

SG-REP Secretary General Report 2025-26

Organization: CDN
Resolution date: 13.03.2026
Agenda item: 4. Reports and plans

Resolution text

1 The report covers the period from April 2025 to March 2026, i.e. the second year
2 of the Sec-Gen's term.

3 Employment Conditions and Infrastructure

4 The working conditions remain decent. The salaries in the Office went up 50 EUR
5 in November 2025, amounting to EUR 1,350 for Sec-Gen (EUR 1,400 for next term)
6 and 1.300 for other full-time positions. The increase was planned (in the
7 financial plan) since January 2026, but savings were allowed to be implemented
8 earlier. The increase is due to the inflation and tax raises in Serbia, still
9 being around the average gross salary in Serbia (1,308 EUR in December 2025).
10 Additional raises or employing a new person would require receiving an
11 additional grant.

12 In addition, the EC decided to grant an office year-end reward of 450 EUR per
13 person. The EC decision states: In years where there is a profit compared to the
14 financial plan, the Office may be awarded a year-end reward of up to 20% of the
15 additional profit to be divided among personnel, which makes the reward clearly
16 defined and predictable.

17 The only significant change in the infrastructure is that, due to the savings in
18 2025 and the transfer periods incoming, we bought new computers for the office.

19 The adopted Office Guidelines show the total amount of overtime, which stayed at
20 the same level (around 120 in total for all Office personnel) despite the two
21 additional projects organised.

22 Internship programme

23 The Project&Communication Intern started working in September and works until
24 the GA is finished. The internship is remote, with participation in the Study
25 Session and EC Meetings, totalling 17.5 hours per week, with a salary of 550
26 EUR. The main tasks and learning outcomes were defined in the activity report.
27 The intern was supervised by the Secretary-General.

28 The internship brought improvement in the quality of the communication,
29 especially from the events, and the coherence. Thus, it was proven that it is a
30 good idea to have another position responsible for comms, even if part-time, or
31 just for a specific campaign period. Project-wise, Sintija contributed to the
32 FemAT Local Action as well as took some responsibilities from the Office in
33 reporting (though it was limited due to some funders changing deadlines).
34 Generally, the programme and intern's work has a big advantage for CDN.

35 As it was the first CDN internship in years, the planning was quite chaotic. The
36 internship plan was proven to be insufficient and needed to be adjusted during
37 the internship (also due to the changes in deadlines of some

38 applications/reports compared to the last year). This negatively affected the
39 learning process, but hopefully will not affect satisfaction with the
40 internship. It is recommended for the future to organise the internship
41 programmes, not necessarily every year, but depending on the needs and
42 capacities, to provide a good plan with learning outcomes.

43 It would be good to monitor somehow the situation of former interns, to check if
44 the knowledge gained during the internship benefits CDN or its MOs. It would be
45 fantastic if every intern applied for other positions, or EC, or Prep-Teams in
46 the coming years, but there are many circumstances that make it unpredictable.
47 The introduction of an alumni network might help in that as well.

48 Office Retreat and Internal Training

49 Office retreat was organised to create the transfer documents and team-build
50 before the in-live activities in 2025, with that realising it aims. The
51 documents were created, and the transfer will be much more straightforward.

52 We did not organise any internal training for Office, unfortunately. The Office
53 retreat was prioritised, as well as additional activities in Q2-Q4. Finally,
54 Office personnel also did not attend any in-person external training (one was
55 supposed to go, but withdraw due to the sickness) due to the combination of lack
56 of time and over-experience for some offered workshops.

57 New Office members will be encouraged to attend some external training,
58 especially for the first year. Some two-days internal training plus team-
59 building outside of Belgrade was proven to be a good practice as well, maybe
60 with the use of some online tools, and invitation of some external expert at the
61 later stage if needed.

62 Strategy Monitoring

63 We have met our strategic objectives in 92,11% (I goal: 100%, II goal: 94,31%,
64 III goal: 82%), which is increase of 11 p.p. comparing to 2024 (KPI monitoring
65 sheet available on request). We are succeeding in the educational events, and
66 improved compared to 2025 in transforming them into outputs (increased number of
67 publications). The goal 3: Bringing Eastern European perspective remains weaker
68 and harder to measure: we increased the traffic on website or social media
69 engagement, but it might be derivative of increased engagement in educational
70 activities etc.

71 At ECM2, steps were taken to improve the strategy itself and its monitoring.
72 KPIs were modified to measure the outreach and engagement of our external
73 communication, instead of just its individual forms (which, like Opinion Pieces
74 introduced last year, proved uninteresting and unengaging). At the same time, an
75 amendment to the strategy was proposed, defining the forms of communication and
76 their message, to avoid engagement farming (which in political movements is
77 usually negative and reactive messaging) simply to achieve KPIs. CDN is
78 committed to achieving engagement, but in a manner consistent with our
79 engagement ladder.

80 Contact with EC

81 The contact between Office and EC improved comparing to the last year. The daily
82 decision-making is quick on regular bi-weekly meetings, while the strategic
83 decision are focus of the live meetings.

84 The activity and responsiveness of all EC Members increased the productivity of
85 the network as a whole, also decreasing the amount of work put on the office. In
86 previous term (2024/25), the reshuffling of work, waiting for the input of two
87 inactive EC Members and forcing Office to make strategic decisions not in this
88 role meant a lot wasted time for Sec-Gen, as well as other, active EC Member. In
89 the 2025/26 term, this was freed up. Thus, the organisation of two additional
90 events (Environmental Consequences of War and Training for Trainers) was
91 possible thanks to EC being active and taking their work seriously.

92 While the EC task division was equal at the beginning, some people took
93 additional projects not defined at the beginning, that could lead to inequal
94 task division and overwork. There was reshuffling of tasks during live EC
95 Meetings to mitigate this risk, but maybe the check-in mechanism from the Office
96 should be implemented to monitor.

97 Fundraising

98 Due to the increase of Green Forum funding, we could fit the sensitive gaps in
99 our previous years' budgets such as co-funding for work plan and salaries, and
100 rather apply for grants based on our strategic priorities rather than to adjust
101 our priorities to the grant. This also meant that we did not have to look for
102 the additional co-funding of work plan, that previously required a lot of
103 additional work from the office that was freed-up this year.

104 We applied for additional grant (rejected), as well as created the concept of
105 additional programme Taste the Change: Youth Shaping Sustainable Food
106 Transitions in Municipalities that was not send due to posponing the call for
107 projects and can be used next year with some funder.

108 We need more work put in the small scale fundraising. We received only 20 EUR in
109 small-scale donations. We also need to pay attention in the changes in the donor
110 lanscape. The cuts in USAID did not concern us directly, as we have not applied
111 for any such grant; however, it means that some organisations previously funded
112 by USAID were applying for other grants. This means bigger competition for the
113 usual grants we were receiving or applying for. Due to that, we need to put more
114 focus on the applications for this funder; however, it is difficult because of a
115 lack of any feedback on applications from their side (they either accept or do
116 not). We will definitely need to pay more attention to CoE Youth Sector
117 priorities while planning activities.

118 Relations with Other Organisations

119 We continued good, and on-time communication with FYEG, sharing calendars and
120 doing some statement co-operation. We participated in the meeting with
121 Foundation Max van der Stoel (PvdA foundation, Netherlands) to get to know each
122 other and put stones towards potential cooperationa after GL-PvdA merger. We
123 were also again represented at EGP Congress, with no significant updates.

124 We stay in contact with other youth international NGOs, either via EYF events,
125 or participation in some events. This needs to be continued, but in order to
126 increase our position, we need to make steps towards joining European Youth

127 Forum. For this we need to increase the membership base, especially in our most
128 active MOs – thus, maybe they should be strategically prioritised over next 1-2
129 years.

130 Next steps and recommendations for next Sec-Gen

131 Finishing my mandate, I believe the plans and strategy for next year are well-
132 defined. A crucial thing will be to ensure the sustainable transfer of positions
133 and continuation of work, merging the current strategy with the vision of the
134 new Secretary-General. My recommendations for the next Sec-Gen, Office and EC
135 that were not put into other documents include:

- 136 • The financial management and budget planning should be sustainable and
137 reflect the challenges in the donor landscape. Thus, the amount of savings
138 should not decrease much, and preferably increase, over the next few years
139 in the case we do not need to implement any crisis management connected to
140 the termination of some grant. Small-scale fundraising might be
141 prioritised, as there is no need to gradually increase the activities of
142 CDN, but ensure they are sustainable.
- 143 • Division of tasks in the office could be more equal on the
144 institutional/document level. In my two years, we have quite an unequal
145 division at some points, which was not problematic due to the overall good
146 relations within the office, but can potentially cause problems in the
147 future. Reflecting on specific tasks should be done periodically,
148 especially to reduce the workload of the Finance and Office Manager in the
149 coming years.
- 150 • Communication priority should indeed bring the Eastern European
151 perspective regarding the developments in EE politics and our progressive
152 postulates for the change. We are sometimes the only ones or one of the
153 few pages that can gather the info about the region – the info from
154 political parties or other organisations is limited due to their electoral
155 aim, and the most popular info about the region often comes from Western
156 influencers. Thus, I suggest increasing the communication on the
157 developments in Eastern European countries, with the focus on positive
158 developments or counter- and alternative narratives, with informative
159 posts spreading the information. Furthermore, the fact that we are not
160 competing in the elections and our ladder of engagement leads through MOs
161 makes us less dependent on the outreach. Furthermore, this allows us to
162 experiment with some avant-garde forms, having much more freedom in
163 communications.
- 164 • Regarding the EC work, the task division can be clearer and more in line
165 with the strategic decisions of EC. Eg, the decision on enhanced internal
166 communication and trying out the new format (short videos) should include
167 a list of topics and the person responsible for recording the videos.
168 Maybe the role of (unofficial) spokesperson(s) should be discussed.

169 Moreover, repeating the point from last year, I strongly suggest rethinking the
170 role and format of the General Assembly. The GA's added value is low compared to
171 the capacity-building events considering the amount of money and office capacity
172 it takes, and, however necessary, can be shortened or be smaller, or even

173 organised online, sometimes, eg, every second year. With new IRPs that shorten
174 bureaucracy and implement changes increasing the roles of MOs in-between GAs,
175 and a new form of political conference that has already tried this year, we
176 might increase the added value of GA, so the next year I will be proven wrong.

177 Hence, I leave the the position CDN on a stable organisational basis, clear
178 strategic direction and strong human potential. The organisation has proven its
179 resilience, adaptability and relevance in a rapidly changing regional context,
180 and this is an asset to be further strengthened. Our strength is in trust-based
181 cooperation, flexibility and critically implemented Green and progressive
182 values. We can work beyond the standard NGO practices, innovate faster than the
183 systems we operate with, make some avant-garde, experimental forms of
184 communication, organisational or event formats, or decision-making, as long as
185 they remain transparent, accountable and politically meaningful.

186 I will stay (remotely) at CDN at least for three more months as coordinator of
187 Taste the Change programme.