



Whose Youth? Far Right Youth Wings and the Challenge for Progressives

12 October 2026, 17:45-20:00

@ Kamilou - Rue Joseph II 36, 1000 Bruxelles

Description

What will the future of the far right look like? It is a question worth asking at a time when their rise in the polls and their dominance of national media discourse have become key characteristics of European politics. Characteristics that threaten to continuously undermine democratic standards and poison public debate.

What better way to tackle this question than by looking at the next generation of their leaders in the most systematic way possible? In this public event, Cas Mudde, one of the leading scholars on the far right, will present insights from a [new book](#) examining the youth wings of ten populist radical right (PRR) parties across Europe. Together with the author, we will dive into the key functions these youth wings fulfil for the radical right: mobilisation, socialisation, internationalisation, professionalisation, and normalisation. We will also discuss more broadly what they tell us about the present and future of the populist radical right.

Following the presentation, Cas Mudde will discuss the book with Mariam Asghari, Secretary General of the Young European Socialists, and Emma Rafowicz, S&D MEP and former President of the Socialist Youth in France, before opening the conversation to the audience. Taking the analysis as its starting point, the discussion will shift attention to how far-right youth wings compare to progressive ones. Are they fishing in the same ponds for members? What are the key differences between them and social democratic youth movements? Where might strategies lie to strengthen progressive youth movements, and weaken far right ones?

About the speakers

Cas Mudde is Distinguished Research Professor of International Affairs at the University of Georgia. A leading scholar on the far right and populism, he is the author and co-author of several books, including, *The Far Right Today* and *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*.

Emma Rafowicz is a Member of the European Parliament from France, sitting with the S&D Group, where she is Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education and a member of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Former President of the Young Socialist Movement in France, she was elected to the European Parliament in 2024 and previously served as a municipal councillor in Paris.

Mariam Asghari is Secretary General of the Young European Socialists (YES), the youth organisation of the Party of European Socialists. A long-standing activist in Sweden's Social Democratic Youth League (SSU), where she served on the national board, she has also been a Vice-President of the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY).



Preliminary agenda

17:30 – 18:00

Registrations and refreshments

18:00 – 18:10

Opening remarks

Christian Salm, Head of Democracy Programmes, FEPS

Tobias Mörschel, Director EU Office, Friedrich Ebert Foundation

18:10 – 18:35

Book Presentation: Youth Wings of the Populist Radical Right

Cas Mudde, Professor of International Affairs, University of Georgia

18:35 – 19:30

A Conversation on Youth, the Far Right, and Progressive Movements

Cas Mudde, Professor of International Affairs, University of Georgia

Emma Rafowicz, S&D Member of the European Parliament (tbc)

Mariam Asghari, Secretary General, Young European Socialists

Moderation: Matteo Dressler, Policy Analyst for Democracy and Participation, FEPS

19:30 – 20:00

Reception

Food and drinks

The project that this event is part of is led by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

