE EPP ASSOCIATED  
MEMBER EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY, **PETRO  
POROSHENKO**

With deep concern and unwavering commitment to democratic values, the Youth of the European People's...  
View all 138 comments  
13 of February

This post features a blue background with a portrait of Petro Poroshenko on the left. The text is in white and yellow, expressing condemnation of sanctions against him.

**y** youthepp



**y**  
THE YEPP SHOW  
*"Your Voice, Our Europe"*

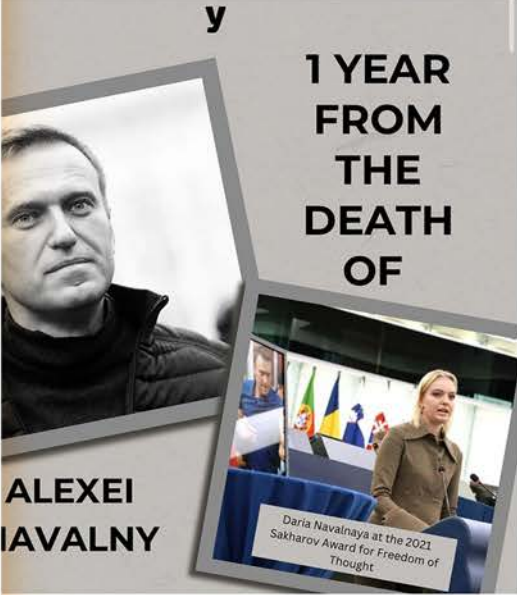
EP. 1 Housing in Crisis: Can Europe Fix It? – with Sebastião Bugalho

1 hour until The YEPP Show is OUT!

View all 265 comments  
12 of February

The image shows a video player interface for 'The YEPP Show'. The video title is 'EP. 1 Housing in Crisis: Can Europe Fix It? – with Sebastião Bugalho'. Below the video player, there is a progress bar and playback controls. A text overlay at the bottom of the post says '1 hour until The YEPP Show is OUT!'.

**y** youthepp



**ALEXEI  
NAVALNY**

1 YEAR FROM THE DEATH OF

Daria Navalnaya at the 2021 Sakharov Award for Freedom of Thought

ago, one of the leading voices against the Russian as brutally silenced, disregarding the fundamental...  
24 comments  
ary

This post features a collage of images. On the left is a portrait of Alexei Navalny. On the right is a photo of Daria Navalnaya at a podium. The text '1 YEAR FROM THE DEATH OF' is prominently displayed. Below the images, there is a caption and a video player interface.



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