



How to start from scratch.

You are willing to start a new JEF section, or develop a struggling one.

Great thinking! This piece is here to help you find ideas on where to start.

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Getting in touch with JEF

Before anything else, do not try and start a section without getting properly in touch with the network you want to belong to!

If you are in a country where there is a national section, first try and get in touch with them. You can find a map of national sections with contact details [HERE](#).

If you have no national sections, or if you do not receive an answer to your email quickly enough, get in touch with the JEF secretariat at sg@jef.eu. People in this place coordinate the work of JEF throughout Europe and they should be able to tell you if there are other people interested in getting a branch started in your area, and later on they will be an important contact point anyway. It is never too early to drop an email to the European level of the organisation!

One side note on the use of the JEF name and logo: if you do not belong to a national section which already has authorisation to use them, you need to get formal authorisation by the Executive Board of JEF Europe to do so. You can get in touch with them via the secretariat.



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Communication

The content

The first thing you need is communication, because that's how you will get enough people interested to form a team. How to communicate when nothing has been done yet though? Well, lucky you, you are part of an organisation that does not come empty handed.

Even before organising local events you can advertise opportunities for your soon-to be members:

- **JEF allows them to take part in pan-European debates on current matters.** That is the principle of our Political Commissions (PCs). These are groups of people from all over Europe discussing our political positions. Any JEF member can be part of them, you just need to join their Facebook groups or drop them an email. They are structured according to their main focus: PC1 works on institutions and governance of the EU; PC2 works on internal affairs; and PC3 works on external relations.
- **Thanks to JEF they can apply for cheap seminars all over Europe all year long.** Both the JEF European secretariat and national sections organise seminars on a regular basis. To be kept aware of the call for applications to attend the seminar, you need to invite your members to subscribe to JEF Info, our newsletter. You can find it [HERE](#).
- **They can contribute to the European debate by submitting articles for publication in [The New Federalist](#).** TNF is our online newspaper. It exists in various languages (English French, German, Italian, and Spanish) and editors are always happy to welcome new contributors. A [monthly call for articles](#) is sent out with ideas of topics that can be dealt with. To receive it, follow the TNF [Facebook page](#).
- **They can be a part of Pan-European actions.** JEF organises at least once a year pan-European actions, meaning that on a given date all sections are invited to organise an event on a given theme. The form of the event is usually also agreed upon and common to all although there is room for creativity. Follow the [link](#) to the “Democracy Under Pressure” action to know more about one of them.



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- **JEF does lobbying in the European bubble and they will be part of it.** Even before you are able to build a lobbying strategy for further European integration at the national level, you can report that JEF does lobbying in the European bubble. We are in touch with MEPs, attend debates, are speakers at roundtables with European Commissioners, our publications (such as TNF articles) are read by many people in Brussels and we have a network of former JEFers now working in EU institutions. Publishing in TNF, being involved in the relevant taskforce or taking part in the Political Commissions for instance makes them part of our lobbying work!

That looks good already, doesn't it? But with the addition of your own ideas and events, it will look even better. So do not forget to also communicate on the project you have, that is the best way to make them happen!

The frame

You need a presence on social media to show that you are active. Only in this way will you attract people who actually want to do things: show them you do too. Do not be shy because you think it is too early to have a website or a Facebook page; it certainly is not.

- **What to post on social media?** There is contribution to the platform on [Twitter](#). On Facebook or similar platform it is quite easy to find content. The most obvious options are to repost what JEF Europe or other sections share on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and so on and to keep a close eye on the news to be able to publish relevant articles that will trigger the curiosity of potential members. Remember to include news relevant to your specific area, and to not solely repost news shared by other branches. TNF articles are also always a good source for regular posting.



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- **How to make a website?** That is a matter for a whole contribution to this platform, but what can quickly be said is that WordPress is very convenient, and there are many tutorials on how to make the best of it. When getting started, do not spend too much time on the website. Try to make sure it looks nice, that you have dedicated a great part of it to the things JEF can bring to its members and the opportunities it creates. Then, include also a dynamic bit with at least a RSS from a European news channel (Euractiv, Politico.eu, TNF... you can find quite a few so pick yours!) or from a national news channel focused on Europe.
- **Do not forget the mailing list!** There is a contribution already existing on how to use [Mailchimp](#). Do start a mailing list as soon as you can. Post the link to your Facebook page; add it to your website. When you start organising events, always have a sheet of paper ready where people can leave their email address and register for it. Open the option to either receive news from you or be active members. As soon as someone says he/she wants to be active, send them an email to ask for their ideas and interests. Do not forget to be enthusiastic and friendly ;) It works; that was the first step in getting JEF UK back on tracks!



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Recruitment

We have already mentioned how important a mailing list is for recruitment. That is a must-have. But there are other ways to get people interested.

- **If you are a university student**

Make sure you are aware of what is going on in the university. If there is already a European society, follow their events – maybe they will be interested in what JEF has to offer in terms of European networking and political involvement. You can then suggest a system of double or optional membership for their members, and easily get a few people on board.

If there is no European society start one! You can then, depending on the policy of your university, either make it part of JEF directly or create an optional membership system that offers members the possibility of joining JEF at the same time as the society. Remember to keep it as simple as possible.

These are tips on how to get a core group of active members; then the real challenge is to go beyond the walls of your university!

- **If you are not a university student**

It is still possible to do things! See if you can advertise the creation of the group in some local news platform (via the town hall for instance). Get updated on the things that exist around you and start attending events that are organised by other local groups. You need to seize opportunities to meet new people, and never miss a chance to present JEF to interested ones.

When you meet someone who seems interested in your project, exchange email addresses. Always take their email address, and get back to them quickly to build on a good first impression.



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Funding

Before searching for funding, remember there are a hell lot of things you can do with virtually no money.

- **Check the possibilities to get a room for free for meetings.** That's easy if you're at university. If not, there might be rooms available on demand at the town hall, other organisations ready to host you for free, a Europe House nearby with venue facilities... If not, you can always start by organising meetings in pubs. Pub crawls and pub talks are a good way to get started anyway, since socialising helps to keep people involved.
- **Get free materials on the EU or JEF.** You can have some nice items for a stall or participants' take-away by getting in touch with the Commission or the European Parliament's representation in your area or via a network called "Europe Direct" (which can by the way also help you find speakers: follow the link). To get specific items on JEF, get in touch with the secretariat at sg@jef.eu.
- **Make the best of the free tools available on the internet.** We have already mentioned a few (WordPress, Mailchimp...) but surely there are many others you can find depending on what you need (Doodle for instance). It's always worth checking before paying!

If you are already well enough developed to need big money, it's time for grant applications! Generally speaking, the two things you need most for those are flexibility and professionalism. Pay very close attention to the specific requirements of the grant you apply for: is it project specific, does it require co-funding, is the money given ahead of the events or as reimbursement, -what is asked from you in terms of managing the funds?

- **Country-specific grants.** These are the first ones you should look for. Check the local, regional and national offers and be broad in your approach to grant descriptions.
- **European grants.** The first European grant you can apply to is Erasmus+. There is another contribution in this platform on the topic. You need to find the national agency dealing with it and get in touch with them – the management of the grants can be quite different from one country to another. Be proactive and pay extra-attention to what is needed for the final report on how you spent the grant (as required by the EU).



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- **JEF micro-grants.** Every year or so, JEF Europe launches a call for applications for micro-grants of usually around 200€ (non-binding estimate!). Look for this call and see how you can use it. JEF always gives a broad theme for the event to be organised, but there is room for creativity.

What about **private funding**? That is really a matter of the organisations you can find around you, of your personal network and of how daring you are. JEF Europe is currently working on funding diversification and hopefully we can come up with a more satisfactory answer in the near future.

Finally, do not forget about **membership fees** but do not rely on them too much if possible. They are too unpredictable to be the core of your funding strategy.



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Managing the team

To manage the team efficiently you need to find the right balance between fun and work. Too little of the first one and people will leave. Too little of the second and you will not be able to do things. So try to allow both by using various settings for the meeting, differentiating between work and socialising occasions. Always remember your team is a team of volunteers, but keep your ambition for your branch as well. **Be a leader, not a boss.**

Have a vision

Remember that you are the leader. It means you know where you want to get with the organisation. You have objectives and broad principles of action in mind.

It is also your role to make sure there is a good atmosphere within the team. Encourage constructive approaches to problems, either with events or between members. Leading by example is usually the best way to make it work.

Have flexibility

While you know where you want to get, be ready to change your plans in terms of means of action for instance. Adapt to what your team wants. Remember you are all volunteers, and therefore each of you should have the occasion to do the things he or she likes. If a member of your team wants to use sport, arts, or any channel you did not plan using at first, be open-minded and ask them to be in charge of this specific thing they want to do. You are then here to make sure every action remains coherent with the broad purpose of the organisation.

Have resilient enthusiasm

Things will not always work out. You are the ultimate person in charge of giving a new impulsion when needed. However you can also find your own support, by keeping in touch with our taskforce and befriending other JEFers in more established sections, who will be happy to support you!



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Summary

A few bullet points to keep the main aspects of a successful start in mind:

- When joining JEF you are joining a group of more than 10 000 enthusiastic individuals spread all over Europe and looking forward to welcoming you on board. There are many ways you can make the most of it, so don't be shy.
- Be aware of what is going on around you (locally). You can find partners, funding and members just by keeping your eyes open and explaining the added value of JEF to pre-existing actors.
- It is not the size of your group that will determine your success, it is your capacity to never miss an occasion and always keep a good working atmosphere among you.
- Do not wait until you have effectively started organising things to communicate on what you want to do. Only active groups will attract active members.

Keep in touch with as many levels of JEF as possible when facing a difficulty: the task force small and new sections, the secretariat or first and foremost your national branch where it exists. We all have your back!

So welcome on board, JEFer!

Claire Darmé

TF Small and New sections