31st Council
10-13 June 2020
Online
by the European Greens

Draft

Title: **Natalija Simovic**

Tabled by: Zeleno-levi front

Photo



Video

https://youtube.com/shorts/2QuZrBzT4CI?feature=share

Motivation Letter [PDF]

Natalija Simovic Motivational letter

I am writing to express my interest in serving as the European Green Party's (EGP) representative to the Green European Foundation General Assembly.
For the past 18 years, I have worked in civil society, human rights and grassroots activism. My experience has taught me how essential strong connections are between movements, civil society organisations and political parties, particularly when democratic institutions are under pressure and civic space is shrinking.

Curriculum Vitae [PDF]

For more than a decade, I have been active in Ne Davimo Beograd, a social movement that grew into the Green-Left Front, Serbia's only progressive Green and left-wing party. My roles have included fundraising and resource mobilisation, advancing gender equality and representation, and contributing to decision-making within the movement and party. I co-chaired the party's Autonomous Women's Front and its Grand Council, the party's key decision-making body. I currently serve as a local councillor in the City of Belgrade. Together, these experiences have given me insight into both civil society work and the realities of political institutions under authoritarian rule.

Serbia can be understood as a political laboratory: our experience with the last election shows how grassroots movements can challenge an entrenched authoritarian leadership, including one that has held power for 14 years, and how civil society can contribute to rebuilding society in the wake of corruption and democratic erosion. I believe these lessons are relevant beyond Serbia and can support the wider Green movement.

I have worked extensively with civil society across the Western Balkans and would bring that regional perspective to this role. As countries in the region move towards potential EU accession, it is important to strengthen connections among their movements and organisations and ensure that they can participate meaningfully in wider European discussions. At the same time, organisations in non-EU countries face particular barriers to participation with the increasingly stringent EU regulations limiting their voices, which I believe is our duty to offset as a progressive political movement. I would work to use the EGP and GEF partnership to widen access and participation.
As EGP representative, I would seek to strengthen the strategic cooperation between EGP and GEF as well as relationship between EGP member parties and GEF and to encourage more participatory and deliberative ways of working. I would also work to bridge thematic and geographic silos, supporting cooperation across sectors and regions so that our shared commitments translate into stronger collective action.
I would be honoured to bring my experience, regional knowledge and commitment to grassroots democracy to this role. Thank you for considering my application.

Natalija Simović



Work and Political Experience

Local councilor for the City of Belgrade
Green-left front, Serbia
June 2022 to present

Co-Director, Programmes
Ignite Philanthropy, grantmaking foundation operating globally
February 2023 to present

Working alongside grassroots leaders with lived experience Co-designed and launched Thrive Together, a participatory grantmaking programme supporting survivors of childhood sexual violence to lead grassroots prevention initiatives across Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, MENA and South Asia.

Grantmaking Program Director
Trag foundation, grantmaking foundation operating in Western Balkans region
January 2019 to February 2023

Designed capacity-development, grantmaking and movement-building strategies for organisations ranging from informal groups to established CSOs, using participatory approaches. Led OAK Foundation's Issues Affecting Women programme, supporting 40 organisations with core funding and 19 grassroots groups through participatory grantmaking, and contributed to senior management on programme development, MEL and donor coordination.

Issues Affecting Women Program Regional Manager
Trag Foundation

March 2016 to January 2019

From March 2016 to January 2019, I helped shape OAK Foundation's Western Balkans grantmaking within Issues Affecting Women program, strengthened partner organisations, and oversaw child safeguarding policies across 40 organisations and Trag Foundation.

Personal info

Date of birth: October 17th 1983
Country of residence: Serbia

Contact Info

Email:
Natalija.simovic@zelenolevifront.rs

Language skills

- Serbian: native language
- English: proficiency level
- French: intermediary level of reading and understanding, speaking

Education History

M.A in Cultural Management and Cultural Policy
Institution: University of Arts, Belgrade in cooperation with University Lyon 2, Lyon, France
Year of Graduation: 2008

Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature
Institution: Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade
Year of Graduation: 2007

Alumni of Emerging Leaders International Fellowship Program
Institution: The Graduate Center City University of New York
2014

Women's studies Alumni
Institution: Center for Women's studies, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade
Year of Graduation: 2017

Volunteer Work, Affiliations, and Interests

Other roles held at Green Left Front,
Co-Chair of the Grand Council
Managed the work of the party's 70+ member delegate decision-making body, overseeing meeting moderation, procedural rules and effective governance
Co-chair of Autonomous Women's Front.
Organized the party's Women's Wing to advance gender equality and women's rights within the party and in wider society.

Certified trainer in fundraising
The Resource Alliance
Since 2015
Trainer and mentor of fundraising strategies for non profit organisations. Advised strategies over 50 resource mobilisation campaigns involving individuals donors and companies.

Publications

Foundations and Support to Women's Organisations (2017)
Center for Women's Studies with in Faculty for Political Sciences, University of Belgrade

Community Foundations and Social Capital: A Vehicle for Philanthropy Development in Western Balkans (2014)
Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society, City University of New York, New York, United States