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**THE  
ECOSPRINTER**



**THE  
SOCIAL  
RIGHTS  
ISSUE**

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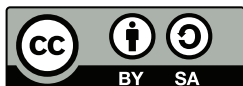
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## Ecosprinter Editorial Board

**Morgan Henley** left the swamp of her native Florida in 2010 to live in Prague, Czech Republic. There she became active with the Czech Young Greens and FYEG, where she joined the Ecosprinter Editorial Board in 2014, later FYEG's Climate Change Campaign and finally was elected as a member of FYEG's Executive Committee in 2015. She currently works for the European Green Party and lives in Brussels. Her family has long worked in newspapers and she is happy to carry on the tradition.

**Jakob Hundsbichler** likes trains. Although being an avowed atheist, he takes satisfaction in holding bible study sessions, especially late at night. He is active with the Austrian Young Greens and studies philosophy and political science in Vienna.

**Paula Keller** has been active with the Young Greens for roughly 4 years. Originally from Germany, she moved to the UK for her studies and is now mostly active within the Federation of Young European Greens, the Ecosprinter and Spunk, the publication of the German Grüne Jugend. Studying philosophy, she adores late night pseudointellectual conversations, cats and black turtlenecks. Her article is written in that very same spirit. Aside from Green politics, Paula defines as an angry feminist, despairs capitalism but has a thing for fashion

**Simo Raittila** recently left his job as the Editor-in-Chief of the magazine (Rönsy) of the Finnish Green Youth (ViNO) to pursue a PhD in sociology at the University of Helsinki. He also identifies as part of the digital precariat. He had less to do with this printed edition, but has done more on the online side of the Ecosprinter.



# Editorial

If you are reading this, it means we did it! After years of dreaming by many Young Greens and members of the Ecosprinter Editorial Board, we've finally produced the EcosPRINTED, a printed edition of the Ecosprinter. This is the first time in perhaps a decade<sup>1</sup> that The Ecosprinter has been printed. At its onset, the Ecosprinter was primarily a printed publication but then went exclusively online for years. The Ecosprinter.eu has been a great home of debate and storytelling for Young Greens from across Europe and beyond. And by no means does this printed edition mean an end to that, far from it. But we want the voices of Young Greens to reach beyond web browsers and to be something you can look back to in the future, just as you can look back at previous editions of the Ecosprinter today and see that while the names of the by-lines may have changed, the ideas and the spirit are much the same.

The articles in this edition come from participants of FYEG's first annual summer camp, 'From Social Wrongs to Social Rights.' We sincerely thank the many contributors, FYEG activists, staff and supporters who made this happen. The Ecosprinter cannot exist without you and the time that have dedicated did not go unnoticed and unappreciated. Further, we from the Ecosprinter are also grateful to be a part of this project and we appreciate the mandate you have given us to do so!

We'd also love to hear your feedback. If you have something you'd like to see in the next printed edition, including your own writing, send me an email, [morgan@fyeg.org](mailto:morgan@fyeg.org). You are also always welcome to submit ideas for articles to be published on the site, send those to [ecosprinter@fyeg.org](mailto:ecosprinter@fyeg.org).

So, read through this copy of the EcosPRINTED, enjoy, and share with friends!

Yours truly,  
Morgan  
Ecosprinter Editor-in-Chief

<sup>1</sup> All FYEG historians are welcome to contact us to let us know when actually was the last printed Ecosprinter



# EUROPE'S YOUTH NEEDS BASIC INCOME

Teo Comet - Spokesperson of FYEG

**J**aime Rosales' movie *Hermosa juventud* (Beautiful Youth, 2014) tells Natalia's story. Natalia lives in Spain and is one of Europe's many NEETs (not in employment, education or training). Her life lacks meaning and direction. A glimpse of light is her boyfriend Carlos, with whom she dreams about being rich and having a house on the beach. Carlos takes care of his sick mother and works – undeclared – on a construction site for 10 euros per day.

It is a movie about a generation. Our generation. And our generation's relation to those who came before us. They had different dreams, opportunities and experiences than young people have today.

**“But one can't live on 10 euros per day in Spain”**

Things change fast. A student who entered a European educational institution, say, five years ago, has in most cases experienced drastical changes in the educational system. Funding is cut, educators are overwhelmed, education is increasingly a privilege for those with the means. Basic living

conditions that were guaranteed by society are commercialised and people in different parts of Europe are forced to make dreadful choices between elementary necessities. Precarious labour markets and regulation reforms that facilitate the accumulation of wealth dramatically deprive employees of bargaining power. But one can't live on 10 euros per day in Spain.

Europe's youth needs a basic income. It should be universal, meaning it should be paid to everyone, and unconditional, meaning it should not be conditioned by, for example, employment status. A basic income would bring material security. It would allow young people to demand decent working conditions. And it would simplify complicated and often humiliating bureaucratic jungles of social benefits.

Moreover, having an increasing proportion of work carried out by machines can be a threat to the wellbeing of many in case it is not dealt with on policy level. Basic income is such a policy. It is possible to work less, to have our basic needs met, and to live a happier life. If there is political will, that is.

**“for the next generation this might just be how things are”**

Basic income experiments are gaining traction. Finland will conduct a rather limited experiment in 2017 and 2018. It will not give us answers to all our questions regarding how basic income works in practice, but it is a step in the right direction. Hopefully it tickles the imagination of many others.

Our generation is said to be the first one that faces grimmer perspectives than the previous one. There is an alarming risk that this is normalised – for the next generation this might just be how things are. The stories that are being told about the life experiences of our generation can be very desperate and it is our responsibility not to perpetuate the precarity we are experiencing for those who come after us. Material security for everyone is not a far-fetched dream. Basic income is our way out.

# Why banning emotions is perpetuating oppression

If there is one thing amongst the many things that people continuously tell me when engaging in a discussion with me on how to debate productively it's "Stop emotionalising the discourse" and "Emotions won't get us any further" or "We need to talk about this like grown-ups". Here are two main reasons why I think this concept is oppressive:

### Your "emotionless" debate is a myth to silence us.

Honestly, I have been told to not become emotional about stuff by white people more often than having been supported. And well, there is a reason I have had this particular experience solely with people who don't suffer from systemic racism. However, this killer argument isn't limited to white people. I hear cisgender people silencing trans activists just as often by saying the exact same thing or generally male\* acquaintances using it against women\*. You see my point? Surprisingly, we only seem to debate emotionally when it comes to our marginalisation and other people's discriminatory behaviour: Emotional debating is a reproach that is regularly misused by people with social power.

Allegedly, marginalised people, let's take for instance people of colour and black people, are not able to discuss something "objectively", whereas everyone else always stays calm and, well, neutral? No, nope, no, stop thinking that immediately! This obviously ignores the fact that they, too, are a child of socialisation and will never be able to free themselves from their subjective life experience coined by the societal belief that certain groups of people are superior to others.

I have never heard two white men in a, let's get it right, discussion about taxation telling each other "Dude, stop emotionalising the discourse." (Even though people tend to get pretty emotional about budgetary control.) But the minute they talk to a certain group of people (namely those suffering from systemic oppression) about certain subjects (namely systemic oppression), everything is suddenly too emotional - the people confronting them with unpleasant topics and naturally the topics themselves. Calling for an end of emotional debating gives us a very wrong impression on who acts emotional (of course anyone except you) and who needs to shut the fuck up (obviously people who you discriminate against).

Personally, I don't want anyone to repress their feelings in a discussion. Especially in terms of oppression I demand from those who suffer to be angry about their suffering, to never stop being angry and to communicate their anger. But we'll never come to an end then, you say. Continue reading to understand why I think that doesn't necessarily matter.

What does productivity even mean? While I agree that emotional debating doesn't always lead to political consensus or anything similar to that, I often ask myself, why first of all, every discussions requires a happy ending with the two sides shaking each other's hands and secondly, why we constantly maintain an efficiency-oriented idea of productivity where everything is supposed to generate a substantial outcome.

### But damn it, there has been a shitload of people that thanked me later for not staying calm.


Now, I am not saying that political discussions without proper conclusion can't be frustrating - I most certainly know what frustration feels like and have had a couple of unpleasant conversations on topics from institutional racism to fiscal policy, and especially when noticing that the person opposite me and myself were talking past each other, I questioned the purpose of the respective discussion. But ending without consensus or any result for that matter doesn't necessarily mean you didn't change someone's state of mind in the long term and/or didn't determine the course for essential awareness work (which is incredibly important to create a further and deeper awareness for discrimination).

Emotional debating has rarely helped to convert people's opinion or to make them my best political buddy. But damn it, there has been a shitload of people that thanked me later for not staying calm. I don't need an immediate result in order to feel better after every debate we potentially have. Maybe you will think about my words eventually, maybe you won't. If you do: Congratulations, my friend! Ms. Diversity-tastes-as-good-as-ice-cream successfully infected you!

# Social Rights?

What's that.





**W**hat is a social right? An easy question one might say, and start to explain. A social right is the right to housing, to education, to health care, to food, to social security, to work. A social right is a right, kind of like the rights given just now. But that definition seem unsatisfying, in fact being rather an enumeration of multiple examples of social rights, not giving a more detailed idea of what a social right is. This "definition" from examples will not help determining whether the right to individuality is a social right, whether it is a right at all. This "definition" fails to fulfil its purpose of being a definition, even though it gives us a rough idea of what we are looking for.

Another possible response to "what are social rights?" might be to say that they are what comes below human rights. So, it seems as if a kind of hierarchy or ladder of different types of rights is introduced; putting human rights at the top, and social rights roughly somewhere below. However, again, this fails to give a definition of what a social right is, it contextualises and therefore helps us to get a better understanding but no definition of social rights.

At this point one might ask, but after all, if we now have this good, solid understanding of what this mysterious concept of a "social right" means, why on earth would we need a definition? Is it not just enough to know what social rights are, without having the urge to definitely and ultimately define them? No, it is not enough. Defining what social rights are helps to group rights which belong to social rights and which do not; without a definition we are lacking the relevant criterion for this grouping business. No, it is also not enough to contextualise social rights. Contextualising will only give us the surrounding but will not ultimately answer the question of the - if one is inclined to call it that - ontology, the mere being, of a social right. Knowing what social rights are, not merely what they contain, is of crucial importance for putting in place political demands regarding their implementation. Defining social rights asks new questions as to whether framing the contents of social rights as social rights is even useful in a political

context and whether another wording for it might not get us to the desired end in a better, quicker way without unnecessary theorising about what a right, an instrumental, a contractualist, a human, a social right is.

In this piece I will therefore try to give a definition of what human rights talk, framed by e.g. UN documents, understand when they mention rights as well as social rights, to then ask why we use the term social rights and whether it is appropriate to use this term at all, or if some other narrative could be adopted making the discussion more clear and inclusive, making its goals more achievable, more pressing and more relevant.

Rights in this case, I take to refer to an entitlement to perform a certain action, to be in a certain state, or an entitlement that others perform certain actions or are in certain states (Stanford). Viewing rights as entitlement leads to questions about where these entitlements come from.

Granting however, that rights are human made rights, human made entitlements, as opposed to some innate, nature- or god-given ability, does in no way limit their scope or force. Assuming it to do so, as it often seems to be the case, neglects human authority over themselves but even more takes us back to a picture in which some humans seem alienated from their own actions, puppet-like, directed by this higher force which also equipped us with rights. Such a picture might be tempting to adopt as it easily explains the presence of rights and guards one from the possible objection that rights, as human made concepts, are not binding simply because they are human made. Such a theological picture, however, is misleading, is unnecessary for the present debate. There seems to be no plausible reason for why we cannot declare rights to be binding for us, sacred for us, even though we made them or came up with them. Rights, as it stands, are a basic form of order, of security, societies are built on, and are therefore equally sacred and even more fundamentally binding than some holy, spiritual ideas coming from above. Since rights are crucial for our survival as/in a community, they hold.

So, our understanding of rights is that they are binding, universal entitlements granted to particular human beings in virtue of them being these human beings because they have been agreed on or established by society. It looks as though they can either be common sense rights, meaning that they are not written down anywhere but that they follow from for example human dignity, or legal rights, meaning that they are in fact written down in conventions, chartas, UN documents etc.

Social rights then seem to exist as a different category from human rights, being not as fundamental as human rights but also not as arbitrary as state legal legislation and resulting legal rights. Social rights are universal but seem to rather be goals than reality in most if not all countries. They are standards that should be but hardly are attained. Now, one might object, that it would not make human rights any less important if they were not as respected as they are and that still countless human rights violations do exist, so what makes social rights different?

### **Social rights are universal but seem to rather be goals than reality in most if not all countries.**

use this term to refer to the right to housing, education, health care, social security, food, work, this connotation of "less than ..." is what comes to mind. The term "social rights" in its usage is synonymous to "goals in social standards," "pretty unachievable ideals," "not as crucial as human rights," "nice addition, friendly reminder." While is this the implication that comes across, our demands rather focus on the "rights"-characteristic of social rights, them being universal, binding, to be granted to all regardless of their achievements or abilities. However this characteristic is lost in the usage of the term social rights. Their treatment in international legal documents proves this point of

They are different not only because their reality of implementation is different but because their legal framework is different. In the European Social Charter as well as in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, social rights are referred to as goals towards which slow progress is ideal, human rights are always referred to as absolutes, as necessary standards.

Additionally, the point seems to be that the violation of a social right is not as urgent as the violation of a human right, that not guaranteeing housing or education might not be persecuted as long as nobody is tortured. Surely, it makes sense that some measures of welfare, such as bodily well-being are regarded as being more urgent than others. But the interesting question rather is whether it is smart to do so in a political context, whether it is smart to weigh human and social rights and their importance or priority against each other.

As soon as we call for the implementation of social rights in a political context, as soon as we

social rights being the ideal, far-away goal. One might object that such treatment and reference is only realistic since the status-quo is far from implementing social rights, they need to therefore be regarded as goals and long-term processes. However, it might make sense to regard them as such, but it does not seem to make sense to write social rights down as this thriving towards them as opposed to this necessity to have them established.

It is crucial to get a clear understanding of rights, to define the term "social rights", and to acknowledge its use. It is crucial to question its use, to question the implications that go along with





this use. The implication of “social rights” as a term in politics are, as established, contra-productive to green, left political demands. Going back, one might be inclined to mock, so why did we do all this defining then, when in the end we reject the term “social rights” and simply call for housing, education, health care, social security, work and food for all. Why do we need an overarching term, that in this case does not contain political force?

I am claiming that we do need an overarching term for all these demands, because they belong together, they are part of one political catalogue, one political vision and because we demand them as a package, we want them all. I am claiming that we need an overarching term which is stronger than social rights, which does not only refer to the abstract,

far-away right of every individual to have all these but which treats social rights as essentials, which calls for action to implement these very social rights.

“Social rights” as a term are these rather unachievable, idealistic goals. “Social rights” as rights are this passive concept without an immediate requirement for anyone to do anything, to start changing the status-quo, without naming the body in charge and without demanding their responsibility to grant education, build houses, provide food, ensure health care and social security and to create jobs.

I am therefore claiming that one needs to emphasise the action and its immediate political importance in one’s political narrative in order to be successful. Social rights have corresponding duties, and it’s

**I am therefore claiming that one needs to emphasise the action and its immediate political importance in one’s political narrative in order to be successful. Social rights have corresponding duties.**

these duties now that we should focus on when writing our policy papers, when debating, when making legislation.

Therefore, using the term social rights when we make political arguments, when we demand political actions seems contra-productive. The only thing we are then reinforcing is this legal language of “would be cool if ..., but don’t worry if not.” Reiterating such a language when what we are demanding is immediate action, will only throw us back, will make demands less significant, will shrink postulations.

Rights as a term does furthermore express a possession, a passive notion, a status rather than an action. Calling for the implementation of social rights, or any rights in general, is directed

to the people ideally bearing these rights when however this call should be addressed to those guaranteeing and ensuring the existence of that right for these very people. Having a right is something passive, something nobody will feel responsible for. Calling for rights does not target the source of power being able to guarantee this right. However, a language of targeting, of pointing out an agent’s responsibility seems to be more effective, as it names the actor to blame and specifically calls on them for action. Rights are corresponding to duties and it is those duties that matter in political contexts.

**Paula Keller  
Ecosprinter Editorial Board**



# Why copyright matters

Julian Hauser - Executive Committee of CDN

**H**ave you ever shared something on Facebook or Twitter, ending your post with a little © to say that it was a quote? Or maybe you remember that time in school when you added this symbol in front of your name on the poster? But do you know what that symbol means and what copyright is? Yes? I don't believe you. I'm sure you're either deceiving yourself or simply lying. You don't care about copyright, its invisible presence may sometimes annoy you, but largely you just ignore it. You shouldn't.

Let's get one thing out of the way first: copyright law is boring and exceedingly technical, and even people who have spent many years working in this field can't claim to understand all the weird little details. In the EU, for instance, the Copyright Directive of 2001 professes to harmonise the law of the various Member States – but still there are no two EU countries that have the same copyright regulation.

What most of you probably know is that copyright protects what authors and artists produce: we can't just copy a song and give it to a friend, and we are not allowed to download the latest film from the internet without paying. But copyright isn't absolute, it doesn't protect all works<sup>1</sup> at all times. So-called exceptions and limitations allow libraries, teachers, and researchers to use works without having to ask the authors, and they allow you to take a photo of the Atomium (that's a funny looking building in Brussels) even though the architecture is copyrighted<sup>2</sup>. The EU Copyright Directive harmonised the law by specifying a list of voluntary exceptions while giving countries free reign to mix and match as they please. This is the reason that copyright law is not harmonised in the EU and that there is currently a copyright reform ongoing.

1 Work is the term used in copyright law to designate all the things that are copyrightable: songs, books, films, computer programs and much much more. Similarly, an author is the person who produces a work and not limited to people who write texts.

2 In fact, until about a year ago you were not allowed publish photos of the Atomium as Belgium had not yet implemented a so-called freedom of panorama exception. And even today you're not allowed to publish photos that show the Eiffel tower at night because the lighting is copyrighted, and France does not have a freedom of panorama exception.

How does any of this impact our social rights? It's quite simple, actually: Imagine, for instance, that you are a researcher who does not have access to a well-stocked library and who is not at a university with subscriptions to a variety of academic journals. How are you going to do your research if your country doesn't have the appropriate exception? Well, you go to Google Scholar, look for the articles you need, find out that each of them costs about 30 to 40 dollars, and if you're a law-abiding citizen you stop right there and bury your dream of becoming an academic. Your right to science and culture has very quickly evaporated into thin air.

**Imagine that you are a researcher who does not have access to a well-stocked library and who is not at a university with subscriptions to a variety of academic journals**

This case also shows the falsity of one of the most insidious arguments put forward by copyright proponents: that copyright isn't problematic because it only protects expressions and not ideas. In order to understand this, another short excursion into the field of intellectual property law is necessary: Copyright only protects expressions, it protects how something is explained, not what is explained. So, if I write an article where I describe a revolutionary new solar cell that is 50% more efficient, copyright will not protect that invention. You can follow my plans, produce such a solar cell, and not worry about a thing.<sup>3</sup> However, what copyright does protect is the article itself, the very specific words and sentences I used to describe my idea. You can copy my idea but not my article. Can you see what's the problem with saying that copyright is alright because it doesn't stop people from using others' ideas? Well... if I can't read the article because it's copyrighted then I have absolutely no way of getting to the idea, even if it isn't copyrighted. Copyright alone is more than sufficient to suppress my right to science.

3 That's a lie. Because I know that patents can protect ideas and because I'm a greedy capitalist, I have patented my idea and you will soon get a – very expensive – visit from my lawyer.



And worst of all, these negative effects of copyright affect most severely those who are already disadvantaged. If you study at a good university or live in a country with high quality libraries – no problem. If you or your university can't afford to pay the licensing fees then your only option may be to peruse (probably) illegal projects such as Sci-Hub.<sup>4</sup> And what makes this even worse is that those who need education in order to improve their lot are exactly those who are barred from freely accessing science. And by the way, this doesn't just affect research, it applies just as much to other fields of education – many schools simply cannot afford to pay for the teaching materials they need to educate their students. The right to education is just as strongly affected by copyright as is the right to science and culture.

Copyright obviously doesn't only cover academic articles and school books. In fact, you've probably come across copyright because it applies to all those songs, videos, computer games and novels you consume every day. To some extent the issue here is very similar to what I talked about in the previous paragraphs: if you can't afford to pay for that book you like, bad luck. But this is not all – there's another issue at play here that affects all of us regardless of our socio-economic background. While many of us might have the material means to consume whatever cultural goods we desire, we aren't usually – to put it mildly – allowed to share those poems, change those songs or use some snippets of a video to create our own fabulous mash-up art. We are allowed to be consumers and that's it. But the Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks of the right "freely to participate in the cultural life" and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights mentions the right "to take part in cultural life". What's common to these definitions is that they protect a far more active role than that of the passive consumer. Current copyright law does not do this justice.

Active participation can take many forms: Some people may want to share a piece of art in order to engage in public discourse. Others may want to

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<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia describes Sci-Hub as "an online search engine with over 58,000,000 academic papers and articles available for direct download, bypassing publisher paywalls."

use fragments from songs to create new ones, or use songs to DJ at a party. And others again may want to write fan fiction based on the plot of a famous film. If we want a cultural sphere that is inclusive and shaped from the bottom up, where minority voices can be heard, and where one does not need an entire legal department to be on the safe side, then copyright needs to change. Whereas issues regarding education and research could potentially be mitigated by a more sensible regime of exceptions and limitation, allowing everyone to take an active part in our culture would require a far more thorough overhaul of copyright.

Unfortunately, the very human and social rights that I have used to ground my argument turn out to be obstacles to a reform of copyright. Both the Convention and the Covenant do not only guarantee our right to participate in culture, they also protect the rights of authors: Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – the same one as that I cited above – has a second paragraph that states that "everyone has the right to the protection of the [...] interests resulting from any [...] production of which he is the author." The tension between these two paragraphs has until now – and with more than a little prodding by corporate copyright holders – been resolved in favour of more and more copyright protection.

### **The right to education is just as strongly affected by copyright as is the right to science and culture**

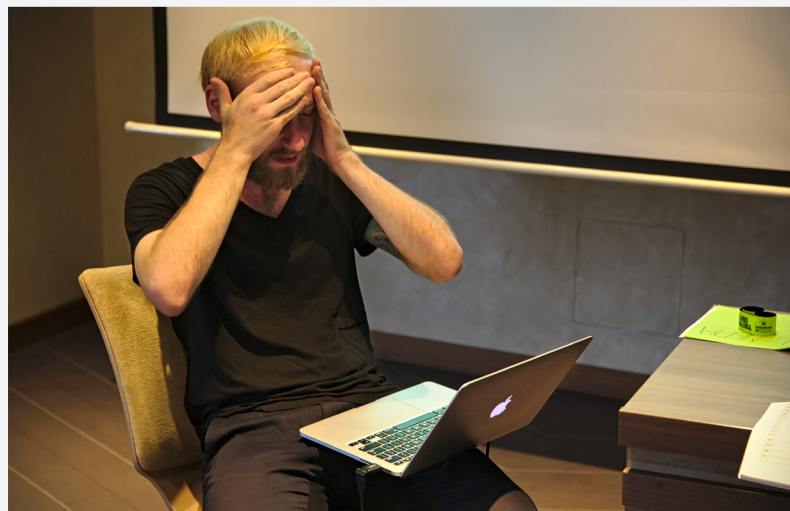
I believe there's a way of overcoming the tension – we can have the cake and eat it. In order to do so we need to overcome the widely shared perception that copyright is the only way of paying authors. There are many ways of recognising authors' important contributions to society and paying them that do not restrict everyone's right to use cultural and scientific works. We need to look at alternatives such as basic income, crowdfunding, patronage systems and government-mandated cultural flat-rate systems. We must ensure that authors and artists get paid – something that most don't, even today – and that everyone gets to benefit from their productions.



# What happens when you send fifty young Greens to a summer camp in Serbia?

## An epic adventure!

It began at our initial meeting point in the center of Belgrade, we had to search for the right group at the bus station. I was looking for a bunch of international young Green people. One would say they would be easy to spot, and actually, they were. A group of already around 20 vivid youngsters with a great amount of energy were happy to welcome us.



When we were complete, it was time to board the bus, going to the middle of nowhere. I was happy with the great company, as I was skeptical of the location at first. The event location was at the Silver Lake in Serbia, on the border with Romania. On our way, we hardly encountered anything. It was only when we arrived at the venue that I was relieved on how great of a place we found. The venue was lovely and the area amazing, with the Silver Lake looking lovely under the summer sun.



It was the beginning of an intensive week with a lot of content, a lot of new friendships and a lot of great parties. The official theme of this camp was 'From Social Wrongs to Social Rights'. I really enjoyed the variety of all workshops organized: from a training on intersectionality to inclusive methods on specific social rights such as employment, health and education. Content wise, my personal favorite was a debate on the basic income, which really provoked me to be critical of the topic.

What made it all even better, were the volunteers who organized everything. They sacrificed their blood, sweat and tears to organize this awesome camp for us, and they did so marvelously. In the space that they left for our initiative, we hosted a workshop on young refugees and youth rights. The positive feedback made us proud to help so many passionate friends.

And friends they have all become. With no reservations, I can say that the best part of the camp were the people who we did it with. Whether it was within the program or in our spare time, it is always a pleasure spending time with passionate activists for the right cause, and above all lovely people with a big heart. I already truly miss them, and I cannot wait for our paths to cross again!

**Sebastian Rood - Dutch Young Greens**



# Hiding behind the facade of urban development – gentrification around Europe

Iva Marković & Predrag Momčilović - Serbian Green Youth

**R**apid changes in urban environments, in any political systems that have ever existed are followed by controversy. Whether the case was top-down building of squares and roads, spontaneous slums, mass housing projects, or pretentious city symbols, changes were never welcomed by everyone and responsive to everyone's taste. However, a relatively new phenomena, often intangible and locally camouflaged, starting subtly and developing slowly but surely, is leaving long term negative consequences in our cities. This is gentrification.

According to the definition, gentrification is a replacement of the population, those from the lower economic classes with the ones from the higher classes in a specific spatial area along with appreciation<sup>1</sup> of real-estate economic value and changes in the comprehensive appearance and character of the neighborhood.

Gentrification is an abstract word that the city officials are doing their best to avoid and even if

mentioned all around Europe, one can hear them deny. In Belgrade the authorities will tell you it is a western concept and it may occur in Vienna while the city managers from Stockholm may point their fingers towards parts of Berlin<sup>2</sup>, and the official Paris will not admit that this American infection have been spread onto its gracious arrondissements. Much more often than about gentrification, one can hear about a renewal, revitalization and reuse of "long forgotten" urban areas - what a noble idea. So what is the problem with gentrification?

In order to find first usage of the term, we should go back to London, 1964, where old and abandoned Victorian houses were appreciated again. The moment gentrification started, it did not finish until all or at least a vast majority of working class inhabitants were not expelled and the whole social character had changed (Glass 1964). But, since today this outcome is not always noticeable, there is a need to highlight that this expulsion of inhabitants is in the very core and is indeed the aim of gentrification - not merely one of its byproducts.

## Rome wasn't built in a day. Neither is gentrification.

<b>1st phase:</b>	Introduction of new users of the space:
<b>2nd phase:</b>	Local are pushed out:
<b>3rd phase:</b>	Arrival of "true gentrifiers" from the upper middle class:
<b>4th phase:</b>	The entire shift of population, appearance and character of the area that enables generation of profit for major capital.

## New infrastructure of alternative culture is attracting the middle class.

The pioneer phase of gentrification usually begins with the emergence of artists, students, and alternative culture protagonists. New self-organized bars, cultural centers and other socializing places, with a flourishing of diverse art

formats flood into the area. This determines the quarter as an alternative and subcultural space. Without any investments in modernization, the earlier image of the area is changed. Unlike the previously dominant industry institutions and workers' and/or migrants' family homes, this new infrastructure of alternative culture is attracting the middle class.

1 Appreciation is an increase in the value of an asset over time. The increase can occur for a number of reasons, including increased demand or weakening supply, or as a result of changes in inflation or interest rates.

2 <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/appreciation.asp>  
<http://theprotocity.com/neukolln-berlin-state-supported-gentrification-denial/>

And there emerges the first problem – how much of these socializing spaces, produced by a class-unaware creative force, are actually social, inclusive and functional for the community?

In the next phase, the symbolic capital is used for appreciation of value of the real-estates. The investors are trying to amortize the means they had to spend during the purchase, so the prices have to increase and reselling starts. This is usually followed by renovation and equally often building of newer and more modern objects on the same location. The capital that was originally invested has now reached higher value and this affects prices of real-estate in the surrounding area.

Depending on the speed, volume and local conditions in which gentrification is taking place, sooner or later for most of the original social structure that was living there, the costs of living become unattainable and population is forced to move. It is not only that the inhabitants are changed, increased average income and different structure of the households is pushing for the shift in services and consumption habits in the neighborhood.

**Take a look at Berlin's<sup>3</sup> quarters, Prenzlauer Berg most remarkably, which - in only a decade - have transformed from poor into elite, wealthy and prestigious areas**

Self-organized coffee shops and social centers are gone with modernization and "improvement" of buildings. The "pioneers of gentrification" are forced to leave the area themselves - they end up together with other losers from gentrification.

**The "pioneers of gentrification" are forced to leave the area themselves.**

Following the prices of real-estate, other activities, that once formed the community, are becoming less and less accessible to the locals. This is inevitable process also for the self-organized alternative collectives, as much as they wish to delay the changes, with all their creativity and flexibility.

At the end, all actors that do not fit into the new market environment are forced to shut down, already losing local regular customers that left in search for lower prices for accommodation. Gentrified areas are clearly characterized by service activities or the so called service sector of the economy which usually includes poor working conditions and exploitation of creative labor.

# Groundwork, foundations and causes

Perhaps there is no ideal, typical process of gentrification, however there is a broad consensus about these phases and that they have previously explained causalities and characteristics. But, when it comes to the analysis of the causes and conditions, there is a bit of a dispute. For a long time, the dominant notion was that gentrification was a process based on supply and demand, explaining that it came "naturally" with the change of lifestyles of the middle class and shift of the central-urban economy towards services that had created demands that further enabled gentrification.

On the other hand, voices of contemporary economists that have more progressive overview, together with urban activists that follow David Harvey's analysis<sup>4</sup> that gentrification is caused by artificial boost of supply, are becoming louder. Having a need to realize surplus value, in the context of dropping profit rates in industry and the financial sector, the investors decide to invest in construction and modernization of residential projects. This overview gives us the understanding that the appreciation processes are not merely the effects of altered demands, but as a direct consequence of changed supply.

If the first school of thought is accepted putting a focus on demand, then the strategy should be based on showing teeth to the middle class and presenting our neighborhoods as less appealing. Furthermore, attacking status symbols such as luxury cars, posh restaurants and branded shops in that case looks like a legitimate (and only) method of struggle. But if we take the other hypothesis about the malversation by pumping the capital into supplies, the strategy of resistance would have to be based on preventing the profit making of the (usually private) investors.

3 Gentrification of a particular type: the case of Prenzlauer Berg, Matthias Bernt/Andrej Holm

4 <http://davidharvey.org/media/righttothecity.pdf>

**The protests against construction plans, building projects, shaming and discrediting actors behind them, and also advocating and demanding for different housing policies that would focus on the needs of the society are some of the basic guidelines for fighting gentrification.**

Even though gentrification is considered a process based upon the principles of free market and entirely motivated by neoliberal economic reasons, appreciation of urban areas can be a process that is not governed by market actors. Remarkably, it is often the case that the gentrification is enabled, if not directly financed by the public means and infrastructure. But in reality, these improvements in infrastructure have less to do with what will benefit the current population, but rather pave the way for gentrification. It is an absurd argument that these primary investments will improve the life standards for the inhabitants, as it's clear that the original population will not even be there to witness the gentrification finale and these promoted better conditions.

**It is almost impossible to publicly, democratically control the process of gentrification once incepted, it looks somewhat like riding a wild bull - you may (think you) control it for some short time, but ultimately you will be thrown down and out of consciousness.**

The capital has proven to be very flexible around the origin of the real-estates, whether it is public, private or sometimes even undetermined, but it seems the easiest to gentrify are the patchwork areas of small private properties, where every unit individually believes they can benefit from competing with neighbors, only to be proven wrong when it is too late.

Complete liberalization of the economy in Europe brought changes in urban policies, and it is fairly easy to spot the infamous neoliberal agenda on the city level: privatization of public spaces, transfer of planning jurisdiction onto investors, turning whole city areas into shopping zones, business centers or exclusive luxurious housing, and expulsion and eviction of the most socially endangered strata.


**The one thing Greens say to gentrification:  
Not today.**

Green politics, putting a high value on local sustainable community, and being exceptionally sensitized for the issues of human ecology, should easily recognize the problem of gentrification as worth fighting against, and address the demands accordingly, towards the true causes. But living and acting in the market economy that dominates Europe, it is not easy to set our goal at disabling or limiting of the profit making, especially not the one so lavish in its accumulation of capital as real-estate. However, there are some conditions that lubricate the environment for the gentrification and that we can act upon before the process even takes over.

Carrying the responsibility for the first steps of gentrification, the creative industry actors, cultural precariat and students should have their class awareness improved, be more perceptive towards local community they meet on the spot, and be inclusive and open for cooperation and exchange with(in) it. This objective seems easily achievable if we notice that the ideological basis of the subcultures that are usually gathered and produced around these places is often full with motivation for improvement and reuse of neglected areas, and not atomization and alienation of the locality and the community. Despite this, too often the values produced in their best intentions are being commodified and finally end up in the hands of major capital.







**The creative class needs to break up with elitist practices, reach out of their bubbles of self-sufficiency and join the local community in the struggle, otherwise they are destined to end the game as losers of gentrification themselves.**

Involving creative actors in the broader mobilization against gentrification is extremely important. The creative class needs to break up with elitist practices, reach out of their bubbles of self-sufficiency and join the local community in the struggle, otherwise they are destined to end the game as losers of gentrification themselves. There are numerous possibilities for common work: from manufacturing protesting material, organizing the exchange of knowledge, lectures, public debates, to designing new forms of organization, that can have unpredictable long term beneficial effects on the local and global society.

Access to housing is also placed around the top of values of Green politics. When gentrification develops into the second stage of its process, evictions and “voluntary” moving influence by multiple layers of pressures, or rent increase, directly steal the right to have a roof over one's head. Situation is severe: the demography of the neglected and gentrified neighborhoods shows that the inhabitants there are in a hard social position, with problematic ownership rights. Their resettlement under pressure rarely ever results in improved living conditions, but it is merely a clearing out of site, and we as Greens must oppose this without restraint.

**Segregation is the final consequence of gentrification.**

Segregation is the final consequence of gentrification. In an integrated inclusive society that cooperates, it is very hard to produce “the others”, or, to take a step further, “the enemies”. Meanwhile isolated exclusive blocks are fertile ground for the perpetuation and reproduction of stereotypes about difference in race, class, religion, or simply a different lifestyle

Greens were always first to argue against consumerism and against creating the “needs” that are not in the public interest and that have not been the result of a common agreement. Consumerism in the case of gentrification is not only tied to luxurious real-estates, it has transfused into, for example, increased fossil fuel spending for unsustainable traffic, outsourcing of soil and water exploitation, or exclusive commodities and services that are locally promoted.

Multiple patches of property and unused public spaces on strategically attractive locations are the best incubators for gentrification. It is much harder to gentrify active, functional and integrated spaces and communities, such as public housing neighborhoods. If the given real-estates are publicly owned and serving the public interest, which is providing homes, they are hardly resold or sub-rented.

As long as there is a key portion of inhabitants that are politically aware, active in the community, even the first, sugar-coated phase of gentrification is unlikely to start, let alone deeper gentrification that includes evictions and privatizations of public spaces. Solidarity of the local community in their struggles against private and corporate interests was always supported by the Green actors and gentrification should be no different case, even when this issue is not easily noticeable for the potential voters.

**In order to permanently prevent the process of gentrification we need policies that prioritizes public and social housing.**

In order to permanently prevent the process of gentrification we need policies that prioritizes public and social housing. Gentrification can be avoided only in a system where buildings are constructed for reaching the needs of society and not the individual profit makers. Until we live in neoliberal cities whose economy is based on the “free” flow of the market, every neglected, old, once unappealing quarter can be, and sooner or later will be, gentrified for the profit of the wealthy, not the inhabitants.

# Housing struggles and activism: the Spanish Case

**W**hen we think about social rights, housing is often at the top of our priority lists as it is considered one of the most fundamental assets that humans need in order to live safely and to develop their full potential. This right is however, one that causes most issues in our societies especially since the economic recession started. In addition, just like in most other cases, the violation of this right affects young people and marginalised groups the most. In Southern Europe and more specifically in Spain, waves of evictions have been one of the most terrible consequences of the economic recession with almost 100 families being evicted from their homes daily in 2014.

## Back to the origin

In the years preceding the 2008 Economic Crisis, Spain was immersed in an impressive construction bubble: at one point, Spain built more houses than the UK, Germany and France combined. The Social Democrat government at the time encouraged people to buy – as opposed to rent – and to “invest” in real estate without thinking about either environmental nor economic consequences of

those purchases. It became almost like something built into people’s minds: in order to succeed in life you had to get married, buy your own property and a car. The conditions for houses to mushroom across the country were further enhanced by a corrupt system in which developers had extremely close relations with local councillors responsible for urban planning. It was typical to find the local authorities helping to provide licences for developers to build in environmentally protected areas in exchange for illegal “bonuses”.

This uncontrolled growth led to the construction of entire new cities in the middle of nowhere. Moreover, it was perceived by many as a great deal to make money: you would invest some of your savings in a brand new house right by the seashore and sell it shortly after for an increased price. This increased economic activity was purely speculative and did not correspond with the capitalist idea of real supply and real demand, meaning that most of these houses were never actually occupied and instead were purely used as a commodity for speculation. As a consequence, prices rose steadily by 180% between 1996 and 2006.



Obviously workers’ salaries did not keep up with these rocketing prices and therefore buyers and speculators relied on massive bank loans. Again, governments at the European and Spanish level facilitated this, as they wanted people to believe that this bubble could last forever. Families were encouraged to spend and to keep pumping up this bubble by banks that gave virtually anyone, regardless of their salary, loans of up to 120% of the property’s value.

When the credit crunch arrived, demand for real estates fell quickly and many construction companies went bankrupt leading to increased unemployment rates especially amongst those with no or very low level of training. Thus, an increasingly large number of families were not able to repay their mortgages leading to thousands of evictions. This brought about extremely dramatic

situations including a significant number of people committing suicide when the police were about to expel them from their homes. News about evictions of families with 7 children or an 88-year-old woman who owed €106 was striking for the population and warned everyone about the magnitude of this problem.

Furthermore, the unfair Spanish legislation on mortgages and evictions forces individuals to pay back the original sum borrowed instead of cancelling the mortgage debt once a home is handed back to the bank. This meant that when the bubble burst and real estate prices dropped, debtors that were thrown out of their homes still had a vast sum to repay to the banks as the property’s worth was much lower compared to that at the time of the purchase.

## What is the PAH and why were they needed?

In this turmoil, the Spanish government was not able to offer sensible solutions to those families who had no shelter and could not afford to start a new vital project with a massive debt burden. This unresponsiveness and clear lack of social sensitivity of the successive Spanish governments (both the Social Democrats and Liberal-Conservatives), made it necessary for many people to organise themselves in order to demand their basic right to a home. This anger and frustration then crystallised into the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages) or PAH, one of the movements often associated with the indignados protests that were born in 2011 to question the Spanish institutional and economic status quo.

This unprecedented movement started with important protests and campaigns to raise awareness; and most importantly they set up local and regional groups that actively stopped evictions by physically barring access to the police and government officials into the property. They even wrote a Green Book: a guide to PAH's actions, meetings, and activist tools (it can be found in English at: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/GreenBook-PAH-21juny.pdf>). Between 2010 and 2014 the PAH had already stopped over 1000 evictions, an impressive yet still insufficient figure for the real magnitude of the issue. Over time, the PAH also shifted their attention from grassroots activism to addressing the legal conditions that allowed this struggle to last over time. Therefore, they initiated a petition for a new housing act that included 5 concrete proposals commonly known as the "PAH's 5":

1. **cancellation of the individual's remaining debt after the property went back to the bank's hands**
2. **affordable rents by setting a pricing framework in accordance with salaries**
3. **amnesty on evictions of main residences**
4. **use of unoccupied properties as public social housing, whose rents should not exceed 30% of the family's income**
5. **social vouchers for those families who cannot afford to pay their utility bills**

This petition was signed by over 1.4 million citizens and the social demand for these changes was so big that the then-ruling Conservative Party saw itself forced to change its opinion and accept at least a debate on these proposals in the Spanish Parliament. The political parties then amended this law proposal so heavily - by either getting rid or severely restricting the application of these

measures - that the PAH regarded the bill finally passed as a "taunt" that violated the spirit of their petition. The Court of Justice of the EU also ruled twice that both the old and the reformed laws on mortgages "violated human rights" and European directives on consumer protection for the "abusive" terms and conditions imposed by banks.



## So what next?

Following this great disappointment, many of those involved in grassroots activism decided it was time to take part in institutional politics. This definitely played an important role in the construction of new political parties and electoral platforms based on concrete proposals for the common good as opposed to "old-fashioned" ideological tags. The paradigmatic example of these activists is Ada Colau, former spokesperson of the PAH, whose electoral platform combined with

a coalition of Green Progressive Parties managed to win the local elections in Barcelona. Similarly, the Compromís alliance in the Valencian Country managed to form a coalition regional government in 2015, making the first bill they passed the so-called "Law for the Social Function of Housing". Green and Progressive people now hope that a different Spanish government can be formed - one that can act as an ally to these governments in tackling the housing struggle.

# If only I had the shape of a p y r a m i d

Julischka Stengele, born 1982, is a German multidisciplinary artist. Her work includes happening, performance, photography, installation and video. She is currently based in Vienna.

**J**ulischka's performance at FYEG's Summer Camp in Serbia 2016 was named "If only I had the shape of a pyramid" focusing on issues of class and rigid class divisions within society. During the performance she stages a Question and Answer Session taking place after a lecture on Classism in which the audience reads out imagined questions given to them by the performer. The performance meant to portray an ideal and respectful discussion on the topic of classism, the form of discrimination people face due to them belonging to a certain, particularly lower,

class. Julischka's dress also seems noteworthy to point out, causing puzzled faces, some laughter and irritation. Wearing a tight polyester jumpsuit patterned with french fries and a bath robe with moneyprints, she means to provoke but also to point out how fat bodies are stigmatised as belonging to people from lower classes who are frowned upon if they climb up the social ladder and how their wealth is only always seen as a costume. At FYEG's Summer Camp, this performance was well perceived and generated interesting conversation and discussion afterwards.



## **Julischka, where do the questions the audience reads out come from?**

For this work, I borrow different people's voices to pair up with my own. All the text is written in the first person. Those lines that start with, for example "Hello, my name is Audre Lorde..." are quotes by authors who have written on the topic. They are introduced with their full name. Those lines which start with, for example "Hey, I'm Andrea..." refer to personal experiences I collected from friends and colleagues. All the lines that don't start with a name are my own reflections on the topic.

I composed the content of this text collage in order to stage a stimulating discussion on class from an intersectional point of view. I want as many different aspects covered, including counterparts. In large part, the script remains the same but I adopt it and include new lines for each performance depending on the context. There is a planned order/dramaturgy in the script but no pre-thinking which line goes to which audience member. Yet, I take care of not having the same people speak all the time.

**None of the activists in the room contributed other than reading out the given texts. How speaking from experience of giving that performance does the audience deal with being given words rather than choosing them themselves? Is there change or progression in the audience's reaction as the performance goes on?**

In general, the audience is a bit hesitant in the beginning but loosens up over time. The overall atmosphere is different depending on the group, the space, the context. Often it gets more focused and dense throughout the performance. Some people are emotionally moved, visually but there have never been any break downs. I have the intention to challenge my audience, not to break them. I believe that the methodology I use - a role play in which nobody speaks personally but follows a given script - creates a space which allows people to discuss a difficult issue without having to reveal anything about themselves.

**As the performance progressed, it seemed like the audience started to get where you were going. Some of us became more brave and started expressing emotions and reactions while reading out their parts.**

The performance deals with a social justice issue and uses (auto-)biographical material. Thus, there is a lot of "real life" in there, if you will. Yet, we deal with it in a constructed frame of art production. It is a staged and scripted Q&A following an imaginary lecture.

**How do you usually and in this specific case perceive the audiences reaction to your performance after it has ended?**

Yes, I was satisfied with the performance. There are several indicators which vary for each work I do. One of the main factors in engaged art is, of course, do people play along? Are they willing to go for what I ask of them? Are they interested in what I have to offer. In this particular case: Will they read out aloud into the microphone what I give to them? Will they follow the instructions on the paper? That's more of a technical thing. But then there is also my feeling in the space, which



**One of the main factors in engaged art is, of course, do people play along?**

is more difficult to put to measures. What vibes do I get from the audience? Do I feel a general openness? How do they react to my inputs, how do my actions affect the atmosphere. In order to monitor (and possibly adjust) this, I must be very present with all my senses and very attentive. If I feel a wall or nothing at all, I know things don't click. During and after the performance in the summer camp I got a lot of positive verbal and non-verbal feedback. Apparently it was an eye-opening learning experience for many, which is really great.

For me, it was quite interesting to do this work for (young) people who are not necessarily drawn to art but deliberately invested and interested in social justice politics. The way how people accessed the work, the different readings of aesthetic or rhetorical codes allowed me to look at my work from another angle.

**By Vesna Jusup - EGP**

**Interested in Julischka's full body of work? Find out more on her tumblr: [julischkastengele.tumblr.com](https://julischkastengele.tumblr.com)**

# MEET THE WRITERS



**Teo Comet** is Spokesperson of the Federation of Young European Greens. Like most of us, he spends his time primarily thinking about the future.



**Julian Hauser** is interested in how modern information technology changes who we are -- how culture and philosophy connect with our smartphones and the internet. He has been active in young Green and digital right organisations for a few years and is currently in the Executive Committee of the Cooperation and Development Network Eastern Europe (CDN). After many years of living in different corners of the European mainland he is now pursuing a PhD in Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland



**Enric Juan** is the current International Officer of Joves amb Iniciativa (Valencian YG). He recently graduated in Materials Science and Engineering from Imperial College London and he has also been an active member of

the Young Greens of England and Wales, becoming their candidate for the 2014 local elections in London. Enric has a broad experience with student societies including Amnesty International and Model UN student groups. In his (little) spare time he likes to play the violin in all sorts of ensembles -from a symphony orchestra to an English folk band or a musical theatre pit band- and learn different foreign languages.

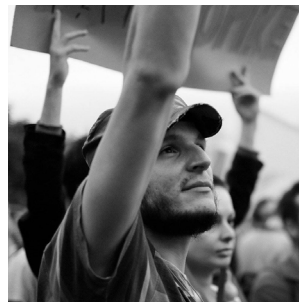


**Vesna Jusup** has joined the Young Greens in 2006 and sailed through the Greens ever since. After being spokesperson of Serbian Young Greens for 3 years, Vesna moved to international work and worked on the development of the Eastern European Young Greens as Network Coordinator of CDN. FYEG was always close to CDN and Vesna's heart so she joined several initiatives such as the Political Platform, Youth Manifesto and Economic Compass Editorial Boards. Today, Vesna works at the European Green party and still supports Greens in their growth. As a graduated Art historian, whose artsy career lost the battle to the Greens, Vesna is always happy to work on Art and politics.

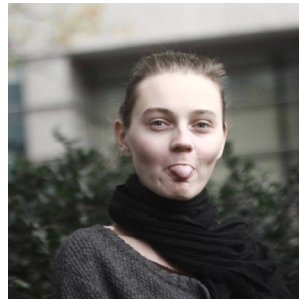


**Iva Markovic** is a political activist from Belgrade. She is active member of Serbian Green Youth, and a student of landscape architecture. She participated in several FYEG

projects and got involved in the Left Summit of Serbia. After a decade of youth and environmental activism she is currently interested in achieving synergy between diverse social movements and green and left political ideas in Serbia and elsewhere around Europe. She can tell you about her demo-femi-eco-socialist vision any time of the day or night, especially if you are willing to join her out of your usual comfort zone.



**Predrag Momčilović** is red-green activist from Serbia. He is secretariat member of Serbian Green Youth, PhD student at Geography Faculty (socio-urban geography) and journalist. Politically he is ecosocialist especially interested in urban issues.

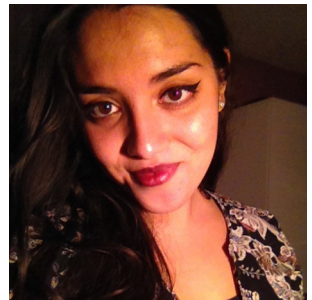


**Masha Pashkova-Dzneladze** is part of Green movement for 5 years already. She is from Georgia where she entered the Georgian Young Greens, where favorite tasks of hers were campaigning and developing political documents. Already for two years Masha is member of EC of Cooperation and Development Network Eastern Europe ([www.cdnee.org](http://www.cdnee.org)). Currently Masha lives in Prague, where she studies Architecture and Engineering. Her main interests are: Feminism, alternative urbanization, Clean sources of Energy, Open Knowledge and Open Culture, Drugs, their affects on people and policies in

different countries. When (very rarely) she has some free time she likes to sketch or do yoga.

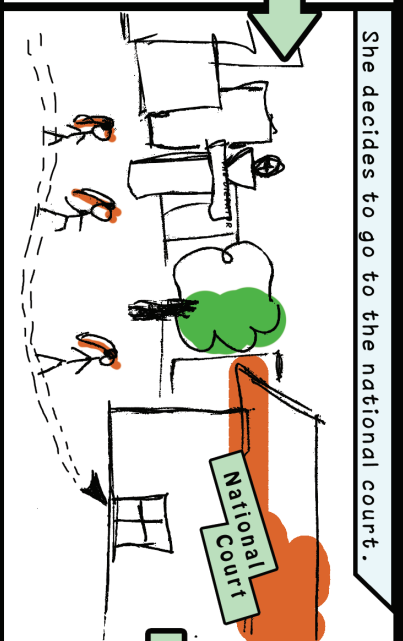


**Sebastiaan Rood** is a member of the Dutch Young Greens, studies European Governance and lives in Utrecht, Netherlands. He has a seemingly infinite amount of energy and uses it to fight for a brighter future for young people!

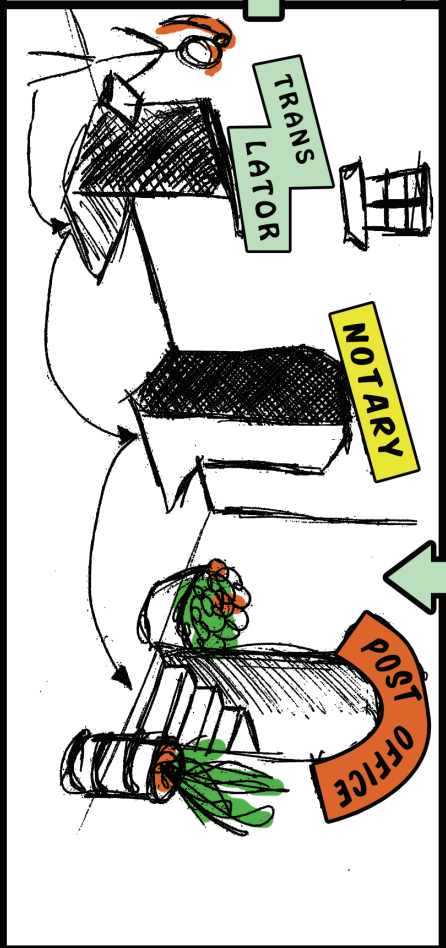
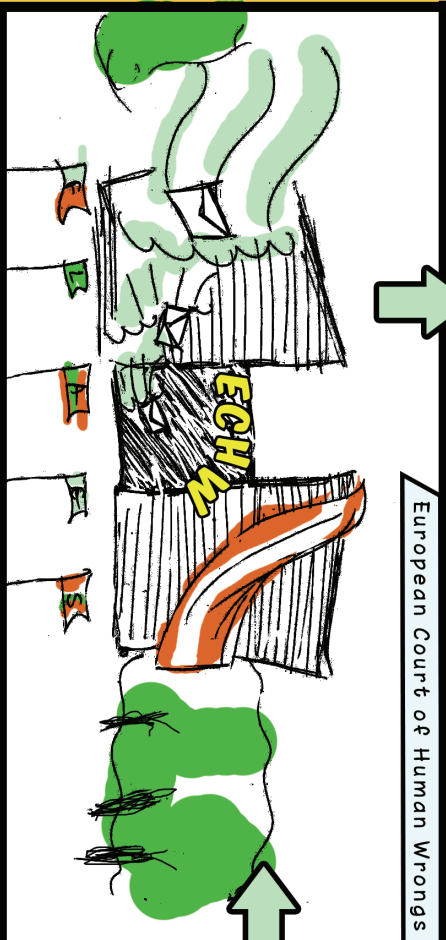
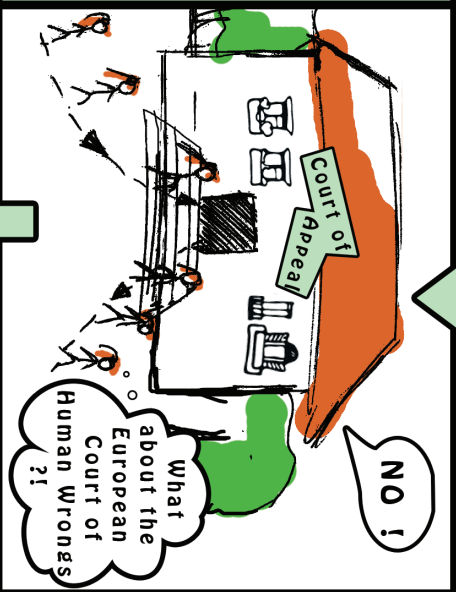


**Miene Waziri** defines as many things but first and foremost she is an ice cream lover who has a slight obsession with Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, worships the sun and hot summers and aspires to be as cool as her mom and local brown girls one day, while parenthetically studying (sociology) and surviving on a daily basis.

The European Court of Human Rights has made changes to its application form .  
Any non-standardized application may be rejected by the Court.



# GO HOME YOU'RE WRONG



SI L'EDUCATION  
N'EST PAS  
UN DROIT  
ELLE SERA  
UN GAUCHE

THE  
SOCIAL  
RIGHTS  
ISSUE