

Social Democratic Youth

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Dear comrades,

Two years ago I asked myself, and all of you, some questions regarding Young European Socialists in my candidacy for Vice President and today we have some answers, while we are still looking for the others. Some were answered through our activities and discussions, some during meetings and seminars, and the YES reform process that we were working on in the months behind us. Still, some challenges need to be addressed in the coming days and the only right way to do that is to do it together.

In the past two years, we had a turbulent period on the political scene in the European Union, as well as in other European countries. The far right is strengthening, and it is stronger than ever. Austerity measures are not helping in stopping the crisis, or in tackling the far right. Moreover, they are giving it tailwind. Along with that, our mother parties are often choosing coalitions with conservatives despite our criticism and despite our efforts. The European elections showed that the left is still neither strong enough to take over the European Union, nor strong enough to get it back on the tracks and reform it in order for it to fit its citizens rather than banks and corporations. That should concern all of us. We should take it seriously, take it as a warning.

The position of the Young European Socialists is clear, we know that we want a different Europe, and we want to work on it! Apart from performing political work, advocating for our policies and initiatives, we also need to dedicate a lot of time to ourselves. Getting YES into shape is the biggest challenge of the organization. As I am willing to lead this process and give my personal contribution and full dedication to it, I am presenting my candidacy for Secretary General.

My interest for the international cooperation dates from the period when I was Secretary General of the Social Democratic Youth in the Social Democratic Union from Serbia. At the time, we were developing a cooperation, which resulted in full membership in YES and IUSY in my second term. I am proud of what we have done, of the people I cooperated with and the experience that I gained. Eventually, that brought me to the support which you have given me in becoming Vice president at the last Congress.

In my Vice president mandate, I engaged in working on the YES reform, and, as a member of a team of brilliant people, in creating milestones for future development. I took part in almost all activities of the organization, and represented YES at numerous events as well. I also made an effort to present YES policies and ideas in Serbia to different stakeholders dealing with the same issues. On several occasions, that meant representing the European Youth Guarantee and consulting NGOs in their policies, but actually spreading our joint policy and values. Since informal education has been an important part of my professional experience so far, part of my job in YES was on that track, too. I participated in developing and creating educational programs that we conducted during this mandate. Along with that, I conducted several workshops and trainings on our events and within our member organizations.

My priorities did not change since my previous candidacy, but in this YES mandate I would like first of all to address them, together with all of you, through further developing and implementing the YES reform and the lessons we have learned. This is a continuation of the process and the work done during the past two years. The work on the ideas on how to reform YES was a process that took time, and we did our best to make a meaningful proposal with directions for the future. I gave my contribution to this, but now I am ready to completely dedicate myself to implementing the reform and strengthening the organization.

In my vision, YES is an efficient organization which uses its full capacities, while it is also financially sustainable. On the one hand, it should be the resource center for all member organizations, and on the other hand it should collect the experience from them and learn from the best practices. As I said two years ago, I have been finding inspiration in YES and other member organizations when I thought that my organization is fighting a lost battle and asking for something that is impossible to achieve in our society. If we all embrace this, we will always see that any idea we have can be passed and every battle can be won. We should be there for each other, share ideas, share experiences, transfer knowledge and motivate one another. This is what I always liked about YES, and we need to empower that part of our work even more today. The YES that I want focuses on a follow-up of all activities, even more than in the past. Continuously delegating the work inside the organization in the most efficient way, YES will address issues with maximum outcomes. YES also needs to involve member organizations as much as possible, and create opportunities for them. This is my vision of YES. This is what I want YES to be, what I believe YES can be and what I am asking your support for.

I was talking to a lot of people from different member organizations and I have the impression that they see YES the same way I do, we share the same vision, and we are in this together. That is the only way YES can succeed in its work – by a joint effort of all of us.

Together, we shared victories and defeats in elections all over Europe; together we stood out for the values we believe in. Together we are going to make YES stronger and more influential. Together, we must oppose Europe of islamophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, right wing populists, and fundamentalists. I believe that only together we can build a Europe of solidarity, equality, freedom and peace. All of us –the leadership, member organizations, our members, our mother parties and everyone who shares the same values – we are all in this together, and only together we can do this.

I come from the region of former Yugoslavia, and I am even emotionally attached to a regional cooperation, so this is the reason why I now remember one sentence saying that none of our republics would be anything if we weren't together. This goes for YES, too. Individually, or as lonely organizations, in terms of changing Europe we are nothing. Together, we can bring change. Actually, we did bring change in the region of former Yugoslavia when we formed the SD9 network, the first and only network of social democratic political youth branches from the states of former Yugoslavia since the war. SD9, which I was Secretary General of, is a clear proof that unity is our way out of problems.

I want to dedicate my next two years to this job, to build a strong organization, together with other comrades, that will continue to deliver progressive policies and advocate for values of social democracy. And even more importantly, not just to advocate for them, but to live in accordance with them. I do believe that we can be bigger, better and more influential.

Therefore, I kindly ask for your support to become Secretary General of the Young European Socialists, so that I can work together with you on fulfilling our vision and changing Europe.

Socialist regards,

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