ANNUAL REPORT 2019
YPFP BRUSSELS
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YPFP) BRUSSELS, as part of a global non-profit, non-partisan organization, strives every day to empower its members and volunteers with the knowledge, skills, networks, and exposure required to become change makers and the leaders of tomorrow. Building on the successes and lessons learned over the course of the previous year, 2019 showed once again the importance of empowering young people and strengthening the community of young professionals and future leaders, whatever their background or ambitions for the future.

Over the course of the past 12 years, YPFP Brussels has grown from a handful of friends interested in foreign policy into an extremely international community of hundreds of members and dozens of motivated volunteer staff. Today, we are proud to represent one of the foremost platforms in Brussels for young professionals to connect, learn, and grow, and our deep roots in the heart of Europe give us a unique and far-reaching outlook on a particularly broad spectrum of issues, and which embrace diverse national, regional, transatlantic, multilateral, and indeed global perspectives.

The work our team does day-in and day-out – on top of our diverse professional commitments – is a rewarding and powerful affirmation of the importance of community and connection, and the pride and dedication we feel comes through in the efforts we make to meaningfully engage with our members, open new doors, and galvanize interesting and relevant debates – be it through mentorship opportunities with senior practitioners, high-level policy panels, or networking conferences.

With that in mind, YPFP Brussels is proud to present its latest Annual Report, reflecting last year’s contribution to these goals and the continuation of years of hard work. This Annual Report strives to offer a clear overview of a year’s worth of activities, to highlight our achievements as a team, and present a cross-section of some of our diverse initiatives, while recognizing the importance of our volunteers who have dedicated their time and efforts to foster the next generation of foreign policy leaders, and to our members and partners who have been integral to our continued growth.

After a particularly dynamic 2018, 2019 saw the organization of 34 events on a broad range of topics, for which we would like to sincerely thank each one of our speakers, partners and sponsors. We would also like to thank the U.S. Mission to the EU and NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division in particular for their continued support for our work and the empowerment which comes with it: we have had the privilege of working closely with them for years now, and the growth and staying power of those collaborations is especially important to us as a reflection of our own team values.

Without giving too much away, we are pleased to select a few noteworthy highlights from this past year that you can read more about in the following report: our recurring Tools of the Trade workshops “Leverage Your Emotional Intelligence Through Real-Life Crisis” and “Standing Out in the War for Talent” received overwhelmingly positive feedback from our members, who were quick to incorporate the skills and diverse perspectives learned into their personal and professional lives; our flagship Ambassador Series events were honored by the presence of 6 Ambassadors, who shared with us their countries’ plans for the years to come; and last but not least our events sponsored by the US Mission to the EU and NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division tackled the state of transatlantic affairs and the 70th anniversary of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Through all these events, YPFP Brussels has followed its guiding values of serving its members through ethical leadership while engaging in informed, constructive, non-partisan discussion of international affairs, and of promoting professionalism and camaraderie within our community.

To conclude, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to our members, our partners, and current and former staff members for their continued engagement and to each one of you for your feedback, ideas, and support. 12 years of YPFP Brussels represent only the beginning and we are looking forward to successful partnerships and constructive discussions in the months and years to come.

With warm regards,

Rafael Adrian Garcia Esteve,  
Managing Director

Cristiana Lavinia Badulescu,  
Co-Managing Director
YPFP IS A GLOBAL NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION founded in 2004 in Washington DC. YPFP is proud to have branches and hubs all over the world, and is supported by a global team of 150 volunteers, who contribute over 55,000 hours per year.

Members of YPFP have access to grow professionally and to hear from foreign policy leaders in intimate settings. The headquarters of the organization are located in Washington D.C. Other YPFP locations include Brussels, London, New York, Puerto Rico, Rome, San Francisco, Tel Aviv and Toronto.

YPFP Toronto is the only organization in Canada dedicated to equipping young Canadian graduates and young professionals with the global affairs knowledge, skills, exposure, and relationships they need, for continuous advancement over the course of their careers.

YPFP San Francisco was founded in January 2015 to promote a diverse community of global citizens in the Bay Area, Silicon Valley, and throughout the west coast.

Founded in 2004, YPFP Washington began as a small discussion group of friends and over the past decade has grown to the organization you see today.

Established in 2007, YPFP came to New York City where today our membership spans financial institutions, international organizations, consulting firms, media, and non-profits.

Established in 2008 and today brings together a vibrant network of young professionals in the capital and heart of Europe.

YPFP London was established in 2006 as the second branch of the YPFP organisation, and has since grown into a thriving community of young professionals with an interest in international affairs, who are living and working in the UK’s capital.

YPFP Tel Aviv was created in 2013 with the purpose to be the “home” for all Israeli young professionals who have the passion and skills to work in the foreign policy and security fields in Israel.

The Rome Hub officially joined the YPFP family in 2013. All of the board members are recognized leaders in their fields and have done a great job of establishing the first YPFP hub in over 5 years.

YPFP’s membership now spans an overall of 70 countries.

YPFP’s network today consists of over 10,000 young professionals.
Established in 2008, YPFP Brussels is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation that brings a distinctive non-partisan policy discussion to a vibrant network of young professionals in the Belgian capital. A strong and diverse community of members, drawn from public administrations, politics, think-tanks, business, NGOs, and academia, join together for informed and thoughtful discussions of international affairs-related topics.

From skills workshops and panel debates to interviews and social media engagement, YPFP Brussels ensures that young professionals have a voice on the issues that matter.

Over the years, Brussels members have had the opportunity to hear from high-level speakers including former President Barack Obama, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, former Vice-President of the European Commission Kristalina Georgieva, former Chief Executive of the European Defence Agency Claude-France Arnould, former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Daniel Costello, former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, former NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller, and former United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

**MISSION**
To foster the next generation of foreign policy leaders by providing young professionals with the skills, exposure, and relationships to tackle critical global challenges over the course of their careers.

“YPFP Brussels brings a distinctive non-partisan policy discussion to a vibrant network of young professionals in the capital and heart of Europe.”

**VISION**
To be the premier global organization that turns ambitious, aspiring young professionals into innovative, inspiring, and impactful leaders.

YPFP Brussels is a non-profit organization that is reliant on its volunteers, partners, grants and sponsors. Many events would not be possible without the outstanding support of partners such as the U.S. Mission to the EU and NATO’s Public Diplomacy Division. We have also continued our fruitful collaboration with SAAB EU Office and Quaker Council for European Affairs. YPFP Brussels is always on a lookout for mutually beneficial partnerships.

The continuous support provided by the YPFP team gives ample room for personal and professional development. Members can benefit from job-relevant skills training, exposure to distinguished high-level speakers and discussions of the most pressing foreign policy issues.

Our members come from a wide range of industry backgrounds and languages spoken. Becoming a member can be done online through our application page (https://www.ypfp.org/become-a-member/ - choose the Brussels branch).

**CONTACT US**
Feel free to connect and reach out to YPFP Brussels through our social media channels, or visit our website. You can subscribe to our weekly newsletter to stay up to date with YPFP Brussels events by emailing brussels@ypfp.org.
Communications & Marketing works to promote regular YPFP events and activities, coordinating with all the other teams to help raise the profile of YPFP Brussels. Our communication service includes a weekly newsletter, daily management of social media outputs through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube, and management of the Brussels section of the YPFP website.

Membership handles all applications, renewals, and queries, as well as represents YPFP at job fairs and trainee information sessions in Brussels. The team also organizes regular social events, the foreign policy pub quiz, the exclusive gala event and runs our career development Advisors Program. The peer-to-peer nature of the program forms a unique setting for members to develop their career goals.

Programmes aims to inform and expand the knowledge of YPFP members through events on foreign policy-related topics as well as professional training sessions focused on skills building needed to succeed in the workplace.

Security & Defense is responsible for the development of thought-provoking events with speakers from international organizations, think-tanks, NGOs, and private sectors on a wide range of topics among which cyber security, lawfare, strategic communications, gender mainstreaming, deterrence and defense.
Highlights of 2019

Highlights from our Security & Defense team include panels and workshops with partners such as NATO, SAAB, and the Quaker Council for European Affairs, exploring cutting-edge issues in international peace and security: transitional justice, disarmament diplomacy, peace education, transatlantic defence, European defence spending, NATO operations, and hybrid warfare. We also organized an exclusive visit to the European Defence Agency and a policy discussion on European defense with Jorge Domecq, Chief Executive, as well as a simulation of the North Atlantic Council with Jan Havranek, Policy Advisor in the Policy Planning Division at NATO.

YPFP’s visit to the European Defence Agency hosted by the Chief Executive and the North Atlantic Council Simulation brought aspiring young people closer together with seasoned professionals creating milestones in their career.

Jeoffrey Houvenaeghel,
Director of Security & Defence

Some of our featured speakers included Dagmar Schumacher, Director the UN Women Brussels office; James Appathurai, NATO’s Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy; Dr. Jamie Shea, former Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at NATO; and Hans Pung, RAND Europe President.

The Ambassador Series managed by the Programmes team remains a flagship programme that for another successful year has allowed our members to interact with Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives to the EU in personal settings and discuss foreign policy priorities and current events.

In 2019 we hosted H.E., Ambassador Bernard Nikaj of the Republic of Kosovo; H.E., Ambassador Dr. Suela Janina of the Republic of Albania to the EU; H.E., Daniel Azzopardi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Malta to the European Union; H.E., Ambassador Jakub Dürr, Ambassador of Czechia to the EU. Within the scope of the Ambassador Series, YPFP Brussels also launched a new initiative – the Briefing Series on the Presidency of the Council of the EU and organized events with the Permanent Representations of Romania and Finland to the EU.

A highlight for me was the launch of the Briefing Series on the Presidency of the Council of the EU, which combined the successful format of our popular Ambassador Series with a focus on EU affairs and the priorities of the rotational leadership of the Council. Not only did our members have the opportunity to gain unique insights from Romanian and Finnish officials during their Presidencies, but they received more personal career input and advice from young diplomats as well.

Franziska Krüger,
Ambassador Series Officer

We are also proud of our UN Series initiative and the events we implemented with speakers from OHCHR, UNDP and UNRWA.

The Membership Team’s highlights include four pub quizzes where our members tested their foreign policy knowledge in good company and a relaxing atmosphere; a presentation and workshop on networking at the EU Job Fair that included more than 900 trainees. Last but not least, we hosted several sessions within our Advisors Program intended to connect like-minded people at different stages of their career.

I believe that community building starts at the core, and we strive to enhance the experience for our members as well as connect with other communities. As such, we are proud to share such activities which showcase how our wonderful, dedicated, and enthusiastic Membership Team goes about delivering that for our members.

Nima Hairy,
Director of Membership & Benefits
Our 2019 Events

NATO at 70: Preserving Peace, a panel event on the Alliance’s operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans with Dr. Benedetta Berti, Head, Policy Planning Unit, NATO; Dr. Jamie Shea, Senior Fellow at Friends of Europe and Former Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges at NATO; Colonel Andrew Budd, Head of Plans Section, Operations Division, NATO; and Jana Kotorová, Officer, Operations Division, NATO. This event marked the Alliance’s 70th anniversary and brought in over 100 participants who exchanged views on NATO’s fundamental role in protecting its nations and citizens.

Peace Education in the Western Balkans, a panel event organized in partnership with Quaker Council for European Affairs which explored the role of peace education as a peacebuilding tool in the Western Balkans region. Speakers included Catherine Denis, Programme Manager, Reconciliation and Culture, DG NEAR; Stéphanie Siklossy, Search For Common Ground, Project Manager Erasmus + Virtual Exchange; Stipe Odak, Doctoral researcher at the University of Louvain; and Leslie Woodward, Post-Conflict Research Center (BiH), Founder and Vice-President, Bosnian NGO.

Transitional Justice: Rehabilitation of Female Victims of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence with Dagmar Schumacher, Director of the UN Women Brussels office and Dr. Elisa Novic, Transitional Justice Expert at Avocats Sans Frontières. The event succeeded in raising awareness among our members on the traumas women face during times of armed conflict and authoritarianism as well as on the importance of documenting their experiences when seeking the truth and formulating reparations programs in transitional justice contexts.

70 Years of NATO: A Common Transatlantic Defence with Brigadier General Greg Smith, Chief Plans at SHAPE; James Appathurai, Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy at NATO; Bruno Lété, Senior Fellow for Security and Defence Policy, German Marshall Fund of the United States; and Dr. Stella Adorf, Chief Historical Adviser at SHAPE. The event explored the military and political dimensions of the Alliance, focusing on its past achievements, present and future challenges.

European Defence Agency: Fostering Defence which introduced our members to the work of the European Defence Agency. Presenters included Jorge Domecq, Chief Executive; Jean Youri Martin, Deputy Director Capability, Armament and Planning; Alessandro Cignoni, Head of Permanent Structured Cooperation Unit; and Wolfgang Roehrig, Head of Unit Information Superiority. The event explored the European Defence Agency’s relationship with the European Commission and NATO while looking at...
the state of the Permanent Structured Cooperation, Cyber Defence, and unmanned vehicle deployment in Europe.

**Critical Adaptation: Hybrid Warfare in the Baltics**, a panel event organized in partnership with SAAB EU office with Colonel Andrew Budd, Head of Plans Section, Operations Division, NATO; Dr. Vlasta Zekulic, Core Policy Officer, Operational Preparedness and Planning, NATO; and Turo Mattila, Deputy Representative to the PSC for the Finnish Permanent Representation to the European Union. This panel event explored various hybrid means and the threats they pose, with a particular focus on the Baltic region which is particularly vulnerable against various hybrid campaigns, for example targeted towards the large ethnic Russian minorities in the Baltic States.

**UN Series** events with Birgit Van Hout, UN Human Rights Regional Representative for Europe; Barbara Pesce-Monteiro, UNDP Representation Office in Brussels and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the European Union; Matthias Burchard, Director of UNRWA Representative Office to the European Union.

**Protecting Democracy in the New Digital Age** with Anneli Ahonen, Disinformation Expert, East STRATCOM Task Force, EEAS; Dr Vlasta Zekulic, Core Policy Officer in the Operational Preparedness and Planning Department at NATO; Dr Nadja Kovalcikova, Programme Manager, Alliance for Security Democracy at The German Marshall Fund of the United States; and Ania Helseth, EU Policy Manager at Facebook, Brussels Office. The discussion focused on the new frontier of threats accelerated by the transition to a Digital Age which pose the greatest challenges to freedom and democracy that Europe has experienced since the fall of the Iron Curtain.

**Peace Education in Intractable Conflicts: The Case of Israel-Palestine**, a panel event organized in partnership with Quaker Council for European Affairs which explored the role of peace education in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Speakers included Elena Mancusi Materi, Senior Liaison Officer, UNRWA Representative Office to the EU; Marc Fiedrich, Head of Unit, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, European Commission; Ellis Brooks, Peace Education Coordinator, Quaker Peace and Social Witness; Avi Goldstein, Director and Facilitator, Pathways Institute for Negotiation Education; and Mbarak Zaharan, Independent Researcher, Middle East regional expertise.

**EU Trainees' Job Fair** with almost 900 trainees which included an information booth and a workshop presentation on networking opportunities.

**A career fair and reception** hosted by the Hessen Representation to the European Union where our staff answered EU trainees and interns’ questions throughout the evening at a dedicated booth.

**Four Pub Quizzes** where our members tested their foreign policy knowledge in good company and a relaxing atmosphere.
Find out more at
www.ypfp.org/brussels