

## **International Executive Report - Summer Conference 2024**

### **Introduction:**

First and foremost, we would like to thank a few people within YL, without whom we wouldn't have inherited the strong position that we have found ourselves in today: Sean Bennett, Kai Pischke, and Kate Sutcliffe.

Fortunately, we will continue to work with both Sean and Kai throughout this year, as in their roles as IFLRY and LYMEC Bureau members, they are non-voting members of our IC. With Sean covering the portfolio of Engagement and Events Officer for LYMEC, whilst Kai is taking on the role of Vice-President for IFLRY, with his responsibilities including programmes on Climate Change.

When reading this Report, you must keep in mind that we only started as International Officers on Thursday the 8th of July, 8 days before Conference.

That said, we will be discussing projects started by the previous IOs and IC that we have inherited, as well as projects that we began in conjunction with the previous IOs, IC, and the Exec that we have since taken further ownership of.

It is also worth noting that, following the example of Kai and Sean, we have chosen to split our responsibilities along the LYMEC/IFLRY divide - with Rowan leading on LYMEC and Tom leading on IFLRY. Of course, we are able to support one another with our portfolios, and the International Officer has many other duties within the role outside of representing YL within our international partners.

### **Overview of Recent Meetings:**

Since starting as International Officers we have convened one meeting of the International Committee, this was on 11/08/24, and the minutes are available [here](#). All voting members were present, and we discussed the upcoming LYMEC Digital Assembly, our plans for the imminent YL Conference, and the delegation selection processes for this Autumn's LYMEC and IFLRY Congresses.

### **Summer Conference:**

Much of our work during our brief time as Co-IOs has centred around the Summer Conference, as we have organised a cohort of international guests joining us from various sister parties and partner organisations. The guests, invited by our previous IO, Kai, hail from a diverse group of sister parties and partners, ranging from representatives closest partners in Europe to incoming IOs in upcoming sister parties to representatives of continental liberal organisations.

Inheriting this project directly from Kai, Tom has organised the group's attendance on a purposefully limited budget, with accommodation sourced not from the Conference's venue but instead being kindly offered by a network of YLers and their families. Similarly, the food budget has been kept to a minimum, whilst most sister parties offer full board to international

guests with representatives being catered to alongside domestic attendees, we are unable to afford catering. Instead, the International Committee will be preparing meals for our guests ourselves. We knew the role of International Officer would throw up many challenges, but we did not expect a culinary one.

We would like to thank Trystan Lloyd, in particular, for assisting us with the logistics of hosting our guests.

Alongside this Rowan has taken the lead on co-organising a panel on *Women in Leadership and Liberalism*, bringing together women role models from across our international partners. This was a project Rowan started as the International Committee Member responsible for Europe, which he was pleased to finalise as Co-International Officer.

The International Committee has also contributed significantly to policy at this conference, leading debates on transnational repression in Asia and the democratic crisis in Georgia. We also submitted multiple emergency motions on urgent issues that emerged after the deadline for policy submissions to ensure that key issues had the opportunity to be addressed at this conference. Overall, we are glad to see a wide range of international policies discussed at this conference, and we have been pleased to have actively engaged with all international policy motions, whether at the drafting stage or through amendments.

### **Delegation Organisation:**

One of the primary duties of the International Officer is to oversee the selection and organisation of delegations to our partners' Congresses and meetings. This has been one of our immediate priorities, with the deadline for submitting our delegations to both the LYMEC Digital Assembly and the LYMEC Winter Congress scheduled this month.

Led by Rowan in his capacity as LYMEC lead, the International Committee advertised for then selected a delegation for this August's LYMEC Digital Assembly, which will be themed around 'Charting a Liberal Path to tackle the far-right and far-left'. We are confident that the delegation we have assembled, with all 6 of our spots filled, will uphold the high standards expected of a YL delegation and contribute greatly to the discussion around how we, as European liberals, will tackle the rise of populism.

We are proud to announce that the delegation we have assembled for the DA has strong LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority representation, as indicated by demographic self-reporting on the expression of interest form. We are disappointed to inform the membership that this delegation has no gender diversity due to the lack of expressions of interest from gender diverse members.

Like many other parts of the organisation, we have inherited an ongoing struggle to engage our women and non-binary members. This is something we are actively seeking to address in various ways. This is shown in part by our choice to organise a panel aimed explicitly at engaging women attendees at conference, but also by our work to actively engage gender diverse members through working with the new women's rep and using links to promote international opportunities in digital spaces reserved for women and non-binary members.

We will continue to track our inclusivity by collecting diversity data and reporting on this at appropriate intervals.

Despite the challenges with timelines around the election, the call for expressions of interest for LYMEC Winter Congress in Warsaw was still able to be advertised within the required constitutional time period. With it being one of Rowan's first actions as Co-International Officer. We are looking forward to receiving applications from as many members as possible, and hoping to send an enthusiastic, capable, and diverse delegation to Warsaw.

To ensure that the Congress is accessible to as many YLers as possible, we are in the process of organising a webinar introducing LYMEC and the application process for delegations to ensure first-time applicants are sufficiently informed and supported to express an interest in attending this event.

### **Sister Party Relations:**

Despite the long period between their resignations, we have been able to swiftly shift the duty of managing sister-party relations from Sean and Kai to ourselves. This has been in part thanks to their facilitation and in part thanks to our initiative and recognition within the International Young Liberal Community.

We have already attended LUF's (Sweden) Congress in Uppsala from 08/08-11/08, where we witnessed the election of a new LUF Board, met with this year's Bertil Ohlin Medal winner, and observed lively debates. We also had the opportunity to speak before Congress, where we spoke about the recent electoral success we have experienced in the Liberal Democrats. We also presented a gift to the incoming President of LUF and the outgoing Chair of the Executive Committee on behalf of YL, thanking them for their wonderful hospitality.

We are already well integrated into the network of International Officers, with Tom having met with our counterpart from the Young Democrats of America to discuss cooperation, exchange ideas, and swap perspectives on IFLRY's future. Similarly, thanks to the work of Kai, the Young Liberals met with CDP Rikken, the youth organisation of the Constitutional Democrats of Japan, to exchange experiences and discuss cooperation.

This is part of a larger long-term project within the International Committee to foster relationships with liberal communities across Asia and assist our international partners in bringing groups into the young liberal international fold. Tom has taken the lead on this work within his role leading on IFLRY and relations with organisations outside of Europe. He is working with Arthur Wu and Kai to organise a call with the bureau of CALD Youth, the regional umbrella organisation for young liberals and democrats in Asia.

At the request of IFLRY's Office, Tom has organised a webinar session for IFLRY South America and JULAC, which Rowan will be attending to represent YL and the Lib Dems, alongside Mark Pack, to discuss the party's recent electoral success.

Rowan has reached out to the international officers of Ógra Fianna Fail, our sister organisation in the Republic of Ireland, and Alliance Youth, our sister organisation in

Northern Ireland, to further our partnerships with our closest neighbours. Rowan is also engaging with the international officer of Movimento Liberal Social (*Social Liberal Movement*) in Portugal and will see if there are any opportunities for further cooperation here.

We are also in the process of individually emailing several organisations and International Officers, aiming to sustain and build relationships with our sister parties worldwide. With the upcoming LYMEC Congress in Warsaw fast approaching, Rowan will also be reaching out to sister parties within LYMEC in order to support our policy priorities ahead of the event.

### **Increasing Accessibility through Webinars:**

One of our key commitments during our election campaign was increasing the accessibility of International events. We are acutely aware that International YL is disproportionately dominated by a certain demographic of the membership, and we want to ensure that the International opportunities that YL can give to its members are properly accessible and advertised to its membership.

We have several ideas on how to achieve this going forward, and one plan that we already implemented is an increased number of webinars and online events. Through proper advertising and signposting these online events have the potential to bring the International activities of YL into the comfort of our members' homes. Furthermore, hosting events with our partner organisations, through initiatives such as IFLRY's Super Sundays also bolsters our relations with key partners.

One example of this is the Super Sunday Webinar Tom hosted in partnership with IFLRY. Tom and Katherine Macy were joined by Joshua Reynolds MP and Bobby Dean MP to present the story of the 2024 General Election before fielding questions from attendees. This event was very successful and has provided a blueprint that we will look to replicate in the future.

Moving forward, Tom is specifically aiming to organise a mixture of webinars where we are joined by guests from the UK and Liberal Democrats who have experience within International Politics, alongside events where representatives of our sister parties join us to educate YLers about the politics of their region and country.