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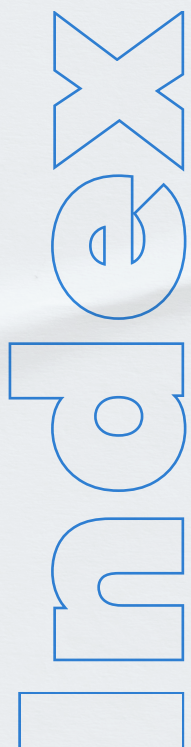


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Editorial

Getting shit done- Secretary General's reflections on the term

At YEPP, we don't believe that young people are just the leaders of tomorrow – they are the leaders of today. This ideal is what drove our hard work over the past two years: to ensure that the voices of young people are not only heard at the top, but that they actively shape decisions across Europe. To push for the presence of young people at the table where the real decisions get made.

After two years, I believe that we can be proud of our achievements: last year, we saw many people from our YEPP ranks becoming Members of the European Parliament. Additionally, our very own YEPP President was elected Vice-President of the EPP parliamentary group. I think this very much proves that this generation is ready and capable of taking the lead.

Yet, the work is not done. Young people in politics are still routinely undermined because of their age. Many young politicians have to see their experience being questioned at every turn, even if they have been involved in politics for a decade. And needless to say, things are even more difficult for young women in politics.

Aslightly more subtle difficulty is that many politicians – and even some youth organisations – think that young people are just one big homogenous group. That we only want

to talk about youth involvement, climate change, and education. And don't get me wrong, these are all important issues – but they are not the only ones we care about.

In YEPP, we do not pretend that there are just a couple of opinions that speak for all youth. We care about everything that affects the present and the future of our societies: the economy, digital rights, defence policy – you name it. Be it one of those policy sectors or something else entirely, young people care deeply, but in different ways. This diversity of interest is not a challenge – it is one of our greatest strengths. YEPP has embraced this plurality, creating a platform where diverse voices find common purpose and shared momentum.

This vision has borne fruit and now, there are many YEPPers at the decision-making tables – in the EU institutions, in national capitals, and local councils. The first step has been taken. The next milestone that we have to reach is for us, as young politicians, to deliver and to show everyone – not just the older generations but also the next generation to come – how competent, passionate, and driven our cohort is. And I have no doubt that we will succeed in this and so much more.

In YEPP, we have been intentional and concrete in how we build our platform. In the past two years, we have grown our social media presence to better reach and engage young Europeans wherever they are. We launched a new podcast to quite literally broadcast new voices with fresh perspectives to a European and global audience. We revamped our newsletter to better reflect the dynamic and diverse nature of our community. In the

heart of the EPP, we have pushed youth-driven policy proposals and built bridges across generations. We have established a strong network of young MEPs and a wider ecosystem of young policymakers throughout Europe. And we've brought YEPP to the global stage, organizing high-level events not just in Europe, but beyond, to make sure that we promote innovative ideas made in Europe and learn from other young people who share our enthusiasm for a free and just world.

This July marks the end of my two-year mandate as Secretary General of YEPP. As I take this moment to reflect on this incredible journey, I am filled with gratitude, pride, and a deep sense of optimism for the future of youth in European politics. YEPP has taught me so much, given me experiences I couldn't have gotten anywhere else, and most importantly, it has given me life-long friendships.

Before I conclude, there are some people who deserve special thanks. First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to our President, Lidia Pereira, for her leadership and unwavering friendship throughout this term. Lidia, your dedication to YEPP, young people in politics and to the European project has set the tone for everything we've achieved together. Thank you, obrigada, kiitos. I am also immensely thankful to our wonderful office team – Danilo, Chiara, and Adriana – whose tireless and often unseen work has made the impossible seem easy. And of course the entire Board: thank you for your trust, your ideas, and your energy. You have made this term not only successful, but truly memorable.

As I step down from this role, I do so with a full heart and a renewed belief

in the power of our generation to shape our shared future. The challenges ahead are real – but so are the solutions that our generation is bringing to the table. YEPP will continue to be a space for those solutions to grow, for leadership to thrive, and for action to follow words.

**Thank you for the honor of serving you.
We really got shit done.**

**By Heidi Hanhela,
YEPP Secretary General**



One Year, Real Change:

How the AD Government Delivered and Won in Portugal

The Portuguese legislative elections of 18 May 2025 marked a clear consolidation of the centre-right after a year of minority government. Under the leadership of Luís Montenegro, the Democratic Alliance (AD), a coalition led by EPP member PSD, was rewarded with a strong first-place finish, with 32.7% of the vote and 89 seats in Parliament. The AD increased its vote share, making substantial gains in both urban and rural districts. This confirms that serious, reform-minded governance can still earn trust in a fragmented political landscape.

When Montenegro first took office in 2024, he inherited a country still weighed down by years of Socialist inertia: stagnant public services, a housing market spiralling out of reach for young people, a tax system hostile to entrepreneurs, and a political class mired in scandal. Without a parliamentary majority and facing obstruction from the left and the far right, it would not be easy to put the country in the right track. Yet in just a few months, the AD government began to deliver.

Montenegro's government delivered tangible achievements that resonated with the electorate. These included a measured tax reform package aimed at supporting SMEs and cutting income tax, while improving public sector efficiency in sectors like education and increasing public sector pay and working conditions. In Brussels, Montenegro has been a reliable and constructive partner, reaffirming Portugal's Atlanticist orientation and its commitment to the EU. Under his leadership, Portugal supported the EPP's robust response to geopolitical challenges, including support for Ukraine.

Supporting young people has been a priority for the AD government. Some of its youth-focused policies include housing reforms targeted at first-time buyers, youth-focused tax breaks, increased student housing, and free public transportation passes for under-23s. This cemented the AD's appeal among young voters, in a sign that new generations can respond to responsible, future-oriented centre-right leadership.

The contrast with the opposition could not be starker. The Socialist Party (PS), under Pedro Nuno Santos, fell to its worst result in two decades, with 58 seats and

just 23.4% of the vote. With only four out of 230 seats, the radical left was nearly wiped out. Meanwhile, the radical right Chega surged to 22.6%, matching the PS in seats (and possibly overtaking it when votes from Portuguese communities abroad are counted and their 4 corresponding seats attributed). This is an unprecedented development in the five decades of Portuguese democracy. Ever since he became leader of PSD, Montenegro has drawn a principled line: no deals with extremists. That stance - consistent, clear, and rooted in democratic values - has strengthened PSD's leadership of a robust centre-right bloc.

The 2025 election marks a rebalancing of Portuguese politics, with a weakened left and a surging radical right. But it should also be seen as a vote of confidence in moderate, reformist centre-right politics. The Portuguese electorate has rewarded institutional responsibility by giving the AD an enhanced plurality, and the government is now expected to last a full parliamentary term. For those of us engaged in rebuilding the political centre in Europe, Montenegro's victory is not just a national success - it is a shared milestone.

By Duarte Amaro,
JSD International Secretary

Past Events

YEPP Council Meeting in Moldova

From May 8th to 11th, the centre-right youth gathered in Chişinău, Moldova. A YEPP initiative organized in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies (WMCES). Delegates from across Europe and beyond took part in a series of engaging discussions, meetings, and policy-focused activities with Moldovan leaders.

A standout moment of the event was a special audience with the President of the Republic of Moldova, Maia Sandu. Delegates held an open and thoughtful exchange with the President, discussing Moldova's current political and social landscape. The session offered a unique opportunity for young leaders to ask questions and gain direct insight into the country's future direction.

In addition, delegates had the chance to meet Mihail Popșoi, Moldova's Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Delegates also met Doina Gherman, Deputy Speaker of Parliament and Vice President of PAS, who shared her experiences and perspectives on democratic development and youth participation in public life.

Another key highlight was an in-depth session on the Transnistrian conflict led by Oleg Serebrian, Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration and moderated by George Dimakos, Project Officer of Martens Centre. His briefing helped participants better understand one of Eastern Europe's most pressing unresolved conflicts.

The program featured a lively panel on education and youth policy with Dan Perciun, Minister of Education; Eugeniu Sinchevici, Moldova's youngest MP; and Marcela Nistor, Member of Parliament. Discussions centered on the state of youth engagement, education reform, and shared European values.

Adding an interactive twist to the agenda, participants took part in the second edition of the Westminster Debate, where they debated current issues in a format modeled after the UK Parliament—developing public speaking and critical thinking skills in a fun and competitive setting.

This gathering provided a valuable space for YEPP members and other participants to connect with Moldova's political landscape, deepen their understanding of regional issues, and strengthen transnational cooperation.



Youth Forces Union of VMRO-DPMNE, North Macedonia meets YEPP, 13th of May

In the European Parliament, YEPP had the pleasure of meeting with a delegation of young policymakers who are shaping the future of North Macedonia. The meeting was organised by the Directorate for Democracy Support, Parliamentary Support, and Capacity Building Unit of the European Parliament. Its aim was to provide the delegation of Members of the Macedonian Parliament with insights into youth policy initiatives implemented by various actors within the European Parliament.

During the meeting, YEPP presented the structure and operations of its organisation, highlighting key activities such as creating communication content that resonates with young people, organising online training sessions, and hosting political events that connect national delegates with opportunities at the European level. The Macedonian delegation consisted of Deputies involved in the Youth Committee of their national Parliament, known as the Youth Club—a bipartisan body of young policymakers working collaboratively to influence national youth policy in North Macedonia.

North Macedonian MP and President of the Youth Club, Dragana Bojkovska, who chaired the meeting, was formerly a dele-

gate in YEPP's council meetings. Another MP, Sergej Popov, currently serves as Chairman of the YFU VMRO-DPMNE, the youth branch of North Macedonia's centre-right party VMRO-DPMNE, which is also a YEPP member. This illustrates YEPP's significant role in not only fostering networking at the European level but also in training young individuals to become national policymakers.

During the discussion, the Macedonian MPs inquired whether there are similar bodies at the European level that bring together young Members of the European Parliament. YEPP explained that the EPP Young Network serves a comparable role. It brings together all EPP MEPs under the age of 40 and promotes collaboration through initiatives like the Young MP Erasmus programme. This initiative allows national MPs to visit the European Parliament and gain firsthand experience of its work.

The meeting was a valuable opportunity to exchange best practices on youth advocacy across different levels of governance and allowed YEPP to raise awareness of its initiatives among Members of the North Macedonian Parliament.

CDJA, Netherlands meets YEPP, 16th May 2025

On Friday 16th, YEPP met a young delegation from CDJA, the youth branch of the centre-right party CDA, Netherlands. 14 young Dutch politicians, alongside the International Secretary of CDJA Sjors Verhage visited the EPP Headquarters in Brussels in the context of a study visit of the European Institutions. There they had a chance to get insights on what YEPP does to advocate for youth policies in the European institutions. Specifically, YEPP Executive Officer Danilo Bussi shared how YEPP is empowering young people through training and leadership opportunities, including online workshops and in-presence study days in which they can take part.

The young participants asked questions on how YEPP organises its council meetings and how the resolutions approved in these occasions are then translated in policy advocacy. They also expressed interest in how to improve their professional career in politics by asking for advice. Consequently, YEPP

Executive Officer asked to the CDJA delegation what activities they put in place to engage with their national base.

The CDJA delegates brought valuable insights on youth engagement in the Netherlands, raising concerns about the growing risks of depoliticisation and low youth participation, and the long-term impact that could have on policymaking for younger generations. With YEPP, they discussed possible ways to have an impact to reverse this process. Globally, it was a great opportunity to exchange ideas, experiences, and best practices with our fellow young leaders across Europe!



The YEPP Show

The YEPP Show with MEP Maria Walsh

With mental health being one of YEPP's top priorities for the 2024–2029 European mandate, our latest episode of The YEPP Show featured a powerful conversation with MEP Maria Walsh, a leading EPP voice from Ireland and one of the most vocal advocates on this issue in the European Parliament.

During the episode, YEPP's Adriana Castellanos and Danilo Bussi joined EPP Group Press trainee Andres to share their personal reflections on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing mental health challenges faced by their countries. Together with Maria Walsh, they explored what the European Union is doing to strengthen mental health support across Member States. In the EU, anxiety disorders are the most widespread mental health conditions, affecting around 25 million people (approximately 5.4% of the population). Depressive disorders follow closely, impacting some 21 million individuals. Eating disorders are also a major concern, affecting 20 million people, with young women particularly at risk.

Maria Walsh brought a deeply personal perspective to the discussion, highlighting the experiences that led her to become a mental health advocate. She spoke about the particular challenges in her home country of Ireland during the pandemic, and how growing up in a small community where mental health was often overlooked inspired her to push for greater awareness, support, and policy change on the issue.

Listen to the full episode on Spotify, YouTube, or YEPP's social media!



News from the EU Bubble

Trump Delays Tariffs Against EU After Late-Night Call With von der Leyen

Former U.S. President Donald Trump has postponed imposing tariffs on the European Union following a late-night phone call with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Sunday, May 25. Von der Leyen shared a positive message on social media after the 9 p.m. call, during which Trump—who had previously threatened to impose 50% tariffs on EU imports—agreed to delay the measure until July 9 to allow time for further negotiations with the EU27.

"The EU and US share the world's most consequential and close trade relationship. Europe is ready to advance talks swiftly and decisively," President von der Leyen posted on X.



Largest Russian Drone Attack Kills 12 in Ukraine

In the night of May 25 to 26, Russia launched the largest aerial attack on Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, deploying 364 weapons – 355 drones and 9 missiles. At least 13 people were killed and more than 60 injured across the country. Among the victims were three siblings killed in the Zhytomyr region. In Kyiv, which was celebrating City Day, drone debris caused fires in residential buildings, adding to the civilian toll.

The attack took place amid a major prisoner swap between Ukraine and Russia, with each side releasing 303 prisoners as part of a broader deal involving 1,000 individuals. U.S. President Donald Trump condemned Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying he had "gone absolutely crazy" and stated that he is considering additional sanctions against Russia. U.S. Special Envoy to Ukraine Keith Kellogg described the attack as "shameful" and a clear violation of the 1977 Geneva Protocols, calling for an immediate ceasefire.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky criticized the lack of a strong response from the U.S. after the attack, saying that silence only encourages Putin's aggression. Previous efforts by the U.S. and EU to push for a 30-day ceasefire have so far failed to produce any results.



Polish Presidential Election to Decide Future of Tusk's Agenda

Poland is headed to a decisive presidential runoff on Sunday, June 1, with centrist Warsaw Mayor Rafał Trzaskowski facing Karol Nawrocki, the candidate backed by the right-wing populist Law and Justice (PiS) party. In the first round, Trzaskowski narrowly led with 31.4% of the vote, ahead of Nawrocki's 29.5%.

The election is crucial for the political future of Prime Minister Donald Tusk and his pro-European agenda. After PiS lost the 2023 parliamentary elections to the EPP-affiliated Civic Platform, it retained significant influence through incumbent President Andrzej Duda, who is aligned with PiS and has the power to block or stall key government initiatives.

The outcome of this election will determine whether PiS is fully removed from top political positions or retains a degree of control over national policymaking.



Get to Know: PAS Youth, Moldova

PAS Youth - The Young Generation Driving Moldova's Political Future

PAS Youth is the youth wing of Moldova's governing Party of Action and Solidarity (PAS). Founded in 2017 and led by Mihai Șevciuc in 2025, the organization serves as a dynamic platform for young people eager to shape the future of their country. PAS Youth isn't standing in the shadow of the party - it's out front, growing new leaders and putting real solutions on the table for a more democratic, modern Moldova.

Its mission is straightforward: to give young people real influence in public life, prepare them for leadership, and involve them directly in policymaking. Rooted in European values and democratic principles, PAS Youth invests in political education, mentorship, critical thinking, and civic action.

Core values that define PAS Youth are:

- **Meritocracy** - what you know and what you can do matters more than who you know.
- **Proactivity** - youth don't wait for change; they drive it.
- **Integrity** - transparency and responsibility without shortcuts.

- **Leadership** - not followers, but decision-makers.

- **Critical Thinking** - good decisions come from asking the right questions.

- **Active Involvement** - participation isn't optional, it's essential.

With a strong national network, PAS Youth operates through local and national structures and issue-based teams. Its members are not on the sidelines. They are in local councils, in government institutions, and in Parliament. The organization plays an increasingly visible role in public administration and policymaking.

A powerful example of its impact is Dan Perciun, Moldova's current Minister of Education and Research, who was the founding president of PAS Youth. His path reflects the organization's deep commitment to cultivating real political leadership from the ground up.

In 2024, PAS Youth adopted a new strategic plan aimed at growth, internal strengthening, and greater political influence. It focuses on expanding active membership, deepening involvement in the legislative process, and building European-level partnerships. PAS Youth isn't just reacting to political events, it's helping define the agenda.

And that agenda is about to become even more important. On September 28,

Moldova will hold parliamentary elections that will determine the country's course for the next four years. PAS Youth is ready to play a central role in this pivotal moment, mobilizing young voters, shaping campaign messaging, promoting youth candidates, and ensuring that the voice of Moldova's new generation is heard loud and clear. This won't be just a campaign of slogans, it will be one of substance, energy, and vision.

PAS Youth's priorities focus on what young Moldovans need most: modern education that's practical and aligned with today's job market, real support for youth entrepreneurs, and fully digitized public services. It also fights for equal chances for every young person, regardless of region or background.

PAS Youth isn't just a place for politically curious young people. It's a movement that empowers prepared, courageous, and values-driven leaders. A generation that's not asking for a seat at the table, they're building a new one. With vision, responsibility, and relentless energy, PAS Youth proves that young people aren't just the future of Moldova, they're its present.

PAS Youth is not the future of politics - it's already shaping the present.

By Oxana Bordian,
PAS Youth International Secretary



Social Media Highlights

y youthepp



The EPP Congress was a success! 🇪🇺 🇩🇪

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From May 8th to 11th, the centre right youth gathered in Chisinau.

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europeday!
celebrate peace, unity, and the shared values...
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