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Editorial

Moving Forward: 6 years of success – Interview with Lídia Pereira

Lídia Pereira was elected president of YEPP back in 2018 and became a Member of the European Parliament the following year. Fast forward to 2024, she was re-elected in the latest European elections and also became Vice President of the EPP Group. She reached the highest position in the history of YEPP presidents. The election of a new president at the next YEPP Congress in July will mark the end of 6 successful years.

It's been quite a journey, Lídia.

It has. It's been a very successful journey overall, with ups and downs, but definitely a positive one.

Before talking about your years in YEPP, let's have a look to the future. You have just launched the EPP Group Future Lab, which falls under your responsibilities as Vice-President of the group. Can you tell us more about that?

The idea comes from what we experienced during the previous term. We're constantly dealing with topics related to technology and the economy, and we live in an incredibly fast-paced world. So for us, as legislators and policymakers, it's crucial to stay as informed as possible about emerging trends. Right now, we're not only talking about artificial intelligence but also about quantum computing. The EPP Future Lab

was created with that in mind. It's a platform to raise awareness among members of the EPP Group, helping ensure we make the right decisions and take the right positions in this very complex world.

I think it's really interesting that politicians are looking not only at what needs to be tackled now, but also at how to prepare for the future.

Yes, and that's a very important point. For instance, I believe national governments don't talk enough about the implications of artificial intelligence for their communities. If we want people to understand the bigger picture, then it's the responsibility of leaders, opinion-makers, and policy-makers to raise that awareness. AI should be more prominently featured on national political agendas.

In your six years as president of YEPP, what changed both within and outside the organization?

A lot has changed. In those six years, we went through a pandemic, which was a major challenge, especially for someone like me leading an international organization that thrives on personal connections.

But it also brought some positive changes. It pushed us toward becoming a more

digital organization. We started using video conferencing much more, and that helped us stay connected.

You probably remember that the initial response to the pandemic was very national, but the European Union played a crucial role—particularly in coordinating the vaccine rollout, where YEPP also had a part to play. Being part of the European Union during that period showed just how valuable EU membership can be. There were responses we wouldn't have gotten if we had only relied on our national governments.

Now, we're seeing a global shift toward nationalism and isolationism, not only in the United States but elsewhere as well. The world has changed a lot in that direction. But the European Union and the EPP Group, in this instability, has remained a stabilizing force, even when national politics have been volatile.

I think that stability will be one of the EU's greatest strengths. Not just in the short term, but in the long run as well.

Watch or listen to the full interview on The YEPP Show, available on Spotify and Youtube.



Op-ed

"Beyond Tariffs: A Generation's Call for Transatlantic Renewal"

For over 70 years, the transatlantic alliance has been one of the most successful stories of international cooperation. It defeated tyranny, built the modern global economy, and safeguarded democracy. But even the strongest alliances must be renewed — especially when challenged by economic strain and political uncertainty.

Recently, this transatlantic relationship was put to the test once again. The United States announced sweeping tariff increases on a wide range of European imports — including a 20% hike on general EU goods and a 25% tariff on vehicles. These measures, while temporarily suspended for 90 days, were a stark reminder of the volatility still present in U.S.-EU trade relations. Though a pause is welcome, it should not be mistaken for resolution. It is a critical window — not just to negotiate, but to rethink how we want to shape our economic future together.

The EU had already begun preparing a proportional response. Just one day before the U.S. announced the tariff suspension,

EU member states agreed on a new retaliatory package: a list of U.S. goods to be taxed at rates between 10% and 25%, amounting to €20.9 billion. These tariffs were scheduled to begin rolling out on April 15 in response to earlier U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum that have been in place since mid-March.

This situation presented a dilemma: respond forcefully and risk escalation, or pause and recommit to dialogue. Thankfully, the latter path has been chosen — for now. But it's clear the debate within Europe is not over. Some EU member states have called for broader action — including preparations for regulatory moves against U.S. digital giants. These voices express frustration, and in many cases, legitimate concern. But while we must defend our interests, we must also defend the principle of strategic partnership.

Because let's be clear: retaliatory action is not our goal. As young Europeans, we seek a future built on cooperation, not confrontation. We believe in transatlantic leadership, but that leadership must be rooted in shared values, mutual respect, and open dialogue — not in tit-for-tat policies that hurt workers, consumers, and industries on both sides of the Atlantic.



This is precisely why initiatives like the Transatlantic Youth Summit, set to take place in June in Washington, D.C., are so important. As young leaders from Europe and North America come together, we are offered a unique opportunity to push for solutions that transcend short-term political cycles. We will discuss not just trade policy, but climate action, digital governance, and security. We will envision a future not dominated by tariffs, but strengthened by trust.

In a time when global powers are realigning and protectionism is rising, young people must take the lead in renewing the transatlantic promise. We must show that partnership is not a relic of the past — but a foundation for the future.

Let us use this 90-day pause not as a timeout, but as a turning point. Let us turn competition into cooperation. Let us choose strategy over sentiment, and solidarity over short-term wins.

The future of the transatlantic relationship will not be shaped by tariffs — it will be shaped by trust. Not by division, but by dialogue. So, let's keep talking and let's stay stronger together!

**By Florian Gasser,
YEPP Vice-President**

Past Events

Microsoft event 9th of April

On April 9th, Microsoft hosted the youth-led panel *“From Promise to Policy: Youth Reflections on the EU’s First 100 Days,”* bringing together dynamic voices from across the EU institutions. Among the standout speakers was MEP Ana Miguel Pedro (EPP), who offered

powerful reflections on digital transformation and the importance of youth engagement in policymaking. Ana’s perspective on turning political vision into concrete outcomes resonated strongly with the audience and set the stage for a thought-provoking discussion.



Online Seminar: Understanding the Sahel

On March 26, YEPP, in collaboration with the Robert Schuman Institute, organised an insightful workshop titled *Understanding the Sahel – Security, Migration, and Geopolitical Challenges for the Mediterranean and Europe*. The event, featuring Antonio López-Istúriz White, EPP Member of the European Parliament (Committee on Foreign Affairs), and Michael Benhamou, Executive Director of OPEWI and Research Associate at the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, served as an opportunity to explore the current state of European foreign relations with the African continent, with a particular focus on the Sahel region.

MEP López-Istúriz White emphasised the need for the European Union to establish

a common army to better coordinate operations on the ground. At present, peacekeeping missions are largely carried out by private contractors, who are not well-received by local civil society. Europe must confront the growing isolationist trend of the United States and potentially seek opportunities to fill the void left by the diminishing American influence in the region.

Benhamou highlighted the West’s ongoing struggles in managing operations in Africa and the Middle East, noting that both the US and Europe have experienced setbacks in most conflict zones over the past decade. According to the researcher, the EU will still require time to fully organise itself and may continue to face challenges in the coming years. Meanwhile, its adversary, Russia, has spent more than 30 years observing the West and reorganising following the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989.



YEPP Stand at EPP Congress

On the 29th and 30th of April, YEPP proudly hosted an engaging and dynamic stand at the EPP Congress in Valencia, centred around the theme “YEPP: Acting as a Bridge Between Present and Future Generations.”

The stand was designed to showcase the key role of youth in shaping European policy and featured a photo booth, YEPP-branded giveaways, a prize wheel, and a participatory canvas inviting attendees to express why youth matters in politics.

It attracted considerable attention, welcoming high-level guests including European Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, and the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola. Their presence highlighted the growing recognition of youth as essential voices in Europe’s political landscape.

More than just a space for visibility, the YEPP stand provided a meaningful opportunity for exchange and connection between today’s leaders and the next generation.



YEPP President and MEP Lidia Pereira engaged in a powerful conversation with Belarusian National Leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya and European Parliament President Roberta Metsola.

Get to Know: MHDZ, Croatia

Foundation

The Youth of the Croatian Democratic Union (Mladež Hrvatske demokratske zajednice, MHDZ) is the biggest political youth organization in Croatia and one of the largest center-right youth wings in Europe, with around 17,000 members. Founded on 13 September 1990 within HDZ, the leading party in Croatia's independence movement, MHDZ grew as part of a party rooted in national unity and civic values. From its very beginning, it has stood for active youth participation, patriotism, and democratic development.

HDZ was founded by Croatia's first President Dr. Franjo Tuđman and is today led by Prime Minister Andrej Plenković. He continues to support youth engagement: six MHDZ members are on the HDZ National Committee and three are Members of Parliament, including MHDZ President Maksimilijan Šimrak. This generational inclusion strengthens both the party's future and Croatia's long-term political stability.

Values

MHDZ gathers young people around Christian democracy, solidarity, and patriotism. As a people's movement, it upholds democracy, national identity, and social responsibility—values rooted in Croatian tradition and reinforced during the Homeland War, in which many members actively participated. These values remain at the core of its policies today.

International memberships

During the 1990s, as Croatia fought for international recognition, MHDZ played a proactive role abroad. It formed strong bilateral relations with sister parties and joined major youth organizations: DEMYC in 1992, IYDU in 1994, and the European Young Christian Democrats, now YEPP. MHDZ remains an active YEPP member and strong advocate for Croatia within the European center-right youth space, ensuring that Croatian perspectives are heard at the highest political levels of European youth cooperation.

Activities

MHDZ works through four committees—International, Communication & Education, Youth Policy, and Logistics—ensuring regional and gender-balanced participation. It organizes workshops, lectures, and policy forums with experts and leaders. The youth wing is a crucial part of every HDZ campaign, present in all regions and always engaged with the public.

It also fosters international mobility and knowledge exchange, encouraging young members to represent Croatia at YEPP councils, seminars, and working groups, where they gain skills in advocacy, negotiation, and leadership.

Every 13 September, MHDZ celebrates its founding alongside National Youth Day. Every two years, the General Assembly elects new leadership and adopts program guidelines.

Political influence

MHDZ is deeply involved in policymaking. It played a key role in drafting the “Youth Measures of the Government of Croatia,” including the law exempting youth under 25 from income tax and reducing the rate to 50% for those aged 26–30—helping raise net salaries and encourage youth to stay in Croatia.

In the 2024 election program “*Youth for Every Challenge*,” MHDZ advocates for:

- **Housing:** A National Youth Housing Plan to ensure affordable living.
- **Mental health:** Mobile psychological support teams for pupils and students.
- **Education:** Full-day school programs, free meals, textbooks and transport, and digital enrollment systems.
- **Demographics:** Mothers gain 12 extra pensionable months per child; paternity leave is doubled.
- **Employment:** A new set of active employment measures, targeting young and vulnerable groups.

Conclusion

MHDZ is more than a youth organization—it is a driving force behind Croatia's future. By empowering young people to participate in public life, shape national policy, and represent Croatia across Europe, MHDZ remains a vital part of the political landscape. With clear values, strong lead-

ership, and bold policies, MHDZ continues to prove that young people are not just the future—they are the present. Through continuous advocacy, concrete measures, and international recognition, MHDZ sets an example of how youth can lead responsibly, work globally, and deliver locally.

By Tea Jerković,
YEPP Vice-President



Social Media Highlights

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IN
PEACE

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Pope Francis was more than a leader—he was a light in a world that needed hope. His words, his actions, his heart for the margins will echo for generations.

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21 of April

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NEW NEW

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"Your Voice, Our Europe"

NEW NEW

EPISODE

NEW NEW

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📺 Third Episode OUT Now!! 🎙️

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18 of April

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YOUTH OF THE EPP
Lidia Pereira
MEP and President of YEPP

ACCESSORIES

Meet Lidia Pereira: Politician advocating for European rights, innovation, competitiveness, and the empowerment of young people.

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Don't miss this trend !!

mini power duo: Madam President @lidiafopereira

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