

# LYMEC Annual Report 2015

## Introduction

This LYMEC Annual report covers the year of 2015. This year has been the core of the mandate of the current Bureau and reflects their key strategic priorities set in their working plan. While focusing on the outreach of activities and increased visibility, the Bureau delivered a number of innovative event formats and extended LYMEC's cooperation and communication platform. Also, focus was put on more direct involvement with MOs both through regular visits to their countries and through engaging the members in working groups and LYMEC sponsored activities. In the diversity of topics brought forward in 2015, overarching topic and key issue of LYMEC campaigning efforts was TTIP.

## Extending the outreach of LYMEC

In 2015 LYMEC has made a significant outreach with events that brought diversity and new impetus to our activities. Besides regular activities that involve bi-annual Congresses, seminars, summer schools and workshops with our traditional partner organisations (ELF, FNF, VVD, D66, ALDE Group), we have organised for the first time a **gathering of young liberal local councillors** in cooperation with ALDE CoR. The event emphasised the interlinkage between local and European level and the role of the EU decision making on the local level. Through this event we have broaden our network of members engaged in local politics and provided the young councillors with the opportunity to establish contacts to other councillors as well as decision-makers on the European level which resulted in further strengthening of ties between our young elected representatives throughout Europe.





Next to diversification of our target group through bringing local politicians closer to LYMEC, we've also made significant outreach towards civil society through engagement in public activities on European level. LYMEC joined for the first time the central European event for promotion and advocacy of LGBTI rights - **the Europride**. The event took place in Riga, Latvia, the country presiding the Union at that moment and we've combined it with the workshop with the NGOs promoting LGBTI rights.

We've also tried to focus our political activities on the MOs and countries where our presence would bring added value for our members. In a number of activities, some of the highlights are the **events aiming at building capacities** of our MOs (seminar in Serbia with LDP Youth, workshop in Macedonia with LiDem, workshop in Latvia with Attistibai Youth) and **visits where our presence made political relevance** for the liberal parties there (YLM on elections in Catalonia, LYMEC president on elections in UK and local elections in Vienna).

The Bureau made individual visits to the countries falling under their regional responsibilities, either as guests of our MOs or attending other events which they combined with meetings with our members there. Special emphasis needs to be put on the efforts made to establish a **Baltic liberal network**, which was successfully concluded in early 2016. The Bureau has also **served as trainers and speakers on events of our partners**, which further strengthened our relations and partnership (VVD International training for young liberals in Podgorica, FNF and VVD International training for young liberal activists in Istanbul, ELF Ralf Dahrendorf Roundtable in Ljubljana, IFLRY Capacity building for Latin American organisations in Barcelona, Yabloko, Radikale Venstre and ALDE Party conference in Moscow, LIBSEEN event in Sofia, ALDE Group and Ciudadanos event in Madrid).

During the year we also **renewed and strengthened our cooperation with other political party youth organisations**, both within the European Youth Forum framework and bilaterally, working together on issues such as youth unemployment and free trade. We invited the other PPYOs to our congresses and visited their congresses (YES congress in Winterthur, YEPP Congress in Porto, JEF congress in Zurich). Special partnership was also built with IRI Institute through **joining the platform Generation Democracy** which aims to connect diverse PPYOs in a wide debate about key challenges for the young people today.

In 2015 LYMEC further **strengthened its position within the ALDE Party**, gaining major visibility during the ALDE Party congress by hosting once again a very well visited fringe seminar on Development aid as well as by conducting in depth interviews with all candidates for the ALDE Party Bureau. Evidence of the increased impact and importance of LYMEC in the ALDE Party is also reflected through the invitations to the LYMEC president to chair a working group both at the ALDE Party Council meeting in Oslo, ALDE Party Congress in Budapest as well as in the Reclaiming liberalism series.

## LYMEC on the TTIP myth busting mission

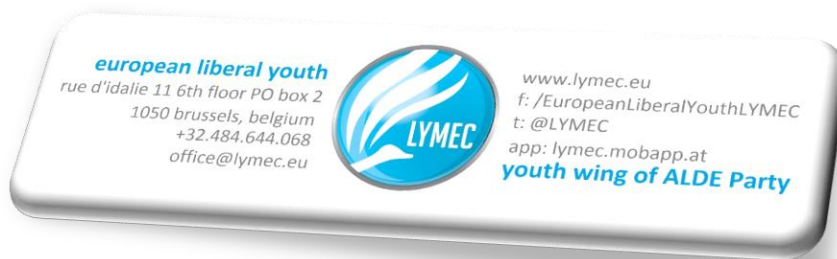


LYMEC focused their advocacy and campaigning activities in 2015 on **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)**. Based on LYMECs favourable position towards free trade and creation of trade partnerships, we've promoted an EU-wide debate on the topic based on the facts available for everyone to find on the DG Trade TTIP-website instead of relying on myths and hear-say. LYMEC organised a number of round-tables on the margins of ALDE Party and LYMEC Congresses together with key liberal spokesperson on that topic MEP Marietje Schaake and other relevant interlocutors.

Also, LYMEC organised an online campaign with the slogan "Bust the myths on TTIP" which caught the attention of not only our MOs who shared it and multiplied its effects, but also engaged NGO and business associations from EU and USA. The highlight of the campaign was the **TTIP action day on May 16<sup>th</sup>**, when our MOs throughout Europe promoted the TTIP in their member states by giving out leaflets and TTIP balloons in street actions or hosted debates and issued newspaper opinion pieces. Next to public promotion of TTIP, LYMEC lead the TTIP policy making exercise inside of the ALDE Party together with German FDP and Dutch VVD which resulted in widely supported **resolution "For A comprehensive TTIP Agreement"** on the ALDE Party Congress in Budapest making the LYMEC position now an official position of liberals in Europe on this issue.



## Promoting liberal policies



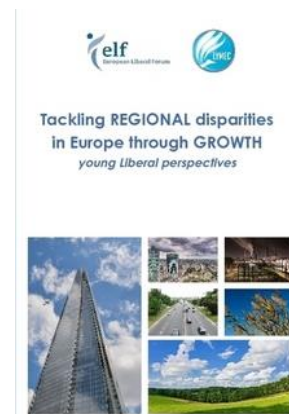
Despite focusing on the TTIP as the key topic of 2015, LYMEC engaged in a number of topics which unfolded through the year and followed the key challenges Europe was facing at that moment.

In the light of the changing security environment in Europe, LYMEC organised a number of events addressing the **issue of security**, from security of prosperity, security and diplomacy to security of energy supply in Europe.

At the beginning of the **refugee crisis** we came out with opinion piece of the President, which later followed joint activities and public calls for action with our MOs and other PPYOs ("Open letter to European leaders to act against Orban's refugee policies" lead by Jeunes MR, "Open appeal to Luxembourg presidency to act on refugee crisis" lead by JD Luxembourg, "Don't touch my Schengen" petition lead by JEF Europe). LYMEC also took part in the creation of the ALDE Party position towards the refugee crisis and migration through active participation of LYMEC President on the drafting workshops on the topic of migration inside of Reclaiming liberalism series.

Also, to commemorate **European year of development**, LYMEC organised a fringe meeting on that topic on the margins of the ALDE Party Congress in Budapest, gathering MEPs and MPs as well as experts on our panel. Cooperation with the MEPs and MPs was further extended on other topics such as youth unemployment, TTIP, CAP and Regional disparities.

The workshop with ELF on regional disparities which took place in Warsaw gave once again our participants the opportunity to have their papers published in a book. After compilation of all the articles and book launch, the publication was later distributed to decision-makers in the European Parliament and in the Committee of Regions. The **book "Tackling regional disparities in Europe through Growth"** is also available on [Google books](#), [Amazon](#) and [Lulu](#).



## Strengthening our network

The Bureau continued working in 2015 in the same format (Vedrana Gujić as president, Sissel Kvist as vice-president, Danica Vihinen as treasurer, Svenja Hahn as press officer, Timo Roeleveld as political officer, Jelena Jesajana as campaign officer and Markus Ylimaa as education and trainings officer). Office was headed by Igor Caldeira, where we trained a number of assistants from **Zeneda Ferattlari and Edgaras Mascinskas to Mitch Devinck**, who all stayed embedded in the organisation through other forms of engagement.



In 2015 the organisation witnessed slight structural changes and further growth of members, therefore continuing to pursue its goals of extending its membership base and promoting liberalism in all corners of Europe. We have welcomed back the **JDL Luxembourg** as full members and accepted **Attistibai Youth Latvia, TLDE Romania and LIFT Hungary** as associate members. The Bureau continued to keep contact with potential new MOs from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Poland, Czech Republic, Turkey and Andorra.

Also, we witnessed an increase in numbers, strength and activities of the **Individual members section (IMS)** in 2015. IMS held regular meetings, actively participated in working groups and regular LYMEC activity and contributed to the overall development of the organisation.

**The Statute was changed** so that it allows new organisations to apply for membership on both Congresses. Also, to clarify and simplify the procedures internal deadlines are changed to match two time indicators – eight weeks prior to the Congress or four weeks prior to the Congress. Changes in Rules of Associations enabled the Bureau to co-ordinate and organise the work of the Working groups, following the increase of working groups and interest of our members to join them.

In 2015 LYMEC operated in **2 working groups and created additional two** at the end of the year. **Press team** was in charge of editing and preparing the bi-annual LYMEC Congress Newspaper and **50 shades of liberalism** working group researched political standpoints of our MOs on a number of topics, such as Youth unemployment, Human rights and recent Migrant crisis. Following the intense debate on agricultural policy at the Autumn congress, we created the **CAP** working group in December with the idea of redrafting current agricultural policy and research new and progressive approach towards agriculture in Europe. Also, **40Y** working group will prepare for the celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LYMEC taking place in 2016. The Bureau continuously encouraged the involvement of members in the working groups with the aim to get a more direct engagement of individuals in pan-European policy making and to extend the European platform for joint activities.

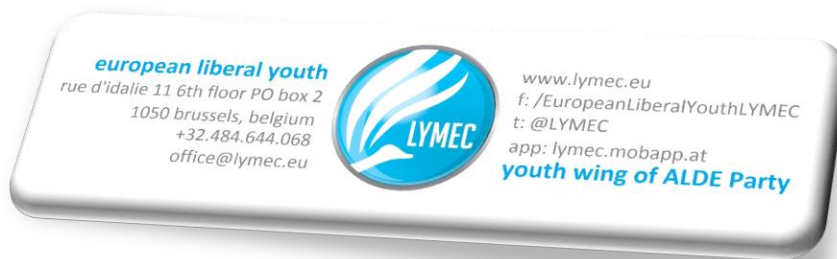
## Campaigning and communication

LYMEC Bureau continued to pursue various forms of promotion and communication with our members, partners and general public. Central website of LYMEC – [www.lymec.eu](http://www.lymec.eu) – was renewed in 2015 through the financial grant by the European Commission. The renewed website introduced a more user friendly interface allowing a better overview of activities, news and past and upcoming events. While key information and relevant data is always available on the website, LYMEC strongly engages with members and partners through **social networks**. LYMEC **Facebook** account currently has 20,191 followers, making LYMEC second largest PPYO on Facebook (after YEPP). LYMEC **Twitter** account is followed by 2, 437 followers and **Instagram** by 654 followers (the number tripled since its opening in late 2014).

- 5 -

LYMEC is supported by operational funds from ALDE Party, from ALDE Group in the European Parliament and the Erasmus Plus Programme of the European Commission





Next to official online channels, LYMEC hosts several internal discussion and information sharing groups on Facebook which can be joined upon invitation (LYMEC International officers group, LYMEC IMS group, LYMEC CAP working group).

In 2015 we've engaged in a try-out of our new visual promotion tool – **LYMEC Congress TV**. The Press team filmed interview and re-caps from LYMEC events such as [as LGBTI seminar in Riga](#), [Young Liberal Councillors gathering in Brussels](#) and [LYMEC Congress in Rotterdam](#), which can be accessed through LYMEC YouTube account and the Videos section of the official website. LYMEC Press team also assisted in filming promotion videos for [TIIP campaign](#).

**LYMEC Congress newspapers** continued to regularly follow the activities of LYMEC and its MOs and host interviews with a number of prominent European liberals such as MEPs Ilhan Kyuchuk on Youth unemployment and Fredrick Federley on Renewable energies.

Also, **LYMEC mobile app**, launched in 2014, continues to be regularly updated with information about new events and all relevant data about LYMEC and its member organisations. The app is available for both iPhone and androids.

## Events in 2015

2015 continues to deliver a **high number of events** for all profiles of members, now widened with the outreach towards young elected local and regional councillors. While regular statutory activities continued to take place (Spring and Autumn Congress, YLM, Bureau meetings), we've diversified other types of activities through organising focused capacity buildings for MOs, public activities such as attending EuroPride and hosted policy workshops and book publishing. Cooperation on projects with ALDE Party, ELF, FNF, VVD and D66 continued to deliver high-quality events for our members.

Below you can find a **detailed list of activities** that have taken place in the course of 2015:



Date and Place	Type of activity	Summary of the event
20.-22. February Belgrade	<b>LYMEC roundtable on Media freedoms and Bureau meeting</b>	LYMEC and Mladi LDP-a organised a round table discussion on media freedoms and the freedom of speech, as recent events and trends had showed a deterioration of media freedoms in Serbia. LYMEC Bureau held its regular meeting on the margins of the event.
22.-23. March Warsaw	<b>LYMEC/ELF Workshop</b> - <b>Tackling regional disparities through growth</b>	The workshop discussed about different levels of development across European regions and solutions on how to tackle regional disparities by promoting growth based on innovation, private investment and trade. The workshop resulted in the book "Tackling Regional Disparities Through Growth: Young Liberal Perspectives" compiled from the participants' papers on the topic.
30. April-03. May Rotterdam	<b>LYMEC Congress</b> - <b>Securing European Prosperity</b>	LYMEC Spring Congress gather more than 100 delegates who debated wide range of resolutions and selected LYMEC delegation to the ALDE Party Congress in Budapest. Congress also hosted a fringe meeting on TTIP and launched a LYMEC europe-wide TTIP campaign.
04.-05. June Brussels	<b>LYMEC/ ALDE CoR seminar for young local councillors</b> - <b>Local politics revealed</b>	LYMEC and ALDE CoR organised a seminar for young local councillors which focused on the role of the CoR in the European institutional framework. Next to the visit to a plenary meeting of CoR, the event included a visit to the nearby municipality of Uccle/Ukkel, an example of good interaction between the European and the local levels.
05. June Brussels	<b>LYMEC Book launch</b> - <b>Tackling Regional Disparities through Growth</b>	In a dinner debate LYMEC presented the results of the Warsaw workshop and launched its book "Tackling Regional Disparities Through Growth: Young Liberal Perspectives".



<p>20.-21. June Riga</p>	<p><b>LYMEC IMS seminar</b> - <b>A Liberal Fight for LGBT Rights and Europride and Baltic Pride 2015.</b></p>	<p>LYMEC and Latvian Attistibai Youth organised a workshop on LGBTI rights across Europe, which hosted as speakers representatives from international LGBTI NGO IGLYO. As a result of the workshop Latvijas Attistibai Youth developed its strategy on promoting LGBTI rights and its campaign for gathering signatures for the Cohabitation Law project through citizens initiative platform manabalss.lv.</p> <p>The participants of the workshop joined the EuroPride and Baltic Pride march in Riga.</p>
<p>01.-02. July Brussels</p>	<p><b>LYMEC/ALDE Group Summer Academy</b> - <b>A Europe That Works for Young People</b></p>	<p>Traditional LYMEC/ALDE Summer Academy presented to the participants how the ALDE group in the European parliament works and what are their relations with its two European political parties, their political foundations and youth organisations. The participants also debated some of the key topics for young generations today: unemployment, brain drain, mobility, free trade, entrepreneurship and apprenticeship.</p>
<p>17.-20. September The Hague</p>	<p><b>LYMEC/VVD/D66 summerschool</b> - <b>Security and Diplomacy</b></p>	<p>The Summer School on the topic of Security and Diplomacy was a mixture of lectures on international relations, debates on EU-Russia Relations and the situation in Eastern Ukraine and introduction to negotiation strategies for people who are interested in working in Foreign Policy.</p>
<p>25.-27. September Barcelona</p>	<p><b>LYMEC Young Liberal Leaders meeting</b> - <b>Leading for Liberty</b></p>	<p>The central activity of this year's leaders meeting was a professional training on campaigning, communication and management by a renowned trainer Kamran Ullah. Presidents and Vice-presidents attending the YLM also observed the regional elections in Catalonia, which took place the same weekend.</p>
<p>29.October-01. November Helsinki</p>	<p><b>LYMEC Congress</b> - <b>Energy Security</b></p>	<p>LYMEC Autumn Congress gather the participants to further debate new resolutions, accept new member organisations (JDL Luxembourg, Attistibai Youth Latvia, TLDE Romania and LIFT Hungary) and voted on the change of Statute. The Congress supported a refugee crisis campaign of the ALDE Group #letthemfly.</p>





<p>19.–21. November Budapest</p>	<p><b>LYMEC delegation to ALDE Party Congress</b></p>	<p>LYMEC delegation was actively taking part in discussions and debates during the ALDE Party Congress in Budapest and presented the widely supported resolutions on TTIP. The LYMEC delegation also interviewed all of the candidates for president and the next ALDE Party Bureau. The elections resulted in a success for LYMEC as three young liberals were elected ALDE Party vice-presidents: Fredrick Federley, Ilhan Kyuchuk and Marta Pascal, who have all been actively involved in LYMEC.</p>
<p>20. November Budapest</p>	<p><b>LYMEC Fringe on Development Aid</b></p>	<p>LYMEC organised a fringe panel debate on the margins of ALDE Party Congress in Budapest on the topic “Development Aid - EU’s unused potential” with MEP Ilhan Kyuchuk, MP Michael Aastrup Jensen and experts.</p>
<p>11. December Brussels</p>	<p><b>LYMEC working group - CAP</b></p>	<p>After an extensive debate about the Common Agricultural Policy on our congress in Helsinki, LYMEC launched a Working Group on CAP. The group hosted two debates for its members with policy officer from COPA-COGECA and with Jan Huitema, ALDE MEP.</p>

For any further questions or information, do not hesitate to consult LYMEC website [www.lymec.eu](http://www.lymec.eu) or contact the Bureau [bureau@lymec.eu](mailto:bureau@lymec.eu) or the office [office@lymec.eu](mailto:office@lymec.eu).

Liberaly yours,

LYMEC Bureau

