



THE MILLENNIAL  
DIALOGUE



# Norway

## Oslo, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015

*I hope Norway sustains the welfare state. I think we have experienced some bad times and adjusted to these.*

*Quote from an Norwegian Millennial*

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**FEPS  
Activity  
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As part of the **Millennial Dialogue initiative**, an online survey was conducted on the perceptions of the Norwegian youth towards politics, politicians and Norway's political system between August and September 2015.

The **Foundation for European Progressive Studies** (FEPS) together with the **Arbeidpartiets** (Norwegian Labour Party) launched on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 **Norway's Millennial Dialogue report** and discussed its findings at the International Seminar of the Arbeidpartiets.



Ernst STETTER, FEPS Secretary General (*pictured above*) presented the Millennial Dialogue report on Norway and also discussed with the audience the topic of today's **youth and political engagement**.

The main **issues, aspirations and frustrations of young Norwegians towards politics were compared to other Millennials in Europe** as part of this global and European initiative.

The launching of the report was particularly important as it set the scene for an internal meeting of the party the ensuing day on political engagement with a focus on the planning for the parliamentary election in 2017.

**The report revealed that Norwegian Millennials are generally happy (86%) about their lives and optimistic about their future (88%). This is a clear indication that even though the Millennial generation has been spoken broadly as an age group with a gloomy perspective for life due to the economic crisis and rising youth unemployment, in general, Millennials are optimistic and happy with many things in their lives and they are confident to seek changes. However, Millennials also clearly conveyed that politics is not the mean by which these changes can be achieved.**



Conversely, Norway's youth reflects a different image on interest in politics when compared with Millennials in Hungary and Italy, for instance. **Many Norwegian Millennials stated that the only reason why they were very interested in politics was that they had everything they needed, due to Norway's thriving economy.** This was not the case when compared to the other countries, where the percentages point to a generalised lack of interest in politics, politicians and political parties. One Norwegian Millennial argued: "Young people are disengaged because they are content and happy and society today. Nothing engages people more than common adversity. Times of peace and

progress make people more apathetic and they don't feel there is any point on getting engaged since they are fine as they are".

Yet, young Norwegians were passionate about a number of issues, but they didn't necessarily identified them as being political. **The state of the national economy tipped the list of concerns (92%)** and many were especially worried about what would happen to the Norwegian economy once they ran out of oil and oil money.

In the light of the Norwegian results vis-à-vis the other surveyed countries in Europe, **two conclusions can be drawn:**

- 1. Millennials are not interested in politics in its current format**
- 2. Millennials don't think politics is focused on their direct expectations, but they have clearly defined priorities**

These two points should be brought to the attention of Social Democrats, as they are a direct message from their future voters. When looking at the **issues that concern the youth in Norway such as dental bills and the state of the environment, progressives should place healthcare in a broad sense as a priority in terms of public spending and present achievable and sustainable environmental policies.**

Ernst Stetter concluded the presentation by making a plea to the progressive family: "It is time for progressives to come up with a refreshed narrative which the young voters would see progressive parties and their governance as a source of reassurance, reason for optimism and hopefulness about the future!"

