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## LET'S GET MORE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE NEXT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT!

50% of the world's population is under 30 years old. But globally only 2.91% of the world's parliamentarians are under 30. Mapped onto 365 days, 10 January is the last day young voices are represented in parliaments around the world. That is why the United Nations have dubbed this day the #NoSayDay.

Things are no better in the European Parliament. Just a few months before the next European elections, only two Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are still under 30. This is just 0.28% of all MEPs - a lot less than the global average.

For the European Union to meet the challenges of young people today, we need more young candidates and youth representation. We, young people, have the talent, experience, ideas, vision and energy to be brilliant MEPs. We are on the streets, in schools, on campuses, and in our workplaces fighting for our rights every day and we deserve to be at the decision-making table. Including young people in electoral lists should not be a tokenistic exercise of filling a quota.

In a thriving democracy, it's essential that all social groups actively engage in politics to ensure the legitimacy of decisions made. However, our current political structures could strengthen efforts to value young candidates, especially those facing discrimination

or precarity. This leads to decreased involvement of young people due to a lack of ownership over decisions and the decision-making process.

Given the scarcity of young people in positions of power, youth participation in decision-making processes should be facilitated in other ways too. For the first time German and Belgian 16-year-olds will join young people from Malta and Austria to vote in the upcoming elections. This is great news for youth participation, but it results in discrimination for other 16-year-old Europeans who are not allowed to vote.

That is why the European Youth Forum and the European Political Party Youth Wings across the political spectrum are calling upon political parties to:

- select young candidates to run in the European Parliament elections this June - **in electable spots**
- include in their manifesto a commitment to lower the voting age to 16
- focus campaign efforts on first-time voters and young people, especially those from less-represented communities
- train and invest in young talent within the party so they are prepared for future elections and ensure funding for party political youth organisations

The European Parliament elections are a chance to bring young people's voices into the centre of our democracies and boost the percentage of young MEPs!

The **European Democrat Students (EDS)** is a pan-European centre-right student and youth political association, and the official student organisation of the European People's Party (EPP). Founded in Vienna in 1961, the organisation represents over a million students and young people in 30 countries across Europe.

The **European Free Alliance Youth (EFAY)** supports the rights of national and ethnic minority communities, especially those who face discrimination and policies aimed at weakening their rights. EFAY's aim is to make young people aware of Europe's diversity and to foster respect for cultural, linguistic and ethnic richness.

The **Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG)** is the European umbrella organisation for 36 Young Green organisations from all over the continent, comprising local ecological groups, student unions, youth wings of Green parties and Green Youth NGOs. In addition, FYEG is also the independent, official youth wing of the European Green Party (EGP).

The **Young European Federalists (JEF Europe)** is a non-partisan youth NGO with 10,000 members active in over 30 countries. The organisation strives towards a federal Europe based on the principles of democracy and subsidiarity as well as respect for human rights.

The **European Liberal Youth (LYMEC)** is a pan-European political youth organisation seeking to promote liberal values and to create a liberal and federal Europe. As the youth organisation of the ALDE Party and the Renew Europe parliamentary group in the European Parliament, LYMEC is made up of member organisations and individual membership and is active across the breadth of the European Continent.

The **Young Democrats for Europe (YDE)** is the youth wing of the European Democratic Party and of Renew Europe, Parliamentary Group. The YDE has 13 members in 10 European countries and partners in a dozen other European countries. We embrace the key role of democratic principles, underlined in the Lisbon Treaty and enshrined in our political beliefs: democracy, freedom, equality, participation, sustainability and solidarity.

**Young European Socialists (YES)** is the biggest political party youth organisation in Europe. YES unites the youth of socialist, social democratic and labour movements all over the continent to work for a united, democratic, environmental, social, feminist and federal Europe, based on individual and collective human rights and freedoms. YES promotes a clear socialist and social democratic vision for Europe's future to combat inequality, social injustice and right-wing and extremist policies.

The **European Youth Forum (YFJ)** is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. YFJ represents over 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe. The Youth Forum represents and advocates for young people's needs and interests, and empowers young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives.