Candidates’ Questionnaire – GB Elections 2019

Personal details

First and last name: Aritz Labrador Odriozola.
Age: 22.
National Committee: EYP España (Spain).
Nationality: Spanish.
Current occupation: Student: Music Interpretation and Orchestra Conducting.
Member platform: [Is your profile on the Member Platform updated?] Yes.
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Availability: [Are you able to dedicate 3-6 hours per week for the GB?] Yes.
[Are you able to physically attend at least four events each year?] Yes.

Questions for candidates

1. What would your aim and priorities as a GB member be, and with what mind-set will you pursue them?

My main priority will be designing a new Strategy for the upcoming five years. It is time to evaluate how we did since we first established it some years ago and to make an individual (NCs) and global (GB) analysis of the work we have done to achieve it. This Strategy should extend the previous pillars (inclusion, empowerment, contribution, stability and continuity) and add a focus to:

- **Nature of our Organisation**: Do we properly define ourselves? What kind of organisation do we want to be? As time goes one, new generations of EYPers come and older ones leave. However, our active citizenship key aim remain. How have we changed? What can we do to prioritise education and active citizenship as key priorities of all our projects, processes and bodies?

- **Stability**: It is essential that every growing organisation takes time to pause, reflect on its growth and think of new aims and successes to strive for. I believe 2020 is the perfect year to do this, to ask and care about the development of National Committees, The whole network will grow only if every partner association is on track. We need to make up a real dialogue tool in order to be proactive –not reactive– and support newer and older NCs, providing a continuous communication that goes far beyond standard BNC Meetings.

- **Continuity**: EYP goes far beyond its events. Following the previous GB mandate’s wish to make an impact assessment of sessions, I reckon we should extend this assessment to the work we do in a daily basis. We should be able to know how much we impact on participants, members, external stakeholders, other NGOs, etc.; analyse results and decide on measures to take to offer and foster a quality and impactful project throughout the whole year.
Another important key aim is the relationship between the Governing Body, the International Office, the Board of National Committees and Councils. The international structure of the network is still far to be reached by our members. It is essential that we make an effort to have a closer contact with every member and that the democratic processes of our organisation makes network-wide opportunities. This means bringing democracy closer to its members. I believe the GB members from the previous mandate have achieved a great starting point with the aim of turning decision-making more participative – but there is still much to be done–.

The success of our organisation and our activities is also dependant of our image and the external impact we have on stakeholders (partners, other NGOs). Following the Communication Strategy, the professionalisation process and the publications on what we are and what we do, we now need to show to the world what the EYP is, what makes us truly special and the impact we can have on youngsters and society in general. Our network need to place itself in the map and be at the same level of other youth organisations. We need to work on partnerships with other NGOs and youth associations to offer a two-way-collaboration in our events and our everyday activity. This will give us expertise, new ideas outside the EYP bubble and a great way to use and share all the tools that previous and current generations have developed up until now.

I believe all the above can be achieved if the Governing Body keeps facilitating a tool to gather NCs and international stakeholders (such as Presidents’ Meetings, etc.) and reflects on the real impact we have far beyond our events.

2. In your view, which EYP projects deserve more resources and which projects are less of a priority?

A. National Committee Development: If we want to grow as a network, we need to take care of every National Committee and National Initiative. This includes essential pillars such as integration, inclusion and outreach.

B. Events: EYP is mostly represent by its events. If sessions are the best chance to show the world why we do what we do, we need to focus on them and train our young members to be the ambassadors of the network. I also consider training events necessary for us to sustain the human capacity of a volunteer-based network. This trainings may involve volunteers at events and members who want to try a new role in sessions, but also NC managers who need support, external trainers or professional experts from related fields. Finally, our flagship events: International Session are one of the best opportunities to connect the real world with the European Youth Parliament. They should also be places to connect with other companies and institutions and build partnerships for other future events or for the whole network in general.

C. Educational Value: Throughout the last years, I have noticed that we often forget about the real value of what we do in our organisation. I will never get tired to claim that the EYP offers educational learning experience to all the youngsters involved. I sometimes think, after a thorough reflection, that debating is just an excuse to learn from each other and grow. Connected to this, I have learnt to appreciate the role of teachers and schools. They are the ones sustaining the project within the educational institutions and they often need support in various fields such as materials adaptation to implement EYP workshops in schools or facilitating resources before they take part in EYP.
D. Partnerships and Fundraising: Connected to point stated above, I think the EYP needs to find its place in the international perspective. I think finding partnerships is essential to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. Partnerships can be collaborations with or without funds. I reckon joining forces with other NGOs, youth organisations, companies from the professional sector, universities, etc. will not only provide us with experts, funds and long-term institutional support, but also in-depth expertise, professional training, common projects and knowledge sharing platforms. This will make us learn as a global youth organisation, whilst maintaining our existing tools, methods and methodologies.

3. What personal skills, knowledge or experience will you bring to the board that will be needed to face the challenges that EYP is likely to encounter?

Firstly, my knowledge and experience on non-formal education and finding the real value of the EYP. A couple of years ago, I was about to leave this organisation when I realised what really makes this project special. It is all about people and what they can offer to others. Learning in a different way is also valid. Gaining knowledge outside the classroom is also okay. I am eager to explore this environment from a broader perspective and focus my efforts to offer a valuable learning experience. No matter what one studies at school or university, EYP has always something to give.

Secondly, project and team management. Having had the chance to initiate and shape two big projects within the network (Understanding Europe Spain and Valencia 2019, the 90th International Session of the European Youth Parliament), I feel confident with supporting future International Sessions and EYP events and looking a beneficial link between the EYP programme and Understanding Europe.

Thirdly, my experience in the field of partnership making. During the past years, and especially during Valencia 2019 IS, I have experienced several opportunities for networking and partnership building. This knowledge combined with a deep reflection on where the EYP stands, can turn out to be a perfect opportunity to build a solid long-term partners with the whole network, far beyond individual events and programmes.

4. What experience do you have of non-profit management?

My experience with non-profit organisations started in 2014 when I joined the European Youth Parliament. Within this network I have had the opportunity to be part of several small, medium and large scale events, as well as managing various tasks within the Spanish National Committee (NC).

Even though I have not been a Board Member as such, I initiated the role of the External Communication Manager of EYP Spain and was in charge of this portfolio for two terms (2014-2015 and 2016-2017). This role is currently part of the Executive Board of the NC.

In 2016, the Board of EYP Spain and the Schwarzkopf Foundation trusted me to initiate and coordinate EYP’s brother project “Understanding Europe” in Spain, which gave me the autonomy and independence to shape my own project, train and build my team, as well as represent EYP Spain with a brand new initiative, under the common framework led by the Foundation.

During my last years of in EYP, I have been the Project Manager of Valencia 2019, the 90th International Session of the European Youth Parliament last summer. I have been involved in this project for more than two years and a half, with various tasks that include global administration of a large-scale event, participants’ management, daily task allocations, etc.
This experience makes me a candidate that can give, exchange and share:

- Extensive experience in event organisation and NGO management.
- Support Organising Teams.
- Knowledge and skills on administrative and office work (including Fundraising, Accounting, Erasmus+ management, Participants’ Management).
- Training and Capacity Building.

Outside the EYP, I also started the “Young Musicians’ Platform of the Basque Country” focused on the development of music projects led by youngsters. Based on the knowledge and skills gained in the EYP network, I can proudly say that I built a tool for young musicians to foster their own ideas. Within this platform, I have had the chance to design a leadership workshop for orchestra conductors, a skill that it’s often left out of the school curriculum. That is definitely I tried to say: the EYP always gives you something for whatever field you work on, be it politics, law or, why not, music.

All my experience in regional, national and international level has made my mind to apply to be part of the Governing Body for the next 2020 term. I am eager to contribute to the strategic development of the European Youth Parliament Network; to ensure that every member has a high quality, strong and experience in any of all our activities; to bring decision making closer to NCs and its members; and to take the EYP to the international map of youth organisations. I am available at all times to discuss any of these topics via Facebook, Email, Whatsapp, Skype or Phone Call. If you agree with my vision for the next term in the Governing Body, vote me in the elections!