



**Draft**

**Title:** **Closing the Age Gap in Politics: Prioritising Young Candidates for the 2024 European Parliament Elections**

**Tabled by:** Young European Greens (FYEG)

**Draft text**

1 In order to build a sustainable and just future, we must invest in the next  
2 generation of leaders. We are committed to supporting and empowering young  
3 people to take an active role in shaping the political landscape of Europe. As  
4 European Greens, we commit to an increase in the number of young representatives  
5 in candidate lists for the European Parliament elections of 2024, with a  
6 particular focus on electable positions.

7 Young people are the ones most affected by the pressing challenges of our time,  
8 especially the climate crisis. We often talk about how youth are the future –  
9 but they are already here now, in the present. We need their perspectives and  
10 their input in the Green movement.

11 Currently, young people are underrepresented both in national parliaments and  
12 the European Parliament. The average MEP is 49.5 years old.[1] One-fifth of  
13 Europeans fall within the 18-35 age range, whereas only 6 percent of Members of  
14 the European Parliament (MEPs) belong to this demographic. On the other hand,  
15 although one-fifth of Europeans are aged between 51 and 65, the proportion of  
16 MEPs in this age group is 42 percent, twice the number.[2]

17 This is concerning and needs to be addressed proactively. A lack of generational  
18 change leads to a reluctance to adopt new policies and jeopardises our ability  
19 to tackle the climate crisis and other challenges of our time effectively.

20 Additionally, an increase in the number of young representatives in parliament  
21 can help close the gender gap in politics. There are more women parliamentarians  
22 in younger age groups, as the findings of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
23 shows.[3] For example, within the 21-30 age group, the male to female ratio  
24 among MPs is approximately 60:40. For the 31-40 age group, the ratio is only  
25 approximately 2:1.

26 We call on Green parties to make room for young candidates who represent the  
27 needs of future generations.

28 Greens have always championed increased youth representation and involvement in  
29 the structures of their parties, as well as of the lowering of voting age in all  
30 elections, and especially the European ones. Not only in Austria, the first EU  
31 member state to allow voting age at 16 in all elections in 2007, but also in  
32 Belgium and Germany, where voting age for the European elections was lowered to  
33 16 in the recent coalition agreements: in all these countries Green parties  
34 triggered the conversation and achieved the result of lowering the voting age.  
35 Greens also have been championing youth representation in the European  
36 Parliament, with the Greens/EFA being the Group with the highest number of MEPs  
37 under 30 years old.

38 European Greens and its member parties commit to make room for young candidates  
39 who represent the needs of future generations.

40 1. We commit to prioritise putting forward young candidates, below the age of  
41 35, in elections at all levels of government, especially for the upcoming  
42 2024 European Parliament elections. In accordance with Green values, the  
43 participation of youth is crucial to ensuring a sustainable and just  
44 future.

45 2. We underline the importance of placing young candidates in electable spots  
46 on party lists. In many cases, young candidates are relegated to lower  
47 positions on lists, making it difficult for them to win seats. By  
48 prioritising electable spots for young candidates, we can ensure that  
49 their voices are heard, and their contributions are valued.

50 3. We commit to provide training and support to young candidates, to help

51 them develop the skills and experience necessary to succeed in politics.  
52 This includes providing mentorship, networking opportunities, and access  
53 to resources and funding. Candidates of marginalised identities should  
54 receive trainings that equip them with the skills to better deal with  
55 social and structural discrimination they may face as candidates.  
56 Moreover, parties should provide adequate human and material resources to  
57 young candidates to run their campaigns.

58 4. Being a young candidate is always a challenging experience, but young  
59 candidates of marginalised identities face extra barriers to accessibility  
60 due to discriminatory structures and systems, from gender-based to racial  
61 to ableist discrimination, to other forms of discrimination. We pledge to  
62 strengthen our support networks for (potential) candidates that are young  
63 women, trans, non-binary or queer, from racialised or ethnic-minoritised  
64 communities, disabled, or that are otherwise affected by discrimination.

65 5. Investing in youth is an investment in the future of the planet. By  
66 empowering young leaders in politics, we can build a better world for  
67 generations to come.

68 By investing in young and electable candidates, we can build a stronger and more  
69 vibrant Green movement, and create a better world. The EGP and its member  
70 parties commit to prioritise young candidates and provide them with the support  
71 they need to succeed.

## Background

## References

[1] European Parliament. (2019, July 9). *Facts and figures: the European Parliament's new term*. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20190705STO56305/facts-and-figures-the-european-parliament-s-new-term>.

[2] Shilhav, R. (2022, September 15). *There are as many Martins in the European Parliament as MEPs under 30*. *European Youth Forum*. <https://www.youthforum.org/news/there-are-as-many-martins-as->

[meps-under-30.](#)

[3] Inter-Parliamentary Union. (2021, April 22). *Parliaments are getting (slightly) younger according to latest IPU data* [Press release]. <https://www.ipu.org/youth2021-PR>.