

Motivation Letter Sven Gerst

Dear liberal friends,

I have been with IFLRY for quite a while; and since my first IFLRY event, the General Assembly in Beirut in 2010, much has happened—and we have seen a lot of change. Not only in our organization, where we are finally finding ourselves on path to financial solidity, have expanded our offer and seminars range tremendously, and where we see promising results in our efforts to be an even more global organization; but also my own role within IFLRY has changed: from being a delegate of JuLis in the beginning, I became increasingly involved. First as a member of the Caucasus program and then to being trainer in the events in Tbilisi and Budapest to recently as being an active member of the statutory working group that facilitates the dialogue about the structural changes within IFLRY.

However, while our organization certainly got healthier and saw a lot of progress, we cannot be satisfied with the current state of the world. We have celebrated little victories of freedom, like Myanmar's landmark election last year, the end of Socialist rule in Venezuela or the landslide victory of the Taiwanese liberals, but that seems only like little drops in a sea of challenges: liberals all over the world find themselves confronted with struggles and they seem to have become more severe over the last couple of years as we can see with the authoritarian backlashes in the Arab World, Russia, and Turkey or the rise of right-wing populism in Europe. Our member organization need us more than ever. As unfortunate as it is, liberalism does not have any problem to identify its threats. It is our obligation as umbrella organization to support our friends on these political battlefields and we need to help them to tackle such problems effectively and efficiently. This requires not only great commitment, inspiring words, and the willingness to do so; but a practical, feasible agenda in mind. Here are some of my ideas how IFLRY could advance even further:

1. Shaping IFLRY to MO Demands

Like any umbrella organization, IFLRY's MOs are at the heart of the organizations. While we are united in our love for freedom and human flourishing, our needs and what we want to take out of IFLRY differ vastly. Some of our MOs use IFLRY primarily for networking purposes, others count on IFLRY for ideological training, others seek capacity building and others reach out for support for their fight for freedom. IFLRY has many facets and an organization committed to its members has to accommodate for these different needs and shape its offers accordingly.

But how can we do so? Here are some ideas:

- Send out questionnaires and establish IO roundtables about the benefits of IFLRY membership
- Evaluation of the usefulness of certain events not only on an individual level
- Taking criticism seriously!

2. Develop Flagship Projects

Undoubtedly, IFLRY has become more global over the stretch of the last couple of years and we haven't seen tremendous progress—especially in South America and Africa. However, this is not always as obvious to the MOs as it should be. In order to stay attractive for our members, we have to show them the benefits of being part of this community; internal marketing, so to speak. IFLRY should maintain its mission to become a truly global organization and we should become clearer and focussed in our efforts to achieve this goal. We need some shining flagship projects that will be managed by external project managers or some parts of the Bureau itself. Such flagship projects are not only an end in itself and might greatly benefit our local partners; but they will certainly attract potential donors and will be of great interest to our funders and a great selling point for future grant applications.

But how can we do so? Here are some ideas:

- Contest amongst member organizations for being IFLRY support in such flagship efforts
- Always have in mind that an expansion of IFLRY's activities will require additional grants
- Be clearer in assigning tasks within the organization. Build capacities for independent project managing

3. Speak On Certain Topics With A Unified Voice

IFLRY is a heterogeneous organization; this is linked to the many branches of contemporary liberalism: we are proud to be the home of social liberals, classical liberals, and libertarian organizations and that we facilitate the dialogue between these different traditions. However, it might have made us more silent than necessary in our political voice. An umbrella organization on the shoulders of liberalism, the ideological giant in the history of political thought, does not have to hide. The board of IFLRY are not micromanaging the movement, but political animals themselves. We should give them space to develop ideas and being able to test this in a global context. I believe that IFLRY as an organization itself can be progressive and agenda-setting: there are various topics that we can develop and spread through our member organizations; our positions and manifesto should be an actual benchmark for liberal organization all around the world. This takes courage! But the topics are out there: legalization of marijuana, LGBT rights, recognition of property rights or formal representation of the youth wing in mother parties.

But how can we do so? Here are some ideas:

- IFLRY board should also see itself in the position to develop resolutions or agenda-setting
- IFLRY should be able to facilitate cooperation on policy issues as being able to develop campaigns themselves
- Back their MOs up to push for certain positions within their mother party

This is just a sketch of a couple of ideas that I have in mind. However, I do not want to overemphasize such projects, because I see them only as complements to the the core competencies that every bureau members has to have—and for what many of you already know me for: commitment, hardworking, to-the-point, creative, financially conscious, conciliable, solution driven, and a team player. Nevertheless, politics at this level is also about inspiration and about transporting the love for the ideas of freedom. More metaphorically, we all know that you cannot spark a fire without a flame. And I can assure you that I have an abundance of fiery passion for liberty—more than enough to spark several liberal revolution all over the world, even in the remotest places. *(haha, I had to laugh myself writing this)*

Let me close by a couple of remarks about me as a person: I am a PhD Candidate in Political Economy at King's College London, where I mainly focus on moral and political philosophy—more precisely on individual responsibility in the context of global justice. I am a doctoral scholarship holder of the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation for Freedom. I hold a M.Sc. in Philosophy from the London School of Economics and I have previously studied in the United States, Russia, Taiwan, and Germany; I have also worked as a student assistant in the German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) for four years. Within JuLis and FDP, I have occupied several positions since I joined both organizations in 2004; recently, I have been serving on the International Committee of JuLis, where I organized a seminar in Hong Kong with our local partners and the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation for Freedom in November 2015.

If you have any question regarding my candidacy, do not hesitate to contact me via Email or Facebook. I would be more than happy to write/talk/meet about any issue related to my candidacy, politics, philosophy or chess.