Roadmap for the community of the FSFE

– Fellowship and Supporters of FSFE -

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About this document

Up to now, FSFE's community has primarily been built on the Fellowship and its Fellowship groups. The Fellowship is a sustaining membership, and its aim is to give interested people the opportunity to financially support FSFE and be part of the community at the same time.

However, FSFE has not yet come up with a broader community that people can join without financially supporting FSFE or any other costs. This gap will be filled with a new "supporters" system. The aim of the supporters is to be part of the community without the need to financially support FSFE.

Both parts will complement each other and form a common community. Then, everyone who would like to support FSFE can choose at which level of the community: spread the word, offer time, become a supporter or even provide financial support (by joining the Fellowship).

As a consequence, "Fellowship groups" will become "local groups" to highlight the fact, that there is no obligation to become a Fellow to join the (local) FSFE community[1]. Local groups offer information and activities for Fellows, supporters and everyone else interested in FSFE. However, it is very likely and appreciated, that participants in local group meetings become Fellows over time.

This document describes the steps to be taken to implement a useful supporter system, thus building FSFE's community, and how to improve the the Fellowship structure at the same time. In the following

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1   Still, a local group can decide to call themselve "Fellowship group". The general language on the homepage and alike will become "local groups", though.

text, "community" describes all Fellows and supporters. "Supporter" is a supporter that signed up as a supporter in the upcoming supporter-system. A "local group" is a local group that meets on a regular basis and includes Fellows, supporters and every friend of FSFE.

Long term goal: Active local groups shall be visible to the public and known to the local scene. The web instance for the Fellowship and FSFE's community therefore shall offer a dynamic, user-generated content. In this way, the content might be more attractive and up-to-date and better focus on local activities.

Vice-versa, FSFE should also make use of already known local scene – get our newsletter into others' feed aggregators/planets, get locally known sites and communities to link to FSFE for anything related to our mission

How to expand FSFE's community and its outreach

What to do: We will stop the current supporter system because it only allows us to contact them three times a year. But what we like to achieve is to offer everybody who is interested in FSFE all the news we can spread, not just three times a year. That is why the new supporter system will state that every supporter who signs up, receives the Newsletter and mails from time to time with updates about current campaigns or local groups or any other FSFE-related news. By doing so, the supporters are receivers of all major and specific news from the FSFE and spread the word about our work.

To avoid mixing up different sign-up processes, the database containing the current supporters will be frozen and might be used from time to time for special purposes. However, all subscribers for the new supporter-system will be managed by a new database that can be used extensively.

Expected outcome: The supporters will become a reliable resource for FSFE's outreach. Because everybody who signs up as a supporter inside the new system is supposed to have a real interest about FSFE's activities (they register precisely in order to constantly receive information from us). This is not just to spread the word. The same supporters are a good source to become activists that speak out for Free Software and the FSFE. Local groups are already mixed with Fellows and active people but non-Fellows. When they can become a supporter they feel even

more like activists.

Supporters are also an interesting source of people that might get more and more interested and become Fellows one day.

Boost local groups and their activities

What to do: The local group coordinator / staff shall boost local engagement . To do so, staff will have a call with one coordinator a week to ask about specific local needs or other things FSFE can help like Promotion material, some funding, organisation or other things staff can help. This way, they feel more important and are more likely to engage.

We already achieved to have a running system that offers promotion material to everyone interested. The system will be further improved and expanded as there is a lot of interest in promotion material.

Expected outcome: Local groups will increase their (public) activity, because the support from FSFE makes it easier for them to do so

Clear structure of the community

What to do: Have a visible structure of groups and coordinators on the webpages gives a bigger picture and makes it more likely to feel as a coordinator or to resign if someone does not feel so anymore (this step is already done). At the same time, the coordinators should become more involved and feel more important. A first step is to call one each week (see "boost local groups"), it might also work with regular tasks like a quarterly discussion/referendum or to ask them to send reports. Once they feel like having a voice and being the important part of FSFE that they are, discussions on coordinators will become more lively and the community as a whole will benefit from the spirit of its coordinators.

Clear information for and about local groups

Background: Many Fellows often ask the same questions: How can I contact other Fellows, supporters or volunteers? How can I get reimbursement? What shall a local FSFE group do?

All these questions should have simple answers and help should be available as fast as possible.

What to do: Set up a good Wiki (?) page that answers all these questions;

      Always have one intern in charge of sending out ordered promotion material in a transparent system; Integrating "Fellowship" into the Expense Requests system that is linked to the Fellowship coordinator; Make a list of "available material" (also banners, e.g.) for local groups; Publish a Fellowship interview every two months

      Make news-entries from all cool activities of local FSFE groups (like AYC in Munich and Vienna, DFD Prize in Vienna, International Fellowship meeting in Düsseldorf, RMS in Italy and so on …)

      Use social media channels (FSFE's Twitter account) to spread news about Community-activities.

Sub-ordinate targets: promote our active and vibrant community to the outer world, make participation transparent and easy