



**YES - Europe**  
Young leaders in  
Energy and  
Sustainability

January 15th 2024

# Annual Report 2023



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## Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Foreword.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About YES-Europe.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Diversity and Inclusivity Statement.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Financial Report 2023.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Interviews.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Dimitris Symeonidis.....	13
Evi Makri.....	16
Sakari Teerikoski.....	18
Elena Fazio.....	20
<b>Projects.....</b>	<b>22</b>
Annual Conference 2023.....	23
COP28.....	26
EUSEW.....	30
Energy and Sustainability Days in Vienna.....	32
<b>International Team.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Communications.....	40
Community Management.....	42
Country Representatives.....	44
Finance.....	45
Knowledge Sharing.....	46
Operations.....	48
Policy.....	49
<b>Local Teams.....</b>	<b>51</b>

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Austria - Jeremias Jobst.....	52
Belgium - Essam Elnagar.....	54
Finland - Pyry Kiesilä.....	56
Greece - Ioannis Pouloupoulos.....	57
Hungary - Lily Tanui.....	58
Italy - Marianna Montauti.....	59
Malta - Eric Balakrishnan.....	61
Portugal - João Sequeira Sena.....	64
Serbia - Natasa Rajkovic.....	65

## Foreword

Dear readers and community members, Welcome to our annual report!

In these pages, witness how our talks have shaped actions, decisions, and impact. This report isn't a formality; it's an open invite to join the conversation that's propelling our mission: accelerate the energy transition by providing youth with an environment for fusion of ideas, the opportunity to take on responsibility, build local communities, and act for change.

To realise the energy transition we need physical, electronic and soft infrastructure. Soft infrastructure so that people can work together despite cultural differences and languages. The current status quo cannot be maintained and that's why we put the focus on the soft aspect at YES-Europe. A recurring phrase, the so-called 'Courage' Gene is needed to avoid falling into complacency. We encourage perspective taking, to avoid simply taking sides and instead seeing the world through different lenses. We hope through the work of different countries, to build superordinates goals, this way we can aim to bring people together to work towards a common goal.

We are proud of the community that we have built all together, the holacratic method applied to let individuals work in different roles autonomously, the support and the freedom to test new ideas. We have witnessed people grow, personally and



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

professionally, starting from ourselves. From 2023, we have also established an informal Advisory Board Group where selected past members and external stakeholders meet with our board members to get honest feedback on current strategies. We'd like to use this chance to thank Stephen, Erik, Dimitri and Sara for their invaluable support.

Cheers to another year of purpose and dialogue

– Livia Kalossaka, Vice President



# About YES- Europe

### Why YES-Europe?

Shifting the energy sector towards a sustainable state requires an urgent systemic change - all societal, public, and private stakeholders need to group their efforts for a successful transition.

To this aim, multi-disciplinary networks providing the youth with the right leverage resources to catalyse quicker actions are still missing. We are here to fill the gap and accelerate the process.

### History

YES-Europe was created through an initiative of the EPFL University of Lausanne in Switzerland. It brought together fifty students from nine European countries for the first Annual Conference organised in 2016 to connect and find meaningful ways to make a difference in the field of energy and sustainability. Since then, YES-Europe has grown internationally to have an impact at the European level. It was officially registered as an NGO in the year 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland.

By building a capillary network, YES-Europe bridges the gap between the local and European level. We have a regional approach with a European focus, which allows us to have global perspectives applied to local realities.

### Vision

We envision a positive future where individuals and communities can cultivate the knowledge and skills to realise the energy transition, fostering social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

### Mission

Our mission is to accelerate the energy transition by providing youth with an environment for fusion of ideas, the opportunity to take on responsibility, build local communities, and act for change.

### Statement

YES-Europe (Young leaders in Energy and Sustainability) is a community created to empower students and young professionals across Europe. We develop meaningful connections, share knowledge and take actions on energy and sustainability topics. With our commitment, passion and common mindset, we are building an inclusive community that supports each other in brainstorming, developing, and implementing projects to build local communities of change makers.

### How do we work together?

In order to foster creativity and empower our members, we have adopted a decentralised structure for management. Each individual at YES-Europe is encouraged to come up with new projects, collaborations, and partnerships, both internally and externally. With the support of more than 250 active members, resources are easily accessible. The governance team works towards supporting and guiding the development of the projects.

### Contribution towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- SDG 7: affordable and clean energy
- SDG 13: climate action
- SDG 17: partnerships for the goal

## Diversity and Inclusivity Statement

YES-Europe is committed to the acceleration of Europe's energy transition through its equal and unbiased opportunities for prospective members and its outreach activities that facilitate youth empowerment in a manner that is socially and economically inclusive. We are an equal opportunity provider.

The current global youth population of around 1.8 billion (ages of 10 to 24) is the largest in history. Youth plays a crucial role in combating climate change as agents of change, for example, as activists, entrepreneurs and innovators (United Nations, 2022).

YES-Europe's existing membership and outreach activities show that it has achieved great diversity and inclusivity in its membership, in terms of the gender ratio (male:female ratio), and member composition (e.g. students versus young professionals; STEM versus other backgrounds).

Based on our current progress, YES-Europe will continue to build an even more inclusive representation and empowerment of youth voices across Europe (YES-Europe defines youth as persons of ages 18 to 35 years). Specifically, YES-Europe encourages acceleration of Europe's energy transition by facilitating more inclusive youth participation from:

- The LGBTQ+ community
- Low-income regions and communities
- Ethnic minorities
- Indigenous communities
- Under-represented European countries
- Persons with expertise in the Humanities and Natural Sciences
- Strategic collaborations with other regions outside Europe
- People with disabilities



# Financial Report

# Financial Report 2023

Date: 01.01.2023 - 31.12.2023

Niveau 0

P&amp;L

## Bilan financier

Devise: Euro

Somme des montants

Label ligne

Produits

Donations

Produits accessoires

Charges

Autres frais professionnels

Website

Frais de publicité

Frais de voyage

Imprimés publicitaires, matériel de publicité

Relations publiques

Grand Total

Label colonne  
2023

janv

avr

mai

juin

août

déc

Grand Total

-5743.81

-4400.00

-2443.03

-359.69

-12946.53

27.35

142.99

170.34

218

2400

2618

20

20

6311

354

1487

8152

47.35

709.98

-3828.06

-955.83

2400.00

-359.69

-1986.25





# Interviews

## **Dimitris Symeonidis**

*Policy Lead*

### **Tell us about your background**

I am an electrical & computer engineer by trade and my technical background lies more on the renewable energy technologies spectrum. However, since I was always interested in tackling issues such as the energy transition in a more holistic manner, I have pursued a public policy analysis specialisation through my master's degree, where I have the chance to understand and work closely on the policy & politics challenges that exist on the climate change mitigation front.

My main function within YES-Europe has been as a policy lead, but I have been involved in many other amazing projects and initiatives within the organisation as well. Apart from that, I am the founder of the Decentralised Solutions Global Network, a researcher at CERTH Greece and a technical advisor at URANO Kapital. Essentially I am working on all fronts and levels of the innovation ecosystem in climate tech and renewable energy.

### **How did you find out about YES- Europe?**

Being active on the youth mobilisation front, I got in contact with Evi (the current CR lead) and she introduced me to YES-Europe. Initially I got involved mostly with some events the local Greek team organised, but soon I gained interest in contributing to the organisation in all its sectors and geographies.

### **What prompted you to join YES-Europe?**

Energy transition and climate change mitigation are considered the grand challenges of our time, in my view. This means that they have so many challenges that only the motivation and energy of young people, as well as their leadership initiatives, can fight. At the same time, they entail so many opportunities to thrive in the entrepreneurial, civil society or humanitarian front, but they require huge amounts of creativity that traditionally youth bring to the table. However, in order for every young person on these sectors to realize that, it is imperative that youth civil society plays a major role

in mobilizing, empowering, educating and advocating, so that both the conditions, the willingness and the capabilities of youth are there. This vision is what I found only in a handful of organisations and YES-Europe is one of them.

### **How has the "YES-Europe" experience impacted you?**

I would say that it has impacted me on several levels. First of all, through organising initiatives and events with the rest of the team and with partnering organisations I gained a lot of insights that I never had about the energy transition. This happened through interaction with young professionals from fields of the energy transition that are outside my expertise, so it really helped me broaden my horizons. At the same time, it gave me the opportunity to exchange views with people from all European countries, as well as views on the energy transition and help have a broader understanding of the issue. In general, meeting all these cool people within energy and sustainability would not have happened without my presence in YES-Europe.

### **What expectations do you have from the future?**

I hope that in the future European and global stakeholders provide further support and platforms for the voice of youth on the energy transition to be heard. There are definitely a lot of initiatives to engage with youth out there, but there are still green and digital skills gaps, as well as gaps in participation of youth in policy making. In this perspective, YES-Europe has a lot to contribute, so I am expecting further engagement with us, also innovative ways of participatory policymaking through inclusive workshops and other ways, so that they can challenge us to think even more outside the box on the events that we organise. With regards to YES-Europe, in addition, I also expect us to expand beyond European borders and start exchanging views and engaging in joint projects with the Global South. This would be invaluable in my view.

In general for the energy transition, I am expecting more sophisticated financing models, so that the most promising ideas are given the push they need and so that focus is being given on making these enterprises financially viable. Environmental impact is always important, but without potential for scaling, this impact might never happen.

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

In terms of technologies and concepts, I expect decentralisation to play a major role in the energy transition from here onward, given that infrastructure impediments are very difficult to resolve. Renewable energy communities and hydrogen valleys, in my opinion, will save us from not reaching our goals. On a similar note, the next step I expect to be decarbonizing heavy industry, which will require the help of hydrogen or other alternative fuels.

Finally, I am expecting all state actors within the EU and beyond to live up to all the targets that they have set and to not make any discounts. The planet needs that.

**Describe your personal experience with YES-Europe in 1 word**

Unique

## **Evi Makri**

*Country Representative Lead*

### **Tell us about your background**

I am a PhD candidate working on the topic of Climate Justice and my initial concern about this started back during my BA in International and European Studies. After that I had two MScs, on Energy Law, Business, Regulation and Policy and on Climate Crisis and ICT respectively. Throughout my studies and work I always had in mind the global inequalities happening also under the prism of climate change and I've felt how important it is to see yourself as a small part of a bigger picture within which you can leave a positive mark.

### **How did you find out about YES- Europe?**

I found out about YES-Europe in 2019, while I was doing an internship in Brussels. There I met a colleague of mine who was - at the time - a member of YES and talked to me about it. There was no local team in Greece at the time and I instantly felt that there was good potential in shaping one.

### **What prompted you to join YES-Europe?**

I liked the idea of being part of a pan-European network of like minded people where we can learn from each other and pursue, together, a just and inclusive energy transition.

### **How has the "YES-Europe" experience impacted you?**

The whole experience has been very educational and creative as it has helped me develop both my soft and hard skills. In addition, it has offered me the opportunity to be part of something more than a network, but a group of people who can essentially support each other and work collaboratively for what we believe in whether it is about a project or an event. It has been a great pleasure to be able to leave a positive mark in the universal effort to address climate change.

### **What expectations do you have from the future?**

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

I aspire to see the organization bloom further, expand geographically and increase its dedication to our values. As we constantly evolve our quality of cooperation and work I believe that we can be engaged in more and more groups and activities that support our cause: an active platform for youth to participate in the energy transition respectfully.

**Describe your personal experience with YES-Europe in 1 word.**

Openness

## **Sakari Teerikoski**

*Operations Lead*

### **Tell us about your background**

My academic background is in chemical engineering, but I have done most of my professional career in the space industry. I also have a background in multiple NGOs before joining YES-Europe, for example Global Shapers and the Swedish Association of International Affairs.

### **How did you find out about YES- Europe?**

Actually, quite interestingly, by searching on Google. I was interested in knowing if there is any organisation out there which gathers young leaders and young professionals in the energy or sustainability sectors, and I was particularly interested about the European context. I was not aware of neither YES-Europe nor EYEN from before. I think I typed “Young energy leaders Europe”, pressed “Enter” and there it was as one of the first search results: YES-Europe. Good thing there were some really interesting open positions advertised on the website on that day.

### **What prompted you to join YES-Europe?**

In my application to become the Operations Lead of YES-Europe, I wrote that youth empowerment is very dear to me and that I definitely see the value of empowering young energy and sustainability professionals through a network like this. Young professionals are key players in an efficient and sustainable energy transition which is needed to meet the climate goals.

### **How has the "YES-Europe" experience impacted you?**

It's been fun and rewarding.

### **What expectations do you have from the future?**

We have some really cool projects that we are starting up in 2024. Soon you will hear more! I'm sensing that 2024 will be a successful year for YES-Europe.



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

### **Describe your personal experience with YES-Europe in 1 word**

“Network”. YES-Europe is an organisation where one gets to meet a lot of amazing people who are all contributing in various ways to the sustainable energy transition and other sustainability aspects as well. It’s great to work together in teams where people have very diverse backgrounds but share a common vision about the future. It’s not only about working, though. It’s also a place to meet and interact.

## Elena Fazio

*Communications Lead*

### **Tell us about your background**

I have a BA in Foreign Languages and a MA in International and Diplomatic Sciences. Currently, I'm interning as a Policy Assistant for Climate and Energy at an environmental NGO, in Brussels. During my Masters degree, I got interested in environmental policies and wrote a thesis about them within the broader European level, as well as the local one. This has led me to the path I'm currently undertaking, now working on energy efficiency.

### **How did you find out about YES- Europe?**

I joined YES-Europe in May 2022. It all happened because I was in Turin, doing an internship, and was looking for events during the weekend. I ended up on YES-Europe's Annual Conference page and thought – why not? I was actually very close to not participating, as the weather that day was terrible, and I really did not feel like going. Nonetheless, I decided to go and see what it was about... and now I'm here!

### **What prompted you to join YES-Europe?**

Mainly my interest in sustainability and the energy transition. YES-Europe was everything I was looking for: a group of passionate people, interested in the role of young people within environmental frameworks and energy. However, what actually prompted me to join was the feeling of community and closeness that the team showed during the Annual Conference. I remember thinking: "Not only they are doing something meaningful, but it also seems like they're having fun and are close with each other – I want to be part of that!"

### **How has the "YES-Europe" experience impacted you?**

It's really hard to say in a few words. I honestly believe I wouldn't be where I currently am if it wasn't because of this experience in YES-Europe. Not only did I enhance my professional and communication skills, learning how to lead a team and craft impactful

messages, but I also created meaningful connections with people from all over Europe whom I'm grateful to call friends!

### **What expectations do you have from the future?**

YES-Europe has achieved a lot already, but I honestly believe we can be so much more! I'd love to see YES-Europe become a more recognized entity, taking part in different events and conferences. It's the youth, speaking for the youth – I wish for and expect it to be central to discussions involving young people and the energy transition. We are the future and the present.

### **Describe your personal experience with YES-Europe in 1 word**

Connection – because we must not forget that we are not alone in our fight to make the energy transition happen. This is a lot of work, and it can feel daunting to experience everything alone, but we don't have to. That's the real strength of YES-Europe – we commit and plan and strive together, for a better future!

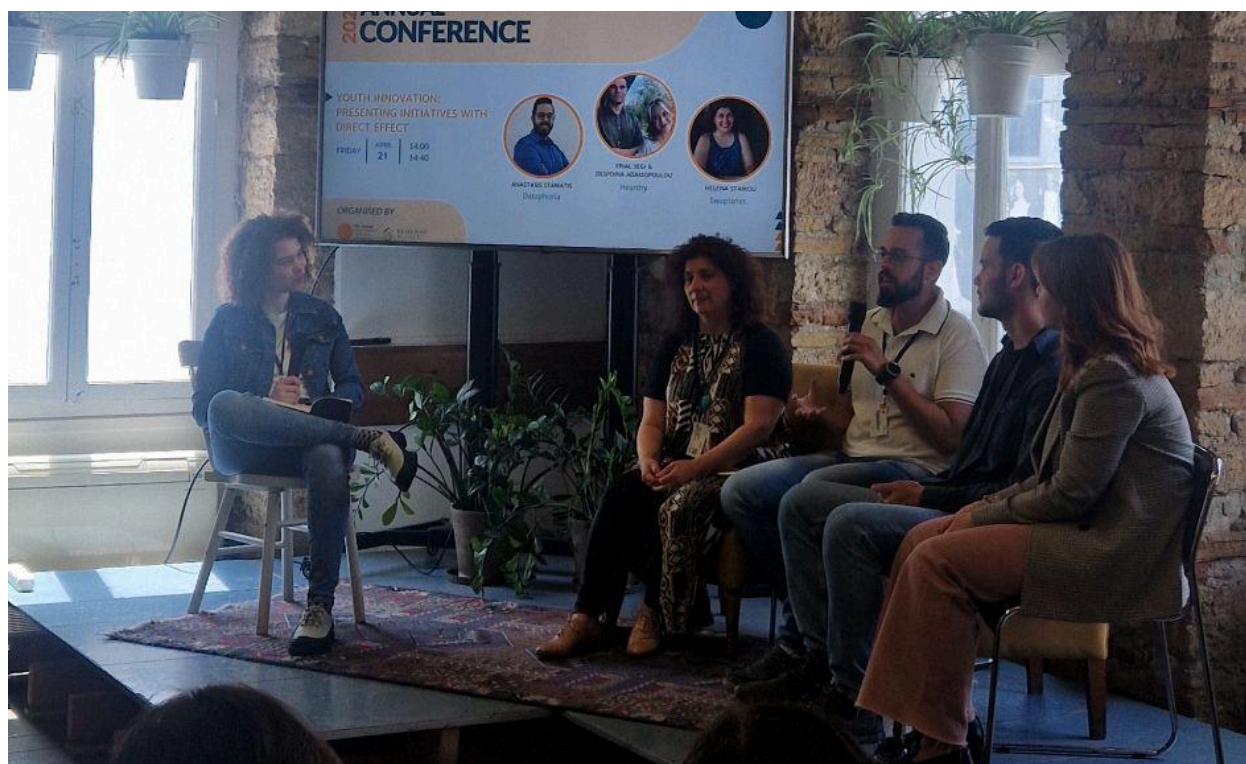


# Projects

## Annual Conference 2023

The Annual Conference of YES-Europe was once more a major highlight of the past year. In 2023, it was organised in collaboration with our strategic partner, Resilient Planet and it took place in Athens, Greece, on 21st-23rd of April.

The conference included a rich mix of discussions and presentations involving personalities from academia and business with a long track record in the fields of energy and sustainable development. In addition, it included interactive activities, nature excursions – done through two field visits - and of course networking with people from all over Europe, interested in the energy transition and sustainable development. The aim of it was to cover a range of topics including the energy transition, the importance of renewable energy in accelerating it, the climate crisis together with the inequalities it brings, ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) criteria, green innovation, the place of youth in energy and sustainability, as well as the key role of women in these topics.



The visits that were included in the Annual Conference's program were done at Helios Eco Lab and Symbeeosis HQ's Garden. In more details:



[Helios Eco Lab](#): is the brainchild of David Davis, a sustainability expert. Helios Eco Lab is a "living museum of sustainability" of zero carbon and zero waste next to the Kouvaras forest near Porto Rafti. Its founder aims to demonstrate that sustainable living can be functional and affordable. The site also houses the [Solar Electric Club](#) which promotes a range of services to support the entire solar electric ecosystem.

[Symbeeosis HQ's Garden](#): The Hippocratic Botanical Garden of [Symbeeosis](#), which includes over 500 species of plants, reflects the philosophy of its founders; Out of respect for the rich Greek biodiversity and the preservation of the natural environment, the natural topography remains in much of the Garden and blends perfectly with the flowerbeds. The species cultivated in the Garden using regenerative farming methods are in harmony with the rich native flora that exists on the estate. In the context of a holistic view of the function of nature, in the Garden, the flowering plants live in harmony with the bees that are hosted here and together they ensure its sustainability. The Symbeeosis Hippocrates Botanical Garden is a place of knowledge, aesthetic pleasure, and unique experiential experiences.



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

All in all the YES-Europe Annual Conference 2023 had it all!

- ✓ Informative speeches
- ✓ Insightful panel discussions
- ✓ Inspiring field trips
- ✓ Creative photo exhibition
- ✓ Empowering workshops
- ➡ And a constantly growing sense of engagement and community building.

As for the experience of organising and hosting it, one could not be more inspired, challenged and grateful at the same time for having the opportunity to bring the whole community together in an interactive, creative and insightful way that really made an impact!





### COP28

Ever since YES-Europe became an official observer to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) the annual Conference Of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC has become our flagship event on the international arena. YES-EUROPE's local and national actions to foster the energy transition are highly influenced by the decisions taken by global leaders in international forums such as COP.

COP is the main decision making body for the climate and one of the largest international meetings in the world; it is organized yearly among the parties to the UNFCCC since 1992. COP has convened the Parties to discuss climate action and decide on the future actions to achieve the sustainable development goals.



Every year, the topics tackled at COP are decided in the intersessional meetings held by the Subsidiary Body (SB) of the UNFCCC. This year, it was held in Bonn, and YES-Europe was present with a delegation. It was composed of members from YES-Europe, both from international and local teams. Two members, Max van der Linden and Mikela Kouyalis represented YES-Europe during the first and second week. There, our delegation had the opportunity to witness the negotiations on the agenda

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

for COP28. Max points out that the delegation could ‘witness in crystal clear manner how difficult and stiff UN-Negotiations are’.

COP28 was held in Dubai from 28 November to 12 December 2023 with the vision to deliver on the pillars of the Paris Agreement. As discussed during the Bonn negotiations, the focus was placed upon specific action on four paradigm shifts:

- Fast -tracking the energy transition and slashing emissions before 2030
- Transforming climate finance;
- Focusing on nature, people, lives, and livelihoods;
- Ensuring full inclusivity

A three-member delegation represented YES-Europe’s interests and political at COP28. During the preparations, YES-Europe and EYEN came together to create synergies, define common interests and establish political priorities. As an outcome of the discussion, adopting global energy targets & empowering youth were deemed as our main priorities to put the energy transition back on track. In particular, we advocated for the adoption of a worldwide target for renewable energy and energy efficiency and for the recognition that skilled youth and a strong workforce will be essential in the global transition from fossil fuels to RES.

Once at COP, YES-Europe had the opportunity to organize a side event at the Finnish Pavilion and participate in three other side events organized at the IRENA and Finnish Pavilion respectively where we had the opportunity to underscore the urgency to bridge the disparity between current renewable energy deployment and the benchmarks set by the Paris Agreement. We could also spotlight the pivotal role of clear renewable energy targets in translating aspirations into tangible actions. Central to our discourse was recognition of youth as indispensable players in the energy transition and the need to tackle the global renewables skills gap while boosting the capacity of our youth workforce in the energy transition.



Laia Guitart, COP28 project leader acknowledges that the adoption of the pledge it's a milestone that is very well aligned with our priorities. Yet, after reading the document is clear that it shows willingness but not commitment, and we do not have time so we need to keep fighting for the adoption of a target on EE and RES that is binding at a global level.

On its side, Livia Kalossaka points out that the media portrayal of COP and the reality of being there can be quite distinct. However, the undeniable truth is that such large gatherings are invaluable moments to accelerate progress, and much more could be achieved. An interesting aspect of the conference design itself is the multitude of pavilions and side events occurring, which can exert a dual influence. On one hand, it provides smaller delegations and organizations with the opportunity to showcase their perspectives and foster innovative ideas. On the other hand, it scatters attention and diffuses energy. Recognizing the distinctiveness of such events is crucial; it requires setting aside ego and embracing empathy and decisive action. In the realm of designing spaces, we are eager to shift our focus to this critical aspect, where subtle nuances in behavior can lead to remarkable transformations.





### EUSEW

This year, our active participation in the European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW) in June 2023 marked a significant milestone, as we proudly served as one of the key partners for Youth Energy Day. The event was led by Essam Elnagar, Country Representative of Belgium, and Elena Fazio, Communications Lead.

During our interactive session titled "How can youth-driven energy communities shape the clean energy transition?" on youth engagement within energy communities, we featured distinguished speakers with diverse backgrounds, shedding light on the crucial role of energy communities in the clean energy transition within the EU. The speakers included:

Megan Gignac - Project Management OÖ Energiesparverband, Austria

Dr. Lurian Klein - Senior Innovation Developer Cleanwatts, Portugal

Heleen Schockaert - Project Manager REScoop.eu, Belgium



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The session was moderated by Essam Elnagar, emphasizing the collaborative effort of individuals and organizations in driving the clean energy transition forward. The event attracted a substantial audience, with a total of 250+ physical and online attendees, underscoring the growing importance of involving young minds in shaping the future of sustainable energy. The overarching message was clear: youth engagement is pivotal in steering the energy transition, and energy communities provide an excellent platform to empower and integrate the younger generation into this transformative journey.





## Energy and Sustainability Days in Vienna

### **How did the idea for the Energy & Sustainability Day 2023 in Vienna arise?**

In spring 2022, a small delegation of the Austrian team visited the YES-Europe annual conference in Turin with - Jeremias Jobst, Amir Muzaferovic and Barbara Gösenbauer. We were very impressed by the high level of professionalism of this voluntary 3-day event organised by our Italian colleagues and got inspired to implement something similar on a small scale in Vienna. This is how the idea of the YES-Europe Austria Energy & Sustainability Day 2023 (ESD23) was born: an international, bilingual event with three thematic areas: Climate Neutral Urban Development, Green Energy Transition and Sustainable Entrepreneurship.

### **How many people were involved in ESD23 and how was the teamwork?**

Over a period of about 6 months, we formed an internal team, organised the locations and speakers and arranged the funding for the catering, the professional photographer and the drinks for our after event. 12 volunteers from the YES-EUROPE AUSTRIA team either worked directly on the event or contributed indirectly through speeches or financial contributions. A small core team developed the concept, planned the day and evening events and organised the marketing. Our team work profited from regular in-person meetings and dedicated individuals with a common goal in mind.



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023



**What topics did you discuss and how many speakers and guests did ESD23 have?**

Keynote speeches, panel discussions, video messages and presentations by more than 20 speakers to an audience of around 80 participants constituted ESD23 from 10am to 4pm.



**I - Policy Talk (in German)**

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Policy Talk included a panel discussion on the Vienna Climate Roadmap 2030 (moderated by Jeremias Jobst and Stephanie Koch) and a presentation of the Austrian Mobility Masterplan 2030.



## II - Tech Talk (in German)

The Tech Talk included presentations on "Gas phase-out in multi-storey residential buildings" and "Public affairs in the energy industry", as well as a panel discussion on future energy sources and the limits of electrification (moderated by Guntram Preßmair and Amir Muzaferovic).



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023



### III - Business Talk (in English)

The Business Talk included the keynote speech "Founding and Development of YES-Europe" by Sara Nyberg, YES-Europe video messages by Evi Makri (Greece) and Eric Balakrishnan (Malta), a presentation by Thinkubator Earth - a startup for the circular economy from Vienna - and a panel discussion on the experiences and challenges of young entrepreneurs in Austria (moderated by Barbara Gösenbauer and Lisa Wolf).

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023



During the lunch break we offered a varied organic vegetarian buffet which was well received. The ESD23 was also broadcasted live - the video can be viewed on our website: <https://yeseurope.org/austria/>

### What happened after the day event?

As a youth organisation, we also wanted to include workshops, networking and partying into our event. ESD23 should be a day of informal exchange and interaction. With this in mind we made sure to organize a fun After Event for networking including one free drink for every participant of ESD23. The evening started with an interesting workshop on "Sustainable Leadership" by Aurela Brida. Afterwards, the unique saxophonist Dan Lio set the mood with his sounds. At The End of the day, we partied until the early hours of the morning.



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023



A&N I – Workshop with Aurelia Brida



A&N II – Live Musik with Dan Lio & Party

What have you learnt as a team and what other goals do you have?

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

There are two sides to a big event like ESD23: on the one hand, you can generate a lot of energy and teamwork when you set yourself a big goal as a team and work towards a special day. On the other hand, it takes a lot of time, coordination and involvement - so of course we were quite exhausted after the event. Exhausted in a good way after a successful event! Therefore, we don't regret a single day of volunteering and look back on a sensational and unique community experience.

For 2024, we want to extend the team, develop new formats and work on content on a regular basis. Of course, ESD23 lit the fire in us and if the team-building with the new colleagues goes well, we are planning to apply for the YES-EUROPE Annual Conference 2025 in Vienna.

### **Claimer: Thanks to the team and sponsors**

YES-Europe Austria's ESD23 would not have been possible without the months-long commitment of the volunteer core team, especially Country Representative Jeremias Jobst, Co-CR Amir Muzaferovic, Barbara Gösenbauer, Guntram Preßmair, Lisa Wolf, Martin Mayr and Stephanie Koch. ESD23 also received great support from the extended Austrian team, in particular Bernhard Fürnsinn, Florian Zach, Alin-Florin Calin and our international colleagues, especially Eleonora Cherubini, Sara Nyberg, Eric Balakrishnan, Evi Makri and Philip Villax, who helped both financially and with creative ideas.

In addition to volunteer work, ESD23 in Vienna also relies on external support. In this context, we as a team would like to thank the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) for its support. A big thank you goes to Helga Weichselberger, who provided the ESD23 with exceptionally healthy and tasty food from her health food shop Regenbogen. The support of the "Wiener Bildungsakademie", which provided us with the premises and a "technical team", was irreplaceable for the success of the event - thanks to Marcus Schober, Bernd Herger, Peter Filipczak & team. Thanks also to the district organisation of the SPÖ Wien Ottakring, which provided us with the premises for the evening event.



# International Team

## Communications

### Projects in 2023

The pinnacle of the communication team's endeavours has been the execution of the communication campaign for the Annual Conference 2023—initiated in 2022. This undertaking encompassed a comprehensive array of responsibilities, including managing all social media posts, designing graphics, creating templates, overseeing in-event disseminations, and various other activities.

Noteworthy among our additional projects are the EUSEW and COP initiatives. In both instances, the communications team assumed the crucial role of formulating and executing fitting dissemination campaigns, disseminating content on social media platforms, and facilitating seamless coordination among diverse teams.

The communications team plays a pivotal role in facilitating the success of various teams by providing support for their projects and addressing day-to-day communication requirements. This involves crafting engaging social media marketing content, designing eye-catching graphics, and managing website content.

Our involvement extends to projects such as COP27, where we played a key role in communication efforts. Additionally, we spearheaded the communication strategy for EUSEW 2023, the premier annual event dedicated to renewables and efficient energy use in Europe. We were honoured to be invited to host a session on Youth Energy Day, requiring us to coordinate a comprehensive communications campaign. This encompassed tasks such as drafting and publishing compelling content, as well as managing in-event dissemination to ensure a seamless and impactful presence.

### Plans for 2024

In the upcoming year, the communications team is committed to sustaining its support for other teams' operational needs. Moreover, we aspire to enhance our visibility through strategic media outreach efforts, aiming to establish a more pronounced and recognizable presence.



### Impact on YES-Europe

As the communications team, our primary responsibility aligns with our name—to disseminate our expertise and showcase our activities. Positioned as the intermediary between YES-Europe and the external world, we recognize that the initial impression people form of YES-Europe is heavily influenced by our efforts. I firmly believe that, through our contributions, the communications team has played a pivotal role in elevating the visibility and recognition of YES-Europe.

"Leadership is not about being in charge. It's about taking care of those in your charge."  
- Simon Sinek

## Community Management

### Projects in 2023

"Energy sustainability today: the application of energy law rules": co-hosted with UNSOC (United Nations Society - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki). Webinar on Zoom about the Energy Laws perspective and applications in Europe, with attendees directly interacting with academic members and company exponents, bringing direct insight and perspective on the topic. Important focus was given on European Parliament's procedural aspects to achieve the Agenda's 2030 goals, in synergy with large companies' cooperation, while supporting and providing guidelines for the development of Energy Communities. Guest speakers involved: Silvia Tamburini (Head of Strategy at A2A life company), Prof. Andrea Lanzini (Politecnico di Torino), Prof. Vassilios S.Karagiannis (Partner KLC Law Firm). Involving around 40 attendees from the communities of both YES-Europe and UNSOC

### Other projects

- Crucial role in finding the previous Leads for the Knowledge-Sharing and Policy Teams, in time for the General Assembly of 2023.
- Strengthening the cooperation between the International Team and the Local Teams, with team-building and knowledge-sharing events and sessions.
- Realization of the MUN-method Workshop, with practical experience on how the United Nations' delegations take place, and cementing the partnership with UNSOC.
- Checking the proper unfolding of onboarding and offboarding of members, taking care of members' google workspaces.
- Providing and nurturing the partnership with A2A, virtuous life-company and partner for further current events

### Plans for 2024

- Rebuilding the Community Management team, ensuring long permanence of the members.

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

- Strengthening the Local Teams of some of the main countries in the European Union (for example, Germany and Spain).
- Creating a more efficient document to check the onboarding, and, more importantly, each team's necessity on people-power and needed members

### Impact on YES-Europe

The community management team has helped YES-Europe become what it is today by providing needed support with members' necessities, for technical aspects (for example, google workspace matters) and for involving and supporting them in both local and international projects.

A tide of stimuli, with enthusiasm nurturing growth

## Country Representatives

### Projects in 2023

The local teams have managed to remain quite active and have organised several regional or local events throughout 2023. The peak of these was the YES-Europe Annual Conference, organized by the Greek team in April 2023.

Another project was the expansion of our representation to more and more countries and achieving to do so in a way that constantly increases the quality of our activities and the level of our engagement.

### Plans for 2024

We are planning - among others - to develop a pan-European Energy and Climate Policy Map where we will record the energy and climate policies of the countries participating in YES, in a way that we will keep updating the policies with all the respective changes in place.

### Impact on YES-Europe

The local teams of YES-Europe are one of the main elements of the organization giving it the branched and multicultural character it has developed over the years. This dynamic and flexible but constantly expanding community is the heart of YES-Europe.

YES-Europe made me familiar with a level of resilience and creativity I didn't know I had. It brought out literally the best of me.

### Finance

In 2023, the finance team's main focus was raising money for the Annual Conference 2023, held in Greece. The team provided support for the organisers of the conference on budgeting, outreach and creating agreements.

Moreover, the finance team established partnerships with 2 important organisations and supported the Austrian local team with fundraising activities for their Sustainability Day in Vienna.

## Knowledge Sharing

### Projects in 2023

The knowledge sharing team completed Season 2 of the Podcast and interviewed multiple founders of successful start-ups (Various CXO's).

- Some of the start ups interviewed:
- Bable Smart Cities
- Voltiris
- Return Protocol
- Smart Helio
- Aikido Technologies
- Enerdrape

### Plans for 2024

Going to change the podcast format - so instead of having more of a Q&A format that has one or two hosts along with only one guest, we are moving more to a roundtable discussion with two hosts along with 2-3 guests. We are moving more towards an open discussion format wherein the opinions and viewpoints of our team members also gets highlighted rather than just having them ask questions alone.

With regards to the Future of Energy Report - we will be moving in a new direction. Rather than having a state-of-the-art for the energy transition, we are planning a more personalised youth centric perspective on the Energy Transition as a whole. We will be allowing members across YES to contribute to the report bringing together very personal viewpoints on what they feel about a particular topic in the Energy Transition. Then we will collate the different articles into broad categories and along the three pillars of sustainability (Environment, Economic and Social). Examples of topics that could be covered: Climate Activism vs Climate Education, The role of YOUTH in Global Environmental Politics, New and emerging technologies, etc.

### Impact on YES-Europe

Season 2 of the Podcast interviewed multiple founders of successful start-ups (Various CXO's). Therefore, the footprint and visibility of YES-Europe has increased and improved.

Was able to increase the collaborative nature within the team and introduce the team to other teams at YES-Europe as well.

"Every one has a voice that can be heard given the right platform"

### Operations

#### Projects in 2023

Following the excitement of the COP27 project in 2022, the Operations Team started the year 2023 with the initiation of a new project to lead the organisation's journey towards COP28. The COP28 project soon found an amazing project manager in Laia Guitart, and you can read more about the success story in the section about COP28 in this report. The COP28 project became an autonomous project under the supervision and guidance of the Operations Team.

Also, big thanks also to Leïla Réau who was Operations Lead in the first part of the year until the 30th of April!

#### Plans for 2024

The Operations Team decided to rescope its area of responsibilities and become solely a support function to projects. Instead of running its own projects, the team now supports autonomously conducted projects. The Operations Team supervises the projects, follows up that timelines and budgets are being met, and reports progress to the Governance Team. Our support includes project management assistance and coordination with other branches of the organisation.

#### Impact on YES-Europe

The plan of the Operations Team is of course to work on its responsibilities outlined in YES-Europe's strategy document, focusing primarily on the priority areas as defined at the organisation's annual assembly in early 2024. More specifically that means supporting a new project for COP29, supporting the Belgium Team in organising the Annual Conference 2024, and many more new initiatives that I'm sure will be proposed by our members as the year progresses.

Great to meet all these amazing people who all share the commitment to a better future for the planet.



### Policy

#### Projects in 2023

The most important project I would say was the women in energy transition series. During these sessions, we are interviewing prominent female figures from the policymaking spectrum of energy and sustainability and ask them questions both related to energy, sustainability, new technologies and policy, but also on the issue of gender equality in workspace and how they are managing evolve and inspire, so that their responses motivate and become insightful for women around the world to excel in these industries.

We have also developed a policy briefers series, where we comment from a policy and legal perspective on each progress made in the EU in law and policy making regarding sustainability, the environment, climate change in the energy sector and beyond.

I have also supported the policy paper drafting for COP28 for YES-Europe and supported the annual conference again through the call for papers.

Finally, I participated in the new strategy drafting for YES-Europe and it has been a very insightful experience.

#### Plans for 2024

The next thing will be policy shorts. They will be 1-minute Youtube (or Instagram) videos that explain policy "for dummies", making very simple what this means and how it affects each person. Also we will develop a policy map, working with all local CRs on mapping the policies in energy and sustainability per country, so that we can compare, contrast, see what is working and what not.

#### Impact on YES-Europe

At least for this year, we increased the dynamic of sustainability x gender equality through the women in energy transition project. I also personally helped in the strategy

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

making which will improve even more the way we function from next year. Finally, we were active in drafting the position paper with which YES will go to COP28 and hopefully will help increase our visibility, credibility and partnerships



# Local Teams

## Austria - Jeremias Jobst

### Projects in 2023

A key experience for our team was the successful planning and realisation of an ambitious one-day event in Vienna: the YES-Europe Austria Energy & Sustainability Day 2023 on May 26 2023. This event was extraordinary in several aspects: We were able to attract over 20 speakers from the fields of politics, technology and business for the one-day event from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in presentations and panel discussions. Around 80 guests attended the event in the rooms of the "Wiener Bildungsakademie". In the first part of the event, the importance of the local "Vienna Climate Roadmap 2040" (a climate-neutral and just city) was discussed as a political guideline for sustainable urban development.

The second part of the event focussed on technologies of the future and their role in the building and mobility sectors. Finally, there was a business talk where young entrepreneurs spoke about their experiences with sustainable business development, for example in the energy sector. The day's event was rounded off with a workshop, joint networking and celebrations from 6 p.m.

The Energy & Sustainability Day 2023 brought new colleagues into the team, who were actively involved in the event's design and management. The event not only made a fundamental contribution to team building but was also our team's first activity with a broad and highly professional external reach. The event was based purely on our personal networks, our voluntary work and financial support from the Austrian Ministry of Climate Action.

We held regular team meetings and expanded our professional network in the areas of politics and science. We are particularly delighted that we were able to double our core team of active members and that the majority of our new active members were women.

### Plans for 2024

We discussed in depth within the team whether we wanted to organise the 2024 annual conference and benefit from the experience of the 2023 Energy & Sustainability Day. However, we decided to submit an application for 2025 and to expand our team and raise our brand awareness in 2024. In addition to increased social media activities and blog posts, we are also planning "fireplace talks", i.e. on-site events open to the public where team members and interested parties can have face-to-face discussions with experts.

## Belgium - Essam Elnagar

### Projects in 2023

This year, We actively participated in two major events, contributing significantly to discussions on sustainability and youth involvement in the energy transition.

#### **1. European Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW 2023):**

Our Belgium team took the lead in organizing a compelling session for YES-EUROPE, focusing on youth involvement in energy communities. The journey from the initial idea to the session's realization spanned months, showcasing our team's dedication and collaborative spirit. As a testament to our commitment, we also had the privilege of moderating the session, featuring three outstanding speakers who shared their insights on the social, economical, and environmental aspects of energy communities.

#### **2. EU GREEN WEEK 2023 | PARTNER EVENT "ASK 4 Green":**

In addition to EUSEW, we actively participated in the EU GREEN WEEK 2023 with our event, "ASK 4 Green: an Advocacy for Social Key-instances in Green Transition." Here, we highlighted the crucial role of youth involvement in the green energy transition, sharing valuable insights and showcasing the various activities our team is spearheading in this space.

Over the past year, our primary focus has been on bringing in new team members with unique skills and passion. This deliberate effort is driven by our commitment to exceed the demands of activities and events. We understand the team's strength is our foundation for success, investing time and resources to prepare every member for future challenges. Additionally, we actively participated in EUSEW 2022 with a booth, spreading the word about the diverse activities of YES-EUROPE.

### Plans for 2024

Next year marks a significant milestone for us as the Belgium team takes on the monumental task of hosting the Annual Conference 2024 of YES-EUROPE—the

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

biggest project in our history! Our entire focus for the year revolves around the success of this grand undertaking. We've already kicked off preparations for the theme, and we're committed to making 2024 a year filled with fruitful collaborations, diverse tasks, and engaging activities. We aim to elaborate on partnerships and deliver an extraordinary conference in 2024, promising a unique and enriching experience for all involved. Get ready for a year of exciting ventures and a conference that will leave a lasting impression!

## **Finland - Pyry Kiesilä**

### **Projects in 2023**

We implemented a project called Finland's Energy Transition: IEA's Perspective on the 2023 Policy Review. We undertook a project centered around Finland's Energy Transition, leveraging insights from the IEA's comprehensive policy review. Our aim was to condense the report's content into a more concise form, highlighting interesting observations and noteworthy results. This condensed version was shared through YES-Europe's blog, a collaborative effort involving the contributions of five members from YES-Europe Finland.

We succeeded in acquiring a few new members, executing a couple of projects and hosting an introduction event of our organization called Introduction of YES-Europe.

### **Plans for 2024**

Our main goals align with those of the previous year: organizing engaging projects and recruiting like-minded individuals to join our cause!



## Greece - Ioannis Pouloupoulos

### Projects in 2023

The most important project of our team was the Annual Conference, which took place between the 21st and 23rd of April. The conference included panel discussions, workshops and networking with young people passionate about energy and sustainability and a field trip. The conference focused on advancing sustainable energy solutions, emphasizing youth and community involvement. It covered topics like energy transition, youth innovation, climate inequalities, and empowerment in energy and sustainability, culminating in workshops and a film debate on climate action.

### Other Achievements

- 16th International Conference on Energy and Climate Change (11-13 October 2023)
- Climate Innovation Meeting - A parallel action with COP28 (10 December 2023)

## **Hungary - Lily Tanui**

In 2023 we focused on recruiting members to our local team. In 2024, we will hold some educational series about energy conservation on our social media and have some other in person programs as well.

## Italy - Marianna Montauti

### Projects in 2023

Dietro le Quinte della Transizione Energetica" (Behind the Scenes of Energy Transition) is an initiative focused on knowledge sharing and networking within the domain of sustainable energy transition. This project is a collaborative effort involving a prominent multiutility company in Italy. Its primary objective is to offer insightful site visits to operational plants, coupled with brainstorming sessions and interactive workshops aimed at fostering discussions and learning opportunities among participants.

The structure of the initiative revolves around three distinct site visits to functioning energy plants, strategically chosen to showcase diverse facets of the sustainable energy landscape.

The core components of each appointment within the project entail:

- **Site Visits:** Participants are given the exclusive opportunity to visit operational energy plants. The appointments include a waste-to-energy plant, a hydroelectric power station, and a wastewater treatment plant. These visits offer an immersive experience, allowing attendees to witness firsthand the infrastructure, operational mechanisms, and the impact on the environment.
- **Interactive Workshops:** Each appointment features an innovative start-up working in the sustainable energy domain. These start-ups are invited to present their pioneering products or systems during dedicated workshops. Through engaging presentations and interactive sessions, participants gain insights into cutting-edge technologies, solutions, or services being developed within the energy transition space.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Participants, including industry experts, professionals, and stakeholders, have the chance to network and establish valuable connections throughout the project. This networking aspect fosters collaborations, partnerships, and the exchange of best practices among diverse entities involved in the energy transition journey.

The initiative serves as a platform for fostering collaboration between established industry players, emerging start-ups, and enthusiastic stakeholders invested in driving the transition towards sustainable energy sources. By combining site visits, brainstorming sessions, and workshops featuring innovative start-ups, "Dietro le Quinte della Transizione Energetica" aims to inspire, educate, and catalyze action towards a more sustainable energy future in Italy and beyond.

"REPowerEU" was a collaborative project involving two other Italian NGOs, wherein we established a comprehensive blog dedicated to REPowerEU topics. Through this blog, we aimed to disseminate crucial information, insights, and discussions regarding the advancements, challenges, and innovations in the realm of renewable energy across Europe.

As a culmination of our efforts, we organized a culminating online workshop. This event was designed as an interactive platform, inviting influential speakers to participate. The workshop's primary objective was to foster brainstorming sessions and generate innovative ideas aimed at addressing key challenges and opportunities within the European renewable energy landscape.

## Malta - Eric Balakrishnan

### Projects in 2023

YES-Europe Malta attended the Science in the City street festival in September of this year, Malta's annual National Science and Arts festival. This was a landmark opportunity for our country team, where we were able to represent ourselves at the largest physical event that we've attended since our creation in early 2022.

This year's Science in the City festival revolved around a Change-makers theme. Change-makers are all around us. At YES-Europe, we believe that the inspiration for making a positive impact in your environment can be derived from anywhere and have a limitless reach. We presented some homemade exhibits to demonstrate how energy can be derived from natural resources and how accessible adopting a sustainable lifestyle could be.

We spoke to festival-goers of all ages about the importance of understanding energy and sustainability topics and using their platform to initiate dialogue about these key issues.

We communicated how it was important to address our national energy situation, by cleaning up and diversifying our supply, buffing up our energy security and independence and developing our existing technologies for more widespread applications.

Sustainability is a vast spectrum, and we could have done the topic justice by engaging in any one of its subtopics. However, we chose to address sustainable construction and development via the medium of Jenga. We challenged the public to play us at the famous game over the weekend, in order to exhibit how it is a competition to create the tallest structure possible through the greed of ambition and the destabilisation of infrastructure - something mirrored by our current construction industry.

## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Our stand was present for both evenings of the festival and was attended by our Country Representative Eric Balakrishnan, along with team members Giulia Aquilina, Cosette Agius, Jake Sant and Zachary Muscat. We also had the pleasure of being introduced to a Maltese-based researcher Annie James Mwantuke, who represented YES-Europe Malta at our stand over the weekend too. She was subsequently onboarded into our country team. We were also delighted to meet and talk to Tijana Srbinovska, a 3rd year Mechanical Engineering student at the University of Malta, who also subsequently joined our country team after being interested in volunteering with our NGO.

We were delighted to launch an interview series called 'Kelma B'Kelma' (meaning 'Word for Word' in Maltese). The aim of the series is to sit down for a chat with well-known local researchers, activists, economists, academics, politicians, campaigners and personalities as part of periodic episode releases, to provide a platform for the minds of Malta to voice their expertise and opinions. We've been releasing content in the form of video interviews on our YouTube channel, short clip extracts on LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube and artwork that illustrates quotes from the interview as a means of positive influence on LinkedIn and Instagram. To date, we have recorded and uploaded 10 interviews. Our interviews have been with Engineering lecturer Dr Paul Refalo, EYEN Governing Board Member Tiago Vicente, Sustainability Project manager Timothy Alden, agriculturalist and animal scientist Neil Joseph Turchett, beach clean-up NGO 'The Coast is Clear Foundation' founder Mark Galea Pace, the greening projects government agency 'Project Green' CEO Steve Ellul, cycling NGO 'Rota' Events Team member Duane Grech, Newsbook journalist Gavin Muscat, vintage thrift store 'Cherrystone' owner Jovana Solarevic and economic researcher Natalia Mangion from ZHN.

Apart from Science in the City, it has been a pleasure to attend and be represented at a number of in-person and virtual events this year, including the YES-Europe Annual Conference in Athens in April, the environmental fair EcoXperience (hosted by Project Green and KNZ) in May, YES-Europe Austria's Energy & Sustainability Day in May, World Environment Day at the High Commission of India in Malta in June, YES-Europe



## YES-EUROPE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Hungary's Kick-Off Meeting in June, the Ocean Health: Sustainability Panel Discussion (hosted by the University of York) in June, Friends of the Earth Malta's 'Towards a Fossil Free Malta' publication launch in June and 'A Conversation with Joe Toscano' on Young People and Information in October.

We also had the pleasure of being invited to contribute an opinion piece to the Chamber of Engineers' Engineering Today magazine. Our CR Eric Balakrishnan wrote about YES-Europe leading the Energy Transition in their 65th issue that was published in May. We have also frequently compiled together short opinion pieces, written by our own members, on energy and sustainability issues for upload on social media.

We've been delighted to more than double our active country team members, diversifying the blend of ages and technical fields that are represented in the team. YES-Europe Malta is comprised of engineers, applied scientists, lawyers, economists and activists, both from the public and private sector, who are either still enrolled in academia to being well-established in their profession.

### Plans for 2024

We would like to be more active in the strategy and policy aspects of energy and sustainability discourse. This includes technical and educative dissemination, collaborating with entities within the private, public and voluntary sector to deliver collective recommendations and doing our own research into case studies across Europe to suggest improvements to various sectors in Malta.

We also aim to continue the natural expansion of our country team's member pool, attend as many virtual and physical events as we can and continue to work on content creation projects.

## **Portugal - João Sequeira Sena**

YES-Europe Portugal was founded at the end of 2023. They intend to carry out a podcast and webinars in the first months of 2024. Also, they are going to send papers and news flashes on upcoming and new topics on energy transition.

## **Serbia - Natasa Rajkovic**

### **Projects in 2023**

The most important project done at YES-Europe Serbia concerns green hydrogen done in Serbian and in a youth-friendly manner. The project resulted in a report that covers the following parts: innovation, methods of storage and transportation of green hydrogen, innovations in respect of new services, standardisation and energy transition 2030 – 2050 (with a particular focus on the objectives of Serbia regarding the green hydrogen sector), as well as electricity supply in Serbia. In addition, the project also deals with the environmental impact of green hydrogen and the polluter pays principle. The project has not yet been published but will be publicly available soon.

In addition to the hydrogen project, the YES-Europe Serbia team has published youth-friendly reports on COP27 and COP15, initiated a project on the management of textile waste and second-hand clothes, and translated the report from Serbian to English on the construction of small hydro power plants in Serbia (drafted in 2022).

### **Plans for 2024**

For now, our plans for the following year is to focus on the project on the management of textile waste and second-hand clothes.