



# Annual report 2019



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# Foreword

## Dear friends and members of Rural Youth Europe,

On behalf of the board of Rural Youth Europe I submit the Annual Report for the year 2019 for your attention. This report outlines key activities and achievements of Rural Youth Europe during this period.

The 2019 theme was democracy and the aim of the annual work plan was to give rural youth motivation, competences and support to address issues that concern rural youth and promote change through activism within democratic frameworks.

We believe it is so important that young people all around Europe stand up and be active in democratic processes to help shape their future society and the environment they live in. Especially for rural youth, who often have the disadvantages of isolation, it is very essential to understand how change can be promoted through democratic systems.

Throughout our events in 2019 we also addressed mental health and wellbeing in rural societies. Especially in rural areas there is a big need to address this topic and we managed to do that with the support of our fantastic hosts. In particular I want to highlight the European Rally in England hosted by NFYFC and their great local prep-team with regards to this topic. We are delighted to see the campaigns and activities implemented as a result of this event to raise awareness and tackle issues related to mental health in rural areas within your organisations and local communities.

In 2019 we have made big efforts to get the voice of rural youth and young farmers heard. Through a joint Manifesto and our online campaign "This time I am voting" with European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) and International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC), we combined the power of rural youth in Europe

and communicated the challenges and needs of young farmers and rural youth in Europe.

I strongly believe that Rural Youth Europe and its mission; „Breaking Boundaries – Building Bridges,“ plays an active role through our events and policy work to ensure that future decision makers gain the skills and characteristics needed to build our bright future.

Our RYEurope network has also grown by three new members in 2019. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Umbrella from Georgia, Südtiroler Bauerndjugend from Italy and Plattelandsjongeren from the Netherlands to our network.

Changes occurred in the staff team in Helsinki which has enabled the organization to continue to respond to the needs of its members and future aspirations. I would like to thank Pia Winsten for her outstanding work and contribution over the last 8 years in various positions. Furthermore, I want to thank Hannah and Aris who left the board for their hard work and commitment during their mandates. You can read about all of the above and more in the pages that follow.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the members, for your active participation throughout the year. Your continued support and contribution ensures the success of our events and your support for the development of opportunities for your grass-roots members helps shape the future leaders of rural youth across Europe. We believe that rural youth does, and will always, play an active role in our society in many different ways.

Rural Youth Europe owes particular gratitude to the European Youth Foundation, The Youth department of the Council of Europe, the Education, Culture and Audiovisual Executive



Agency of the European Commission via its Erasmus+ program, and of course sponsors from your own countries for their continued support which is so vital to the success of our events.

As my mandate will end in 2020 I want to use this opportunity to thank you all for the great support during my period as Chairman. In particular I want to mention my Vice-Chair Linzi, the whole board and our fantastic staff members Eelin and Jenni. Thank you guys!

Although we are living in very uncertain times with regards to the Covid-19 crisis and 2020 has brought unfortunate changes for all of us with the board of RYEurope having to make tough decisions, I also want to highlight the positive aspects of the global pandemic. Within our network we already have witnessed great examples of people helping each other; for example clubs reaching out to their local communities via social media with the offer to help people in need. Such great examples of civil courage show that we can overcome this together. Thanks for that encouragement. Together we will overcome this crisis and hopefully soon we will already look back on this challenging period.

I want to close with a personal thought which I believe makes our network so relevant no matter what:

"Rural Youth and Young Farmers are key in ensuring that rural areas stay attractive!

There would be less social events, charity work, social gatherings, education for youth and much more without all of our active rural youth and young farmers clubs out there.

There would be much less tourism and wellbeing would be impacted without farmers taking care of our landscape. I could continue with this list for much longer. Rural youth are strong and can form the rural society of the future to make sure rural areas stay an attractive place to live for future generations to come. I strongly believe in that."

All the best,



**Sebastian Lassnig**

**Chairman of Rural Youth Europe**

# Members

Rural Youth Europe has 23 member organisations in 20 nations and by that we reach around 500,000 young people all around Europe

Contact with our Member Organisations is maintained through statutory meetings and events.

The RYEurope webpage, social media channels, regular e-news, e-mail, phone and Skype are used

to maintain communication between meetings.

If there is an opportunity or specific need, Member Organisations are visited by Board Members or the Secretary General.

**Membership numbers provided below are as per returns for 2018 fees.**

## Group I

### UK & IRELAND



#### National Federation Of Young Farmers' Clubs (Nfyfc)

16354 members

Yfc Centre, 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth Cv8 2Lg, UK (England)  
[www.nfyfc.org.uk](http://www.nfyfc.org.uk)



Macra na Feirme

#### Macra na Feirme

9840 members

Irish Farmcentre Bluebell, 12 Dublin (Ireland)  
[www.macra.ie](http://www.macra.ie)



Young Farmers'  
Clubs of Ulster

#### Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU)

2898 members

475 Antrim Road, Belfast BT15 3BD, UK (N.Ireland)  
[www.yfcu.org](http://www.yfcu.org)



YOUNG  
FARMERS

#### Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs (SAYFC)

3000 members

Ingliston Young Farmers' Centre, EH28 8NE, Edinburgh, UK (Scotland)  
[www.sayfc.org](http://www.sayfc.org)










#### Wales YFC / CFFI Cymru

5209 members

CFFI, Builth Wells, LD2 3NJ, Powys, UK (Wales)  
[www.yfc-wales.org.uk](http://www.yfc-wales.org.uk)

## Group II

### CENTRAL EUROPE

	<p><b>Landjugend Österreich (ÖLJ)</b></p> <p>93404 members</p> <p>Schauflergasse 6, 1014, Vienna, Austria  <a href="http://www.landjugend.at">www.landjugend.at</a></p>
	<p><b>Bund der Deutschen Landjugend (BDL) e.V.</b></p> <p>100000 members</p> <p>Claire-Waldoff-Str. 7, 10117, Berlin, Germany  <a href="http://www.landjugend.de">www.landjugend.de</a></p>
	<p><b>Agricultural and Rural Youth Association (AGRYA)</b></p> <p>670 members</p> <p>Váci út 134/c, VI/28, 1138, Budapest, Hungary  <a href="http://www.agrya.hu">www.agrya.hu</a></p>
	<p><b>Plattelandsjongeren.nl</b></p> <p>6000 members</p> <p>Bemuurde weerd oz 12, 3514 AN Utrecht, Netherlands  <a href="http://www.plattelandsjongeren.nl">www.plattelandsjongeren.nl</a></p>
	<p><b>South Tyrol Young Farmers (SBJ)</b></p> <p>9164 members</p> <p>K.M. Gamper Strasse 5, 39100 Bozen, Italy  <a href="http://www.sbb.it">www.sbb.it</a></p>
	<p><b>Slovenian Rural Youth (ZSPM)</b></p> <p>3500 members</p> <p>Celovska 43, 1000, Ljubljana, Slovenia  <a href="http://www.zspm.si">www.zspm.si</a></p>
	<p><b>Schweizerische Landjugendvereinigung (SLJV)</b></p> <p>2961 members</p> <p>c/o AGRIDEA, Eschikon 28, 8315 Lindau, Switzerland  <a href="http://www.landjugend.ch">www.landjugend.ch</a></p>

## Group III

### NORTHERN EUROPE



- gør landet sjovere



#### Danmarks Landboungdom and Danish 4H

7781 members

Agro Food Park 15, Skejby, 8200, Aarhus N, Denmark  
[www.landboungdom.dk](http://www.landboungdom.dk)  
[www.4h.dk](http://www.4h.dk)



#### Suomen 4H-liitto

45777 members

Karjalankatu 2A, 00520 Helsinki, Finland  
[www.4h.fi](http://www.4h.fi)



#### Finlands Svenska 4H

3639 members

Elisabetsgatan 21 B 12, FIN-00170, Helsinki, Finland  
[www.fs4h.fi](http://www.fs4h.fi)



#### 4H Norge

12116 members

Postboks 113, N-2026 Skjetten, Norway  
[www.4h.no](http://www.4h.no)



#### Norges Bygdeungdomslag

6081 members

Schweigaardsgate 34B, oppgang 2, 3. etasje, Grønland, Oslo, Norway  
[www.nbu.no](http://www.nbu.no)



#### Sveriges 4H

10236 members

Riksförbundet Sveriges 4h, Box 2012, 64102 Katrineholm, Sweden  
[www.4h.se](http://www.4h.se)



## Group IV

### EASTERN EUROPE



#### Eesti 4H

991 members

Allika 2a, 80036, Pärnu, Estonia  
[www.eesti4h.ee](http://www.eesti4h.ee)



#### Latvijas Mazpulki - Latvian 4H

1700 members

Ezermalas 28, LV-1014, Riga, Latvia  
[www.mazpulki.lv](http://www.mazpulki.lv)



#### Latvian Young Farmer's Club (JZK)

139 members

Krišjāņa Barona iela 40, Jelgava, Latvia, LV-3001  
[www.jzk.lv](http://www.jzk.lv)



#### Umbrella

70 members

Leri Lagurashvili 4, fl 46, Tbilisi, Georgia, 0172  
[www.facebook.com/Umbrellageo](https://www.facebook.com/Umbrellageo)

# Board

The Board of Rural Youth Europe implements the decisions and policies agreed at General Assemblies, monitors the financial situation, is responsible for employment related matters and supervising staff, and prepares and evaluates the international activities of the organisation.

The board also makes decisions on a strategic level and at the same time monitors and develops the organisation's strategic direction.

The Rural Youth Europe board remains very active with their combined work equaling approximately 1.5 full time employees.

The role of a board member is also a process of personal development and competence building.

The board saw change at the annual General Assembly in August 2019 with the mandates of two board representatives finishing.

Hannah Kirkpatrick from Northern Ireland stepped down from the role of board representative for Group I (UK and Ireland) with Niall Evans from Wales taking on the role. In Group IV (Eastern Europe) Birgit Kuslap from Estonia joined the board as Aris Brencis from Latvia stepped down.



**Chair**

**Sebastian Lassnig**  
Austria



**Vice-Chair**

**Linzi Stewart**  
Northern Ireland



**BM, Group 2**  
**(Central Europe)**

**Daniela Allram**  
Austria



**BM, Group 4**  
**(Eastern Europe)**

**Birgit Kuslap**  
Estonia



**BM, Group 1**  
**(UK & Ireland)**

**Niall Evans**  
Wales



**BM, Group 3**  
**(Northern Europe)**

**Nicolai Olsen**  
Denmark



**Special Interest**  
**Board Member**

**Anja Mager**  
Slovenia

# Secretariat

The secretariat carry out the day-to-day tasks regarding administration, grant applications and reports, educational support for the youth teams running the activities and part of the media tasks.

The secretariat also saw some changes in 2019.

Secretary General Jenni Heinonen adopted a child in early 2018 and returned from parental leave in 2019 to the new role of Development Manager.

Eelin Hoffström-Cagiran had worked as Interim Secretary General in Jenni's absence and took over the role of Secretary General upon Jenni's return.

Pia Winsten took a step back from the role of Education and Fundraising Manager and remains as Advisor on an adhoc basis.

Trang V. Phi was hired as Administrator and Madara Klavina continues as the Graphic Designer for RYEurope's publications and other printed material. Madara works from Latvia while the rest of the staff are based in Finland.



Secretary General  
**Eelin Hoffström - Cagiran**  
Finland



Development Manager  
**Jenni Heinonen**  
Finland



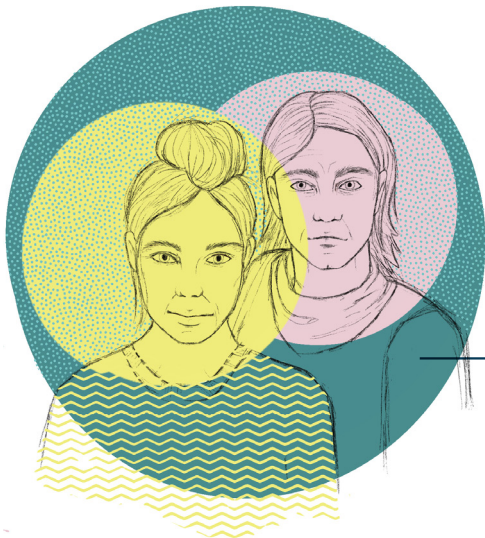
Administrator  
**Trang Van Phi**  
Finland



Education and  
Fundraising Advisor  
**Pia Winsten**  
Finland



Graphic Designer  
**Madara Kļaviņa**  
Latvia

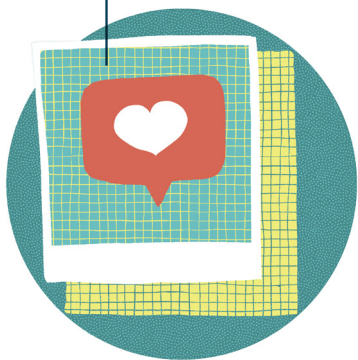


159

participants at events

825

followers on  
Instagram



67

sessions on  
the theme of  
democracy



1

didgeridoo



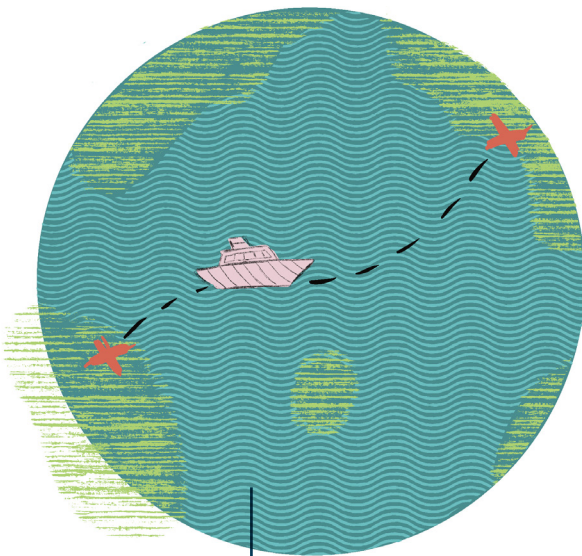
# 11

people stayed  
up until sunrise



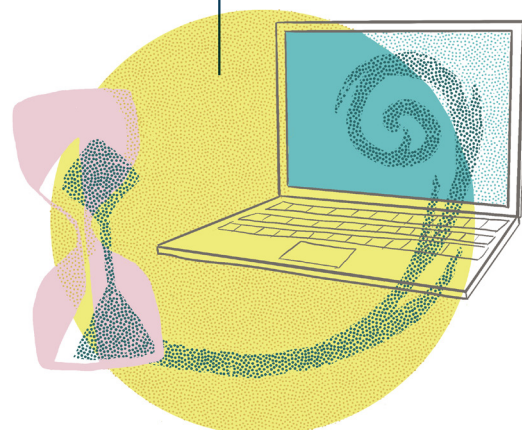
# 73

hours spent  
at board  
meetings



# 64

ferry rides between  
mainland Helsinki  
and Suomenlinna  
island



# Statutory Meetings

The Board of Rural Youth Europe meet in person and via skype regularly to ensure its following roles are fulfilled; preserving and, when necessary, reshaping the mission of the organisation, overseeing employment, ensuring the organisation is well managed, representing the external world to the organisation and the organisation to the external world, exercising financial stewardship, ensuring the organisation complies with laws and regulations, protecting the organisation from external threats and ensuring the board has the right skills and experience to do its job.



## Board Meetings

**Dublin, Ireland** – 2-3 February

**Vienna, Austria** – 19 April

**Farthingstone, England** – 10 May

**Cirencester, England** – 21 August

**Lorrach, Germany** – 24 September

**Riga, Latvia** – 1-3 November

**Copenhagen, Denmark** – 16 November

**Suomenlinna, Finland** – 14-15 December



## General Assembly 2019

"Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, England", 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2019



**The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body for RYEurope. It sets the framework for the organisation and for how the board and secretariat should manage the annual work programme.**

The General Assembly of Rural Youth Europe was held on Friday August 23 2019 at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester, England.

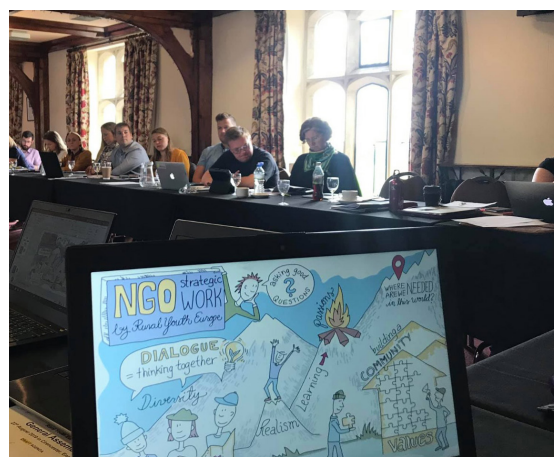
Representatives from the member organisations travelled attended the annual meeting alongside guests from partner organisations CEJA. New members were also in attendance.

In total **15 member organisations** were present, all being full members with full voting rights. **19 voting cards** were distributed.

The Rural Youth Europe **Annual Report 2018** was distributed prior to the meeting.

A presentation was made of the board meetings held during the year, as well as meetings with member organisations.

The board of Rural Youth Europe delivered workshops and presented the strategic workbook; a product of the strategic work carried out by the board developed further by Jenni Heinonen.



The workbook can be used as a tool by rural youth organisations.

Another workshop, run by Anja Mager, took place to discuss advocacy and collect member organisations' input for RYEurope's policy work.

After the workshops, the General Assembly commenced. Chaired for the first time by current Chairman Sebastian Lassnig following his election to the role in 2018, the meeting was declared open at 10am and business got underway.



Applications for membership were received from three new membership organisations: Umbrella in Georgia, South Tyrol Young farmers in South Tyrol and Plattelandsjongeren in the Netherlands. Each of the applications were unanimously accepted resulting in the Rural Youth Europe family growing to 23 member organisations. Plattelandsjongeren from Netherlands were a founding member of Rural Youth Europe in 1957. Swedish 4H were suspended.

Once again the General Assembly showed their commitment to ensuring the sustainability of Rural Youth Europe through constructive discussion and informed dialogue. The possibility of introducing a third membership band was debated and many key topics were deliberated.

A report on the 2018 accounts was expertly presented by Aris Brencis. **Operational income** was mostly from Erasmus+ and the European Youth Foundation, with membership fees also making a significant contribution. The updated **budget for 2019** was presented and the GA approved the **preliminary budget for 2020**. The

external and internal **auditor reports** were read.

Special interest board member Anja Mager shared about the policy work she has carried out and presented the vision of the board for the year ahead.



**Future activities** of Rural Youth Europe were presented.

This year's General Assembly also saw the mandates of two board representatives come to an end. Hannah Kirkpatrick of Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster stepped down from the role for Group I (UK and Ireland) with Niall Evans of Wales YFC taking on the position. In Group IV (Eastern Europe) Birgit Kuslap from Estonian 4H took over from Latvian 4H's Aris Brencis.

Pia Winsten stood down as an employee of Rural Youth Europe after eight years of service.

Joining in 2011, Pia stepped into the role of Secretary General before taking on many other roles throughout the office.

Pia will remain on hand as an Advisor to assist and support as required.

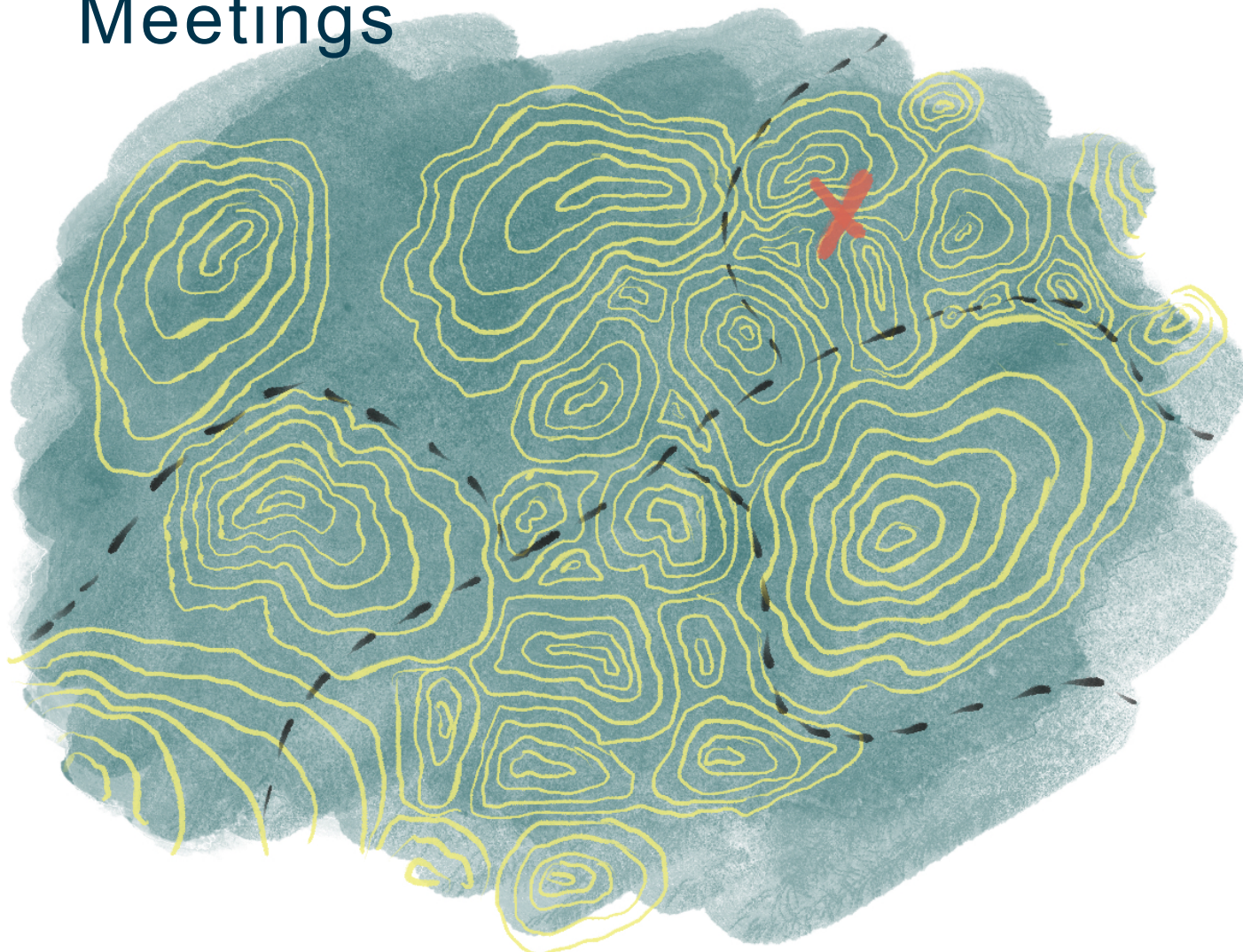
## Elections

- **Niall Evans (Wales)** was elected as the board member for Group I (UK and Ireland)
- **Birgit Kuslap (Estonia)** was elected as the board member Group IV (Eastern Europe)

It was confirmed that the next General Assembly would be take place on Thursday, 6 August 2020 in Slovenia.



## Other Meetings



Rural Youth Europe aims to meet at least 30% of member organisations each year.

During 2019 the board met with some members in conjunction with the board meetings, namely in Ireland, England, Austria and Latvia.

In addition, board members visited member organisations' General Assemblies and special events such as anniversaries.

These meetings create an opportunity to exchange information and develop the partnership through sharing the outcomes of our activities and building relationships.

# Finances

**Rural Youth Europe is a non-profit organisation that does not aim to generate profit or surplus.**

**In 2019 we carried out four activities and a preparatory and an evaluation meeting. Therefore, in comparison to 2018, we had more activities which financially depended on Rural Youth Europe in 2019. We also increased our staff and thus expanded our capacity to carry out high quality learning activities in 2019.**

**Below is a more detailed explanation for our organisation's financial statement.**

Our income is generated from membership fees, participation fees, and funding from the Council of Europe and the European Union.

This income is in the financial statement split under the income from actual operation, fundraising and general subsidies.

Costs for 2019 included the hiring of an Administrator alongside the full-time Secretary General, part-time Development Manager and Graphic Designer, and from August, the

Fundraising and Educational Advisor working on an hourly basis.

The increase in personnel also meant an increase in rent and equipment costs.

The other cost generator for 2019 was the activities.

Besides the annual Rally and Autumn Seminar we also held a Democracy Project for the slightly younger target group of 16-22-year-olds.

This activity did not manage to obtain the Erasmus+ funding which meant we covered the costs which were not possible to cover by the Workplan funding from the Council of Europe.

In an attempt to increase the quality and the learning outcomes for those attending activities, we held our first Evaluation meeting in December 2019. This event was not funded beyond the workplan, which was why we kept it small, and thus also managed to have a lesser financial burden as a result.

On a positive note in December 2019 we received a donation from the Roskilde Festival Charity Society as a contribution towards our continued work with the rural youth of Europe.

## Balance Sheet

Assets	31.12.2018	31.12.2019
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
<b>Tangible assets</b>		
Machinery and equipment	2 390,02	3 827,36
<b>Tangible assets in total</b>	<b>2 390,02</b>	<b>3 827,36</b>
<b>Non-current assets in total</b>	<b>2 390,02</b>	<b>3 827,36</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
<b>Receivables</b>		
<b>Short term</b>		

Trade debtors	13 554,87	13 277,95
Other receivables	25 998	25 277,23
<b>Prepayments and accrued income</b>	<b>0,00</b>	<b>2 864,86</b>
<b>Short-term debtors in total</b>	<b>39 552,87</b>	<b>41 420,04</b>
<b>Total receivables</b>	<b>39 552,87</b>	<b>41 420,04</b>
<b>Cash in hand and at banks</b>	<b>139 137,54</b>	<b>144 559,75</b>
<b>Current assets in total</b>	<b>178 690,41</b>	<b>185 979,79</b>
<b>ASSETS IN TOTAL</b>	<b>181 080,43</b>	<b>189 807,15</b>

<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>31.12.2018</b>	<b>31.12.2019</b>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>		
Shares or other comparable assets	24 214,75	24 214,75
Retained earnings gain or (loss)	77 977,05	113 213,11
<b>Profit (loss) for the financial year</b>	<b>35 236,06</b>	<b>-8 625,6</b>
<b>Capital and reserves in total</b>	<b>137 427,86</b>	<b>128 802,26</b>
<b>Creditors</b>		
<b>Creditors, Short term</b>		
Advances received	0,00	13 358,63
Trade creditors	14 799	33 901,74
Other creditors	3 742,02	2 663,92
Accruals and deferred income	25 111,55	11 080,6
<b>Creditors, Short term in total</b>	<b>43 652,57</b>	<b>61 004,89</b>
<b>Creditors in total</b>	<b>43 652,57</b>	<b>61 004,89</b>
<b>LIABILITIES IN TOTAL</b>	<b>181 080,43</b>	<b>189 807,15</b>

## Income Statement

	01. – 12.2018	01. – 12.2019
<b>Actual operation</b>	<b>-102 878,93</b>	<b>-166 829,35</b>
<b>Income from actual operation</b>	<b>44 334,18</b>	<b>23 249,02</b>
<b>Expenses of actual operation</b>	<b>-147 213,11</b>	<b>-190 078,37</b>
Personnel expenses	-70 071,79	-95 892,67
Depreciations	-796,68	-1 275,79
Other expenses	-76 344,65	-92 909,95
Balancing difference	0,01	0,04
<b>Profit / accrued expense</b>	<b>-102 878,93</b>	<b>-166 829,35</b>
<b>Fund raising</b>	<b>32 950</b>	<b>37 117,8</b>
<b>Income from fundraising</b>	<b>32 950</b>	<b>37 117,8</b>
<b>Profit / accrued expense</b>	<b>-69 928,93</b>	<b>-129 711,55</b>
<b>Investment and financing activity</b>	<b>7,89</b>	<b>-8,25</b>
Income from investment and financing activity	15,03	0,00
Expenses of investment and financing activity	-7,14	-8,25
<b>Profit / accrued expense</b>	<b>-69 921,04</b>	<b>-129 719,8</b>
<b>General subsidies</b>	<b>105 157,1</b>	<b>121 094,2</b>
<b>Profit (loss) for the financial year</b>	<b>105 157,1</b>	<b>121 094,2</b>
<b>Fiscal period surplus (deficit)</b>	<b>35 236,06</b>	<b>-8 625,6</b>



# Activities

The central part of RYEurope's work programme are the educational activities.

Even when digital youth work becomes increasingly important, physical meetings are still essential, especially for rural youth who often are more isolated than other young people.

In addition to the development of knowledge and skills, the physical meetings change attitudes when rural youth connect their daily issues to the European perspective, and start acting with this in mind.

RYEurope is run for rural youth and by rural youth. The learning process is important for everyone involved; participants, team members, board members and staff.

RYEurope has an annual work programme with interlinked activities and follow-up.

The 2019 theme was democracy and the aim of the work plan was to give rural youth motivation, channels, competences and support to address issues that concern rural youth and promote change through acting in democratic frameworks.

## The objectives were:

- A. to gain competences to successfully prepare and carry out the work plan, and along with that learning process, develop the activities to be interconnected, inclusive and of good educational value,
- B. that rural youth define how to support their health and wellbeing.
- C. that youth workers develop competences and create tools to support rural youth to actively participate in democratic processes.
- D. that rural young people gain knowledge and skills to participate in democratic processes and advocate support for rural youth's health and wellbeing.
- E. to evaluate the work plan, disseminate its results and get a foot into advocacy on European level.



## STUDY SESSION

**Democritical**

24 February - 3 March 2019 | Budapest, Hungary | 33 participants

CEJA and RYEurope organised a joint study session in cooperation with the European Youth Centre in Budapest.

The aim of the study session was to identify the obstacles facing rural youth in democratic processes and find innovative and engaging ways to overcome these while also encouraging rural youth to participate in democracy.



The study session aimed introduced tools that many of the participants did not know where at their disposal and increased the participants notion of agency in society.

Rural Youth Europe and CEJA had not previously collaborated to this extent on an activity and the Study Session structure allowed both parties to bring their strengths and learning points to the table, while engaging with our common target group of rural youth.

The group learnt how many young people from rural areas feel lost in the majority driven democracy where many decisions that affect their lives are taken far away from

them and where they represent a minority whose worries and challenges are often overlooked.

Participants learnt about the different ways that rural youth across Europe view the democratic system they live in and realised that actively engaging in the activities of NGOs and other civil society organisations is a way of working for the democracy.

The group discussed how, by raising awareness of issues related to their lives and the local realities they face, they can impact the public decision making.

The participants learnt that elections are a tool for democracy and that the best way to support a healthy democracy is to encourage voting also among people who do not see the relevance of their vote.

The seminar provided the opportunity for rural youth to gain experience of how one person's involvement can make a difference, as they often come from small communities, where their activity can help develop the lives of the other people around them quite significantly. Thus, it is important to take the experience and knowledge of the rural participants into consideration and learn from their small-scale examples, which in turn can come to benefit the bigger communities.



## GRAND PREP MEETING

# Get started with democracy

8-12 May 2019 | Farthingstone, England | 13 participants

Prep team members of this year's activities gathered for the "Grand Prep Team training" – a four-day training and preparatory programme aimed at giving key people knowledge and skills to be able to delivery good quality learning processes.

Besides visiting the venue of 2019 Rally and going through practicalities and risk assessments on spot, there were interesting and educational workshops too.

The group explored the 2019 work plan theme of democracy and developed a common understanding of the work aim and objectives.

The group reflected on the 2018 work plan outcomes and insights and discussed how this information could be used in both planning and as an input for activities in 2019. The aim was to feed workshops with output from former events.

After understanding the background and discussing the aims and objectives of the activities, the team started developing session plans for each of the events before linking the events together and ensuring a consistent theme.

The group also learned about gender aspects and the importance of using gender-neutral language when hosting a session, non-formal methods for learning and techniques to collect constructive feedback during events.

It was very beneficial for the participants to share knowledge as well as best-practise examples.

## EUROPEAN RALLY

# Sharing and Caring in a Democratic and Inclusive European Community

18-25 August 2019 | Cirencester, England | 64 participants and 20 team members



This year the National Federation of Young Farmers Club England (NFYFC) hosted the European Rally.

The event brought together many people from rural areas across Europe who had an interest in the theme of democracy and mental health.

The theme was, and is, an extremely relevant topic in today's society.

The aim of the event was to look at the importance of mental health and wellbeing of rural youth and to explore ways to support peers in this regard.

The theme of mental health was a challenging one to begin with but as the week progressed they grew more comfortable with discussing and sharing personal views and experiences.





The participants realised that everyone has experience of mental health issues whether directly or indirectly and this helped to create space to discuss mental health issues and how it affects people living in rural and remote areas. Participants agreed that farming can be a stressful livelihood with very little free time, a lot of financial pressure and work done alone and identified the impact of isolation and lack of services in rural areas on mental wellbeing.

A study visit to a farm gave participants the opportunity to experience firsthand how to create a positive and supportive work environment in a rural area.

Participants learnt why mental health issues still have such a stigma and came up with solutions on how to create more openness around mental health issues, how to build more inclusive rural communities and how to look out for the mental wellbeing of their peers.

The participants also formed proposals on how to support health and wellbeing, particularly in rural youth, and presented their learnings through vlogs and written materials which they could share within their home organisations and rural communities after the event.

The participants learnt how to recognise signs of mental illness and developed competencies in how to deal with different situations to ensure healthy rural communities for the future.

Participants also gained skills of taking grassroots challenges forward to decision makers, NGOs and stakeholders and learnt similarities and differences in tackling the stigma and supporting mental wellbeing in various countries across Europe.



## AUTUMN SEMINAR

# Speak, React and Act

28 September - 5 October 2019 | Aarburg, Switzerland | 23 participants and 6 team members

The aim of the event was to encourage youth workers to develop competences and tools to support rural youth to increase their active citizenship.

The event began with participants receiving an overview of democratic environments for rural youth across Europe before developing formats for strengthening the voice of rural youth.

Participants learnt about democracy and rural decision making across Europe from local level e.g. municipalities and counties to national level before considering a European level e.g. European Union.

The participants compared and contrasted similarities and differences in how decisions are made before exploring democratic decision-making processes and the level of participation of young people.

In addition, the event provided an opportunity for participants to further develop their communication skills including public speaking and drafting letters to leaders and key organizations.

The group also spent time during the event developing vlogs and other educational material aimed at supporting and encouraging rural young people to be active citizens.



## JUNIOR EVENT (ages 16 – 23)

# Participate in Active Rural Democracy Project

12-17 November | Copenhagen, Denmark | 13 participants, two team members and two expert trainers

The event was a four-day competence building activity where the participants got the opportunity to learn about democratic processes and explore ways of participating in democracy on many various levels.

The minimum age was lower than other events to provide an opportunity for younger participants to get involved.

The aim was to let rural young people gain knowledge and skills to encourage and equip them to participate in democratic processes and advocate support for rural youth's health and wellbeing.

Through the packed agenda, participants gained knowledge about local, national and European level decision making functions and

practiced interaction with decision makers.

Each of the topics were explored through the methodologies of non-formal education and experiential learning, thus creating a safe and comfortable space for sharing, exchanging, practicing and exploring new knowledge and skills.

The emphasis was placed on working in smaller groups and practical exercises, where the participants could really practice develop their skillset and confidence.



# Rural Youth Project of the Year Competition

1 January - 31 December, 2019

**The Rural Youth project of the year competition seeks to celebrate where young people in rural areas have worked together towards a common goal on a voluntary basis.**

The competition gives projects and organisations visibility on a European level.

Every year the standard of projects carried out across Europe within our member organisations is exceptionally high and this year was no different.

The creativity and dedication members show in planning, carrying out and after their projects have finished is truly inspirational.

**This year Rural Youth Europe introduced categories to the competition:**

## **Junior Project of the Year**

This category invites members aged 18 years and younger to submit their projects.

## **Senior Project of the Year**

This category is for projects carried out by members aged over 18.







Considering both the Junior and Senior categories, we received more applications than in previous years.

Projects were sent in from 7 countries with 9 entries for our Senior category and 3 entries for our Junior category.

Although the participation in the newly formed Junior category was lower than expected, we hope to improve it next year with earlier promotion.

The deadline for Junior entries coincided with the outbreak of Covid19 and this may also have impacted the number of entries submitted.

As before, voting was held in two different stages; first by the Rural Youth Europe board and then public voting on Facebook.

During the second stage we had a great audience with more than 91,000 views to the competition post and more than 11,000 clicks.

As one of our goals is to get more publicity for the good work of our member organizations, we are glad that the reach was so wide.

**The Senior category** voting started evenly but in the end **Umbrella organization from Georgia** received many more votes and won without any doubts. Their **project “Democracy is more than voting”** focused on empowering local youth to have enter into dialogue with local authorities. Umbrella tackled a really important topic and after the project, they founded new youth centres and continued to have good dialogue between youth and authorities.

For **the Junior category** the voting was more even, particularly between two projects, and the excitement and suspense remained until the last day. In the end **Umbrella organization from Georgia** was again victorious. Their project **“Young rangers”** was based on volunteering and, without any budget, they were able to activate more than 100 youth to start thinking more about the negative aspects of global warming for local nature.

The board of Rural Youth Europe congratulates Umbrella for having two amazing projects and thanks all the participants for great, motivating projects.

We are really glad to have such amazing member organisations who keep doing important things for their communities.

# External Relations



**In 2019 RYEurope increased cooperation with other INGOs, the European Youth Forum (YFJ), decision makers and public institutions.**

**RYEurope has put more emphasis on rural advocacy and will bring rural issues to discussions in other parts of civil society and among decision makers.**

**This is supported by a special interest board member with focus on European youth policy.**

RYEurope is a member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and this is our main channel to advocate our interests on European level.

YFJ is an organisation uniting 104 National Youth Councils and International Non-Governmental Youth Organisations. YFJ works through its various bodies, commissions and task forces towards the European Union, Council of Europe, United Nations and other policy makers to promote issues affecting young Europeans. YFJ meets twice a year at the Council of Members meeting (COMEM) and the General assembly.

RYEurope maintained good working relations with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. The European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest are residential centres of the CoE Youth Department.

In 2019 RYEurope held a study session “Democritical” in Budapest jointly with The European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) in cooperation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

The European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) is a partner organisation of RYEurope,

mainly dealing with agricultural issues and policies on a European level. They lobby the European Commission on behalf of young farmers in Europe.

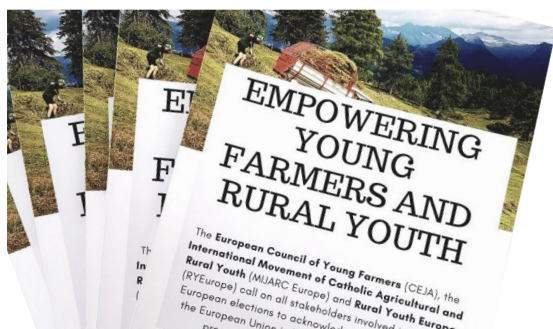
The European Youth Foundation (EYF) of the Council of Europe provided grants for administrative expenses and for the work plan 2019. Activities that were included in the work plan were the Grand Preparatory Meeting and Training, the Rally “Sharing and Caring in a Democratic and Inclusive European Community”, Junior event “Participate in Active Rural Democracy” and Autumn Seminar “Speak, React, Act”. The work plan also included an evaluation meeting and an end of the year publication to disseminate the learning outcomes of the work plan.

In 2019, RYEurope benefited from the Erasmus+ programme as provided by the European Union, through an operational grant.

In 2019, RYEurope continued having good relations with its partners International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC) and European IFYE Alumni Association International Farm Youth Exchanges (IFYE).

## 2019 EU elections manifesto

**CEJA, Rural Youth Europe and MIJARC Europe; three European organisations representing rural youth and young farmers, wrote together the 2019 EU elections manifesto.**



The document, titled “Empowering Young Farmers and Rural Youth”, was released on the occasion of the “EU Young Farmer Speed Dating” event hosted by CEJA in Brussels.

The event brought young farmers, rural youth and candidate MEPs together to discuss the key priorities and challenges for young farmers and rural youth in the years ahead.

The manifesto focused on seven key areas: education, investments, social fabric, health, connectivity, climate change and organisations in rural communities.

Its overarching aim was to raise awareness among politicians and stakeholders about the importance of the EU to rural communities, highlight the challenges rural communities are facing and offer concrete solutions to these problems.

## This time I'm voting

**RYEurope put together a 3 point action plan with CEJA and MIJARC for the 2019 EU Elections;** (1) a manifesto presented to candidates (as above), (2) an event that gathered candidates and young farmers in Brussels so that they could speak about the policy issues that matter to them and (3) a social media campaign “This time I'm voting”.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness about

the elections through videos and informative posts. We filmed our members answering the question: Why are you voting?

## The 7<sup>th</sup> cycle of EU Youth Dialogue

**RYEurope was selected, together with our partner organisation CEJA, to take part in the EU Youth Dialogue as the only two organisations representing rural youth and young farmers.**

The EU Youth Dialogue is a flagship youth participation mechanism at EU level aiming to bring the voice of youth to EU policymaking.

The key feature is the dialogue between young people, youth organisations and policy and decision makers, as well as experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors. It serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection and consultation on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth.

Particular attention is given to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in decision-making processes and in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy.

The 7<sup>th</sup> cycle is held under the Trio Presidency Romania - Finland - Croatia which started on 1 January 2019 and will last for 18 months until June 2020.

The common theme chosen by the Trio Presidency is creating opportunities for youth with a focus on Quality Employment for All, Quality Youth Work for All and Opportunities for Rural Youth.

In 2019 we participated in the conference in Romania which focused on quality employment for all.

# Media and Communication

Rural Youth Europe aims to share information about our activities and the work of our member and partner organisations, in addition to sharing relevant information and links to our stakeholders, through our social media channels, E-news and blogs on our website.

Our main social media channel continues to be Facebook. This year we have endeavored to become more active on Instagram and to regularly update our Twitter page also.

We made the decision towards the end of the year to move our e-news to quarterly due to increased activity on our social media channels and our website.

Our end of the year publication, Rural Voices, took the form of a newspaper. The newspaper was sent out to stakeholders, shareholders, funders and participants and also shared online. This supported sharing the outcomes of our work plan and reaching a wider public.

Through the newspaper more rural youth receive the information about how to act within democracy and more partners get motivated to support rural youth to join democratic processes.

Our website plays host to a learning platform where we share learning materials, methods and tips for non-formal education.

# Impact and Dissemination

RYEurope's 2019 work plan showed how our network is developing good practices and awareness over how to build good-quality, interconnected activities and work plans.

The aim of the work plan was to give rural youth motivation, channels, competences and support to address issues that concern rural youth and promote change through acting in democratic frameworks.

The activities approached the aim from various perspectives and with different groups of participants. The main aim was reached and especially the theme of mental health and working on that through the means of democracy was highlighted in the work plan. The element of youth leadership was very strong at each activity.

Rural Youth Project of the Year competition worked as dissemination of good practice.

RYEurope Board and Secretariat gave its members advice on both rural interest coverage and international cooperation.

All our activities had specific plans on how the participants can implement what they learnt in their organisations and communities. Furthermore, our activities interlinked with local social events and we did sessions together with local stakeholders.

The outcomes of the workplan activities have been feeding into RYEurope's policy work through European Youth Forum and EU Youth Dialogue. Our representatives were involved in getting 'Moving rural youth forward' specifically named as one of the themes within EU Youth Dialogue and it was consequently adopted to the EU youth strategy as well.

This shows that RYEurope can successfully take issues expressed by participants and voice these concerns at a European level.





**Rural Youth Europe is supported by the  
European Youth Foundation of the  
Council of Europe.**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



**Erasmus+**

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## **Annual Report 2019**

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