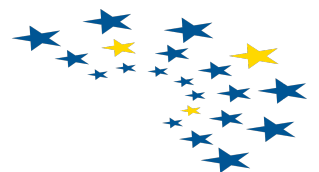


First steps. A GUIDE FOR NEW ALUMNI OF THE EYP

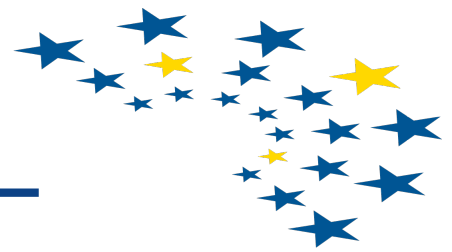
FIRST STEPS

A GUIDE FOR NEW ALUMNI
OF THE EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT



EUROPEAN **YOUTH** PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN DES **JEUNES**
SUOMI FINLAND

EUROPEAN **YOUTH** PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN DES **JEUNES**
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA SWITZERLAND 



Welcome to the community of EYP Alumni!

You've enjoyed a few sessions as a delegate of the European Youth Parliament, which officially makes you an alumnus of the EYP, and you've certainly realised what a fantastic organisation the EYP is. By now, you may also have realised that your time has come to take on the responsibilities of an official's role. This step shouldn't be underestimated – by all means, do enjoy being a delegate for the time being. As an experienced delegate who's started thinking about becoming an official, you will be facing different challenges with your work, and essentially understand the EYP's objectives from a whole other perspective.

Today, EYP is taking place in three dozen countries, and there are more than a hundred events every year. However, the ever-growing international organisation that we are makes it more and more complicated to know one's way around EYP.

This is where this guide comes into play: It is designed to help you, as a fresh alumnus or alumna of the EYP, find your very own way in EYP. We'll show you which sessions you can choose from, how to apply to them, and give you other useful tips.

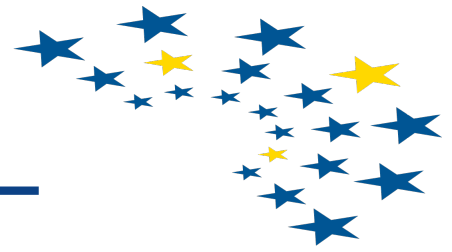
Should you still have questions after reading this guide, you can get in touch with the board of your National Committee. If there are any inaccuracies in this guide which need correction, please write us at firststeps@eyp.ch.

Good luck,

the National Committees of EYP Switzerland and EYP Finland

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EYP international: How it works

The international organisation of the EYP is sometimes justly described as a miniature European Union (of course with some important differences): It consists of 36 National Committees, all of which are independent, act on their own behalf and are volunteer-run. The Schwarzkopf Foundation, which is based in Berlin, assures the international coordination of EYP, especially with regard to the three annual International Sessions. An Executive Director runs the office of international EYP whose responsibilities are the supervision of the International Sessions and international representation and general coordination of the EYP network. Mr Ville Vasaramäki (FI) is currently the Executive Director of the EYP.

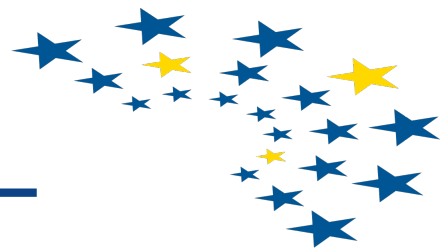
Internationally, the EYP is based on democratic governance, with the National Committees as constituents in the **Board of National Committees (BNC)**. All National Committees can send representatives to the biannual meetings, where the BNC submits policy proposals and offers a possibility for exchange and networking.

All alumni of recent International Sessions and the National Committees jointly elect the **Governing Body (GB)**, which is the EYP's international board. Made up of six elected members and a representative from SF, is responsible for EYP policy-making. The policies issued by the GB are internal rules and regulations of the EYP. It facilitates the general development of the organisation, defining policies, and working on the quality benchmarking of International Sessions, as well as long-term sustainability and protection of the organisation. The minutes of GB minutes are published on the Alumni Platform (see below), and a comprehensive policy compilation can be found in the Knowledge Database of the Alumni Platform. Members of the GB are senior alumni that have accumulated a lot of experience in the past and teachers with long-running involvement in the organisation.

The most recently created body of the EYP is the **EYP Academy**, one of many permanent working groups of the EYP. Its goal is to enhance trainings and the overall academic value of group dynamics at all types of events of our organisation. The Academy organises an annual **Training for EYP Trainers (T4ET)** that provides experienced alumni with valuable tools to provide high-quality trainings to others. It has also published a number of useful guidebooks, especially for Chairs, all of which can be found at www.eypacademy.org or at the Alumni Platform.

As an alumnus of EYP, you should ideally be a member of your country's **National Committee** – typically the one in which you started your participation in EYP. From there, you not only can participate in sessions and represent your country, but your National Committee is also always on the lookout for motivated people wishing to strengthen the institutional backbone of EYP. In time, you can seek office on the board of an NC, as your country's BNC representative, and who knows, one day a member of the Governing Body.

Already today though, you as a recent alumnus have a responsibility to **engage in EYP polity**. We embrace democratic ideals and consensus (following up to a good argument, naturally), and for these reasons, we are motivated by democratic principles in the work and policies of our



bodies. The decisions taken by the GB affect us all, and it is in your interest as a member of the EYP community that you stay informed and up-to-date about recent developments.

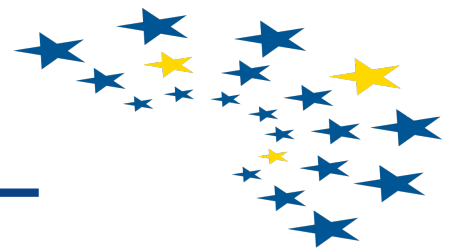
The EYP is democratic in two ways: Firstly, it is representative by giving all active alumni a vote in the GB elections. Active alumni is defined as participants (teachers, organisers, journalists, chairs and jury) of the National, Regional and International Sessions of the past two years (counted from the date of the election). Secondly, EYP is democratic in a participative sense: There are regular open consultations of the wider community on pressing issues (such as the alcohol policy debate in 2011), and you also can at all times approach the political bodies of the EYP. The GB meets regularly, and you can submit questions to them, and your National Committee will be happy to discuss points you would like to have brought up at a BNC meeting.

In short, extraordinary EYP sessions need a strong institutional backbone. Luckily, in our organisation, the people attending sessions are also those who provide their work to EYP's institutions. If you think EYP can be improved beyond the boundaries of a single session, it's time for you to engage in our political bodies.

Types of sessions

There are a myriad of different session types, and whilst there are some common denominators, the role you play as an official can differ considerably from session to session. Here is an overview of the most common session types.

- *Regional/National Sessions.* The majority of sessions that take place are selection conferences on a regional or national level. Needless to say, the Nationals tend to be more appealing in terms of the size and the quality of delegates, especially in countries where they've been preselected at Regionals. For a first-time officials' experience, three day Regionals or Nationals are ideal.
- *Fora.* A forum is a rather loose term, but generally means a session that follows the standard international three-part structure of Teambuilding, Committee Work and General Assembly, but without a selection purpose, and they tend to be longer. Delegations to Fora are often international, as is the officials' team. Since delegates are usually second-time delegates and the session is a little longer than a National, officials are expected to be slightly more experienced. In many ways, a Forum is a miniature International Session.
- *International Sessions.* Due to their length (9 days) and prestige, the competition for spots at ISs is large. The GB ensures a fair balance of gender, regions and experience on the officials' teams. To qualify as an applicant to an IS, one must have a *recommendation*. Recommendations can be given to you by your chair as an IS delegate. Alternatively, the President of another session can recommend you in your role as a chairperson or journalist (in the latter case, the Editor would suggest your recommendation to the President of the session), provided that President has chaired at an International Session. Essentially, a recommendation means that an experienced and respected EYPer states that they consider you capable of chairing/journoing at an International level. In addition to a recommendation, more experience is expected from

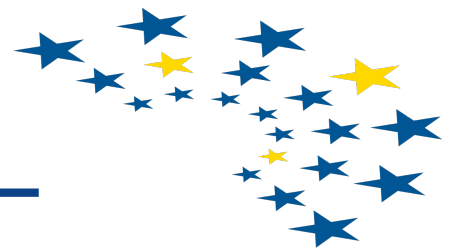


an international official, i.e. having attended several other sessions in the role for which you're applying.

- *Mini-sessions.* This simply means any session that is less than the standard NS 3-day session or any session that doesn't have the full three-part structure. Many National Committees organise short sessions at schools or as regional selection events, which are a great opportunity to stay involved. However, it's advisable to gain experience in full-length sessions beforehand since mini-sessions can be more difficult to chair at and many sometimes don't count them as a full 'chairs experience' in a session history.

Different officials' roles

- *Organiser.* Some NCs have a tradition of giving selected delegations the opportunity to organise the following National Conference, and others have open calls for their organisers' team. Organising an EYP event is a uniquely rewarding experience that offers some unique challenges, such as long-time project management, PR, fundraising and ultimately the chance to create your own EYP event. Almost every senior alumnus of the EYP has contributed to the organisation of a few sessions in his or her past.
- *Journalist.* Most people's first officials' experience is as a journalist. EYP journalism is a pleasant way of observing chairs and generally how an officials' position works, but it must be said that journalism is not just a stepping-stone into chairing. If you aren't interested in taking part as a journo, there's nothing stopping you from applying to chair directly. The advantage of journoing is that the press room under the Editor is similar to a committee and its chair, making the transition a little easier. At the same time, journoing requires a great deal of creativity and flexibility – it might not be everyone's cup of tea. You can't know without trying, though!
- *Chair.* The most visible official to your own delegates, chairing is both challenging and rewarding. As a chair, you hold a considerable amount of responsibility towards your committee and the other chairs (whether you're chairing alone or with a co-chair). When chairing for the first time, it's highly recommended to apply to do so at a session where there will be co-chairs so that you can be paired up with someone more experienced.
- *Editor.* The Editor is responsible for the media team and is very much of a chairperson of the journalists, so editorial applicants are expected to have experience in both EYP journalism and chairing. Editors (and editorial assistants, as there are at some sessions, esp. Internationals) are responsible for the team spirit and social atmosphere within their press team, the creative drive and vision behind a press team's session presence, and editing the material product of the latter, whether video or newspaper.
- *Vice-Presidents.* The board supports the President in all of their roles across the session. The most visible task is chairing debates in GA, but a great deal more goes on behind the scenes in supporting and accompanying the entire chairs' team, especially with the training modules prior to the session. To apply as VP, one should have considerable chairing experience.
- *President.* Most session presidents are appointed by invitation rather than an open call. Presidents are highly experienced and respected EYPers who have taken part in a number of sessions to gain the insight, knowledge and experience needed to take responsibility for an entire officials' team and the delegates. A President is someone who will classically have VPed and perhaps edited several times.



Finding a session

The first step to participate in a session is of course to find a session which you'd be interested in attending. This can be a little tricky, since not all National Committees put information online far in advance. There is a number of places where you can look out for sessions, though.

- *Alumni Platform & Session Calendar.* A safe bet for finding sessions organised by date is the official international platform of the EYP. You'll find all events and sign-up information on alumni.eyp.org. Refer to the next section to find out more about this useful tool
- *Facebook & Twitter.* The unofficial alumni platforms of the EYP, although most promotion and advertising for sessions happens on Facebook. To be sure that you catch wind of new events, 'like' the pages of National Committees and upcoming major events.
- *Your National Committee's newsletter.* Most NCs offer a regular newsletter that includes calls for sessions and plenty of other useful information on the EYP's activity in your country. Visit your NC's website to know more.

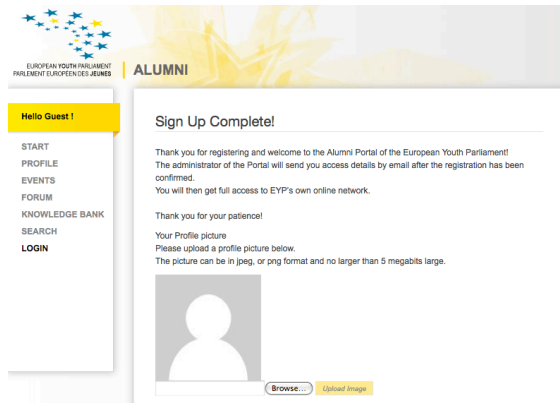
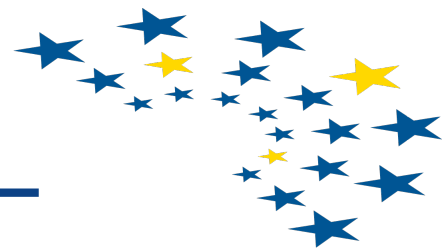
Alumni Platform

The Alumni Platform is an immensely useful tool. You can explore upcoming events, sign up or apply to sessions, message friends, read the latest news from the GB. Should you ever be in need of resources on EYP, there's a very informative section called "EYP materials". There's EYP's very own Wiki that comprises information about all NCs and international affairs and you can debate EYP policy and current political developments in the Forum.

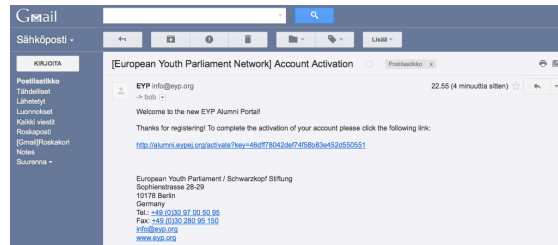
If you've attended an International Session, you'll automatically have an account at the Alumni Platform, but participants of any EYP events are welcome on the platform. Below are some instructions on how to sign up – if you have any problems, you should write to the International Office in Berlin at support@eyp.org.

1. Go to alumni.eyp.org/register to start the registration procedure (this link is not visible on the Alumni Platform's start page!). *Do not* go to alumni.eyp.org/ or alumni.eyp.org/login. Fill in your **account details**. The username is the name with which you will log in on the portal later on.

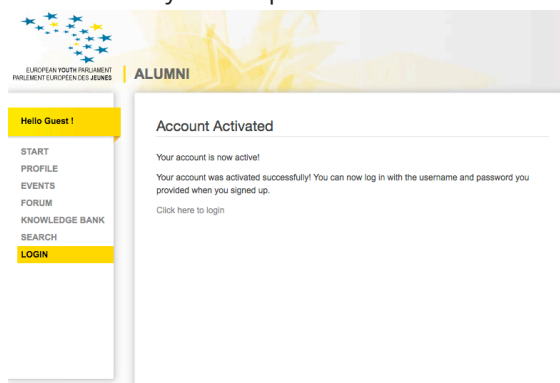
2. Once you have filled in your account details, click "Complete Sign Up".



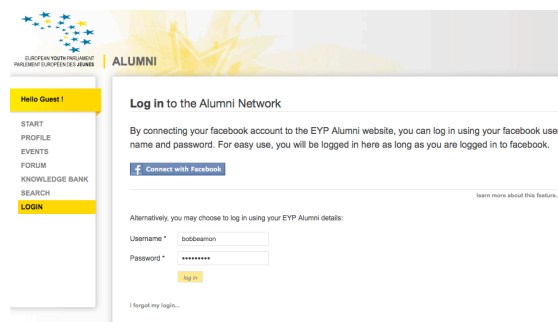
3. Once you have clicked "Complete Sign Up", the portal will say "Sign Up Complete!" You however still need to activate your account though. To do so, the portal automatically sends an activation email to the email address you have provided.



4. The e-mail looks like this. As instructed in the message, there is a link you need to click. Click it.



5. Once you have clicked the link in the activation email, the portal will announce that "your account is now active". Click "Click here to login".

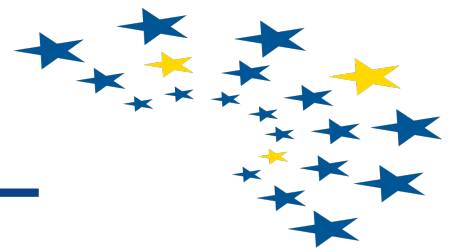


6. Now, use your username and password to log in. You have the opportunity to connect your account to your Facebook account. That's it, enjoy! If there are any issues with your account, you should e-mail support@eyp.org.

What makes a good application?

There are three common ways of administering applications for officials teams: directly through the Alumni Platform, using a Google Form, or by filling in a document on your computer and e-mailing it to the selecting panel. However, all of these procedures have in common that they consist of an application form to be filled out by a certain deadline and to be returned to the selection panel.

There is no 'perfect application', because an application essentially is **your** statement of motivation and ability for a certain position at a specific session. Your application ought to represent *you* as an EYPer and a person before corresponding to any 'objective' criteria according to which applications are regarded.



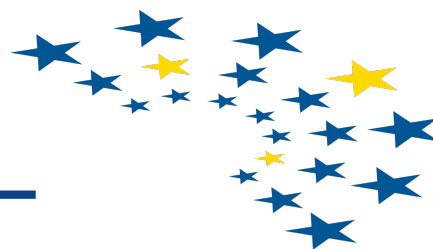
That said, an application is a formal document, and there are a number of factors which will unquestionably enhance your application's quality and thus your credibility as a serious candidate.

The main questions:

- *Session history.* Here you'll be asked to list the sessions you've attended, the position you held (chair/journo/delegate etc.) and your immediate 'superior' – for delegates, your chair, for journalists, your editor, for organisers the head organiser and for chairs the president, so that, in theory, the selection panel could get in touch with any one of these as a reference. Remember to include the year and type of session (Regional/National/International/Forum).
- *General questions.* Standard questions include „What would you bring to X session?“, „Why do you want to be a part of Y Session?“ „Compose a committee topic with description“ (for chairing applicants) and „Write an article on Z“ (for journalists). Bear in mind, no matter what the question, that the panel will likely be reading many very similar answers. Try to stand out, even if it means going a little out of the box, but be careful to read the questions properly before answering. Nothing looks poorer than a reply, however good, which doesn't answer the question.
- *Have something to say.* Needless to say, the content is what matters. The key to all good writing is having something to say – and then saying it as clearly as possible. Show that you have truly thought about attending *this* session, not just any generic session, and that you have a *plan* or a clear idea of what you wish to achieve. Try to have only 1–3 key points you wish to make – of course you have multiple reasons to attend the session, but no one is interested in reading all of them.

A few more things...

- *Language.* An application is a formal document and should be handled professionally – you are trying to show a selection panel that you are a serious candidate (even if you're applying for the 'fun' position of journalist). Even if English isn't your first language, pay a lot of attention to correct spelling (spellchecker!), formal language, single punctuation – two exclamation marks don't say anything one doesn't – and no smileys, if you can.
- *Tone.* If you're applying to a session, you love EYP. We know. We don't need twenty exclamation marks to prove it – try to avoid the trap of being overly enthusiastic with empty adjectives like great, brilliant, amazing and exciting. Instead, try to explain *why* you love whatever it is or connect it to something personal.
- *File format.* This may seem minimal, but can make your application look better or worse instantly. Rename the file to include your name – please no „application.doc“s and if you can, save the file as a .pdf.
- *Covering email.* Easy to forget when you're hurriedly sending off the application two minutes before the deadline, but remember that first impressions count. A few friendly but formal lines addressed to ‚Dear Selection Panel/National Committee/person if you know the name' are to be expected. It's unprofessional, even rude, to simply send the form attached to an empty email.



I applied – what now?

You usually need to be patient with official selections – EYPers are volunteers and have a ‘real life’ too. Also, official selections are a delicate matter, and the selection panels usually go about with a lot of discussion and attention to detail in order to treat all applications fairly. This naturally takes a little while.

After you have sent in your application, some NCs will confirm having received your application. Then, a selection panel consisting of members of the respective NC and the session President/Editor will convene to discuss the applications. Within a few days, or sometimes also a week or two, you will receive a message about the selection outcome.

It is important to note that not being selected does not in any case mean that EYP doesn’t want you. Rather, not being selected means that on this very team for this session in question, there wasn’t a spot for you. It is fair to say that it has happened to the best of us to have their application refused. Take it as a learning opportunity, think how you could improve future applications and whether this was the right session for you. Also, you can always ask for feedback from the selection panel if you’d like to.

Furthermore, expressing your disappointment publicly, for instance on Facebook, is a bad idea. As said, we have all been refused at some point or another, but we have moved on. It is almost certain that public outbursts of disappointment will be noticed by members of the selection panel, not to mention dozens of *future* selection panel members.

In any case, good luck with your applications. We hope to have given you some of the most important tools – now go and write a brilliant application! And enjoy your time in EYP.

About this guide

This guide is published by EYP Switzerland and EYP Finland. We’ve tried to be as accurate as possible, but if there are any typos, mistakes or misrepresentations, we’d appreciate it if you dropped a quick line at firststeps@eyp.ch.

The *First Steps* guide is free to use for all National Committees, but we strongly recommend for it to be given out to new alumni, for example after returning from an event abroad as delegates, rather than to be put on your website.

We did not intend to violate any copyrights in the publishing of this guide. Should you feel otherwise, please write to the e-mail address above.

February 2012 – Sophie Debrunner Hall, Jari Marjelund, Ueli Staeger. Many thanks to everyone who helped with the writing and proofreading of this guide.