



# Young Europe Ambassadors

## on the Future of Europe



## Foreword

**In the framework of Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2020, a diverse group of young Europeans was invited to discuss the youth's visions for the Future of Europe with the 27 Ministers of European Affairs of the EU Member States. The European Youth Parliament (EYP)<sup>1</sup> initiated this project with support from the German Federal Foreign Office.**

27 young people from 24 European countries in the age between 18-26 years were selected to take part in the project as “Young Europe Ambassadors”. Through digital discussion formats between October 2020 – November 2020 in the frame of “Future of Europe Labs” the participants developed joint positions on various aspects of Europe's future in fields such as future of climate and energy, asylum policy, EU democracy, digitalisation and health. The group was moderated by Franziska Maier, EYP Alumna and PhD Candidate in Social Sciences.

The output paper produced by young people was presented and discussed with Ministers of European Affairs of the EU Member States. This initiative served as a preparation for the Conference on the Future of Europe – a major EU-wide initiative that will foster citizens' participation.

<sup>1</sup> The European Youth Parliament (EYP) is one of the largest and most dynamic youth organisations in Europe, currently represented in 40 European countries. Since 1987, the European Youth Parliament has inspired and empowered hundreds of thousands of young people to be open-minded, tolerant and active citizens. As a peer-to-peer educational programme, the EYP is much more than the sum of its events – it's an ecosystem that provides its volunteers and members with an environment to learn, grow and take on responsibility in a multitude of roles. The members also jointly steer and shape the future of the organisation at large, being encompassed by a vibrant network of thousands of people. You can find more information about the EYP here: <https://eyp.org/>.

# Key facts:

## 5 Visions for the Future of Europe:

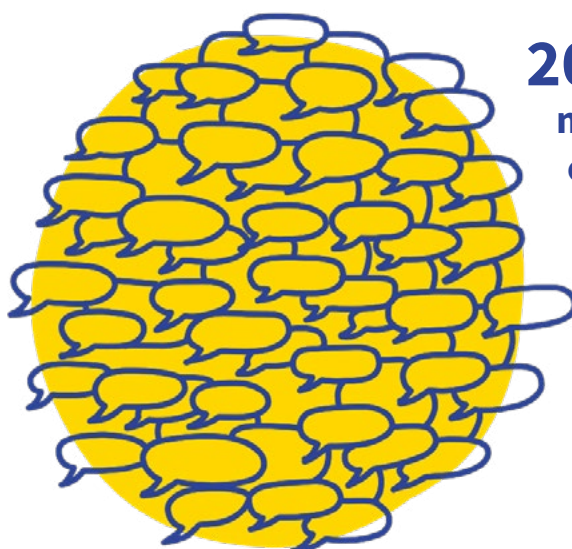
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**27**  
Young Europe  
Ambassadors



**24**  
Countries



**2000+**  
messages  
on Slack



**50+**  
hours spent on  
digital meetings

# Vision for Climate and Energy Policy



## Mission Statement:

As the last generation able to effectively tackle global environmental change, we envision a carbon-neutral European Union where sustainability is placed at the core of policies and planetary boundaries are respected. We believe that it is only through decision-makers cooperation with relevant stakeholders that we will set up ambitious-enough targets to ensure a dignified and fair lifestyle for all current and future generations.

## As Young Europe Ambassadors, we call upon the EU to:

**1. Take global leadership in the transition towards sustainability.** Adopt a strategy to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals and align the European Green Deal with them. Use diplomatic and economic influence to promote the adoption of ambitious international agreements, especially during the IUCN World Conservation Congress, CBD COP 15 and UNFCCC COP26.

**2. Consistently embrace sustainability as a framework for policy making.** Ensure all EU policies are in line with the EU's environmental objectives and follow an ecosystem-based approach.<sup>2</sup> In particular, many trends in the farm and food sectors are contradictory to the EU's climate ambitions. We demand ministers to stop the current reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and work towards a more sustainable CAP.

**3. Ensure the participation of the youth and marginalised people in the decision-making processes.** Boost collaboration with existing non governmental organisations, civil society and research institutes to ensure everyone is

given ownership and responsibility in the energy transition and to reach climate justice.

**4. Increase citizens' awareness on energy and climates issues.** The citizens play a key role in the energy transition. Their education is essential to encourage responsible energy consumption, decrease the EU energy dependency and achieve the Energy Union.

**5. Ban all crude-oil based plastic items and subsidise further research and production of bioplastics.** Only banning a few single-use plastic items is not enough to tackle the massive waste and microplastic problem we are facing.

**6. Promote a comprehensive plan for a Europe-wide rail transport framework.** At the moment, the public transport sector in the EU has too little interconnectivity and sustainable travel is not incentivized enough.

**7. Establish effective and equitable global governance to protect the ocean and sea.** Adopt an international agreement to significantly reduce ocean and sea pollution, stop overfishing and ban destructive sea-bed activities.

<sup>2</sup> The ecosystem approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

## Vision for Asylum Policy



### Mission Statement:

We envision a Europe that is a leading voice in human rights. A coherent and effective policy is needed to safeguard the liberties and rights of asylum seekers and refugees. We believe all refugees should have equal access to the opportunities granted to European citizens and that unaccompanied refugee minors should be provided with transitional support for the years after they reach the age of majority.

### As Young Europe Ambassadors, we call upon the EU to:

**1. Enforce humane and fair EU legislation which is respected and implemented by all Member States.** Acknowledging the impact of the lack of new EU migration policy over the last 5 years, the current promises made by the New Pact leave us disappointed, especially when it comes to return sponsorship and screening procedures.

**2. Recognise that the integration plans of the Joint Statement by the Home Affairs Ministers of the EU, which responds to recent terror attacks across Europe, only feed into xenophobia and discrimination against refugees.** We therefore highlight the need for an integration plan which is not framed as a security proposition but as a human rights one.

**3. Come up with a transnational action plan for unaccompanied refugee minors (URMs) who turn 18 within the EU.** The sudden invisibility

throughout the system leaves the URM<sup>s</sup>+<sup>3</sup> particularly vulnerable. We urge that the EU make a special effort to keep track of this group and support them in all areas, as demonstrated in our further recommendations.

**4. Provide cross-border psychological support systems.** With the increased anxiety and endured trauma that URM<sup>s</sup> and refugees experience, we demand the EU to provide fast and uncomplicated access to well-trained professionals.

**5. Integrate URM<sup>s</sup>+ into communities** by creating a networking and knowledge sharing platform funded by the EU which facilitates professional connections all over Europe through mentorship programmes, peer support and integrates refugees into their previously trained professional areas.

<sup>3</sup> URM<sup>s</sup>+ is a new age bracket for refugees 18-25. Turning 18 in the EU is not a requirement for belonging to the URM<sup>s</sup>+ group.

## Vision for EU Democracy



### Mission Statement:

We aspire to fortify and preserve the fundamental value of European Union – democracy. We want a future where Europe leads the world by example of equality, protection of freedoms and cooperation. We wish for an inclusive union which listens to the voices of its citizens of all backgrounds, where European youth is an essential force for change, and where solidarity and collaboration helps those who struggle.

### As Young Europe Ambassadors, we call upon the EU to:

**1. Strengthen and develop new measures aimed at the prevention of democratic back-sliding in EU Member States.** We welcome the Rule of Law conditionality regulation and ask for the EU to proceed swiftly with critically assessing compliance with EU fundamental values<sup>4</sup> in all the Member States with a special focus on Hungary and Poland.

**2. Bolster trust in EU institutions.**

- a. Define the details about the Conference on the Future of Europe regarding the selection of participants and the guarantees of the conferences' result to be discussed in the European Institutions,
- b. Increase the funding for the public diplomacy initiatives of the EU such as liaison offices and commission representations to engage and inform the public about decisions and results achieved by the EU,
- c. Initiate conferences and forums of informal nature open to the public with pro-European, Eurosceptic and populist representatives.

**3. Expand the Erasmus+ program enabling individuals to learn about European Citizenship through multiculturalism.**

Encourage educational projects within Erasmus+ and Member States' national school curriculum that promote religious diversity including non-Christian religions that are a minority within the EU.

**4. Fight the rise of misinformation and propaganda in the media.**

- a. Extend financial support to fact-check organisations and promote these in all Member States,
- b. Form an EU level advocacy group demanding an advancement of regulations in social media' regarding hateful content and fake-news.

**5. Counteract extremism and radicalisation on social media platforms.**

- a. Provide training to the media on debunking speeches and materials which promote extreme nationalism, Islamophobia and Antisemitism,
- b. Elevate the capacity of the EU to carry out criminal investigations in the digital space by stimulating financial support for knowledge exchange and encouraging the cooperation between intelligence agencies of the Member States.

<sup>4</sup> Respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.

# Vision for Digitalisation Policy



## Mission Statement:

We envision a Europe of universal digital literacy, where all citizens can securely access essential services and engage in democratic processes via e-governance models. Through a cohesive, resource-efficient and inclusive digital strategy, we can achieve a digitally advanced and competitive Europe.

## As Young Europe Ambassadors, we call upon the EU to:

- 1. Recognise access to the internet as a fundamental human right.**
- 2. Set a goal of universal digital access and literacy by 2050.**
- 3. Be a global leader in cybersecurity** by deepening the cooperation of the Member States in the field of cybersecurity with exchange of best practices and information; and by realizing better connectivity, cyber incident and crisis management. The EU must work to harmonise legislation across the Member States to provide European data sovereignty and ensure the safety of personal data that is collected, stored or processed in the Union.
- 4. Invest in Europe's workforce by:**
  - a.** Drafting an action plan focusing on guaranteeing the digital skills of the young workforce specifically in early career transitions,
  - b.** Providing incentives for digital reskilling of the workforce for private and public employers, including lifelong learning and professional growth opportunities, to keep older generations of workers competitive.
- 5. Invest in the development of national educational systems fit for the digital age** and to ensure equal access to quality digital tools at all levels of education.
- 6. Establish a common European e-identification and eSignature system** as a cornerstone in further digitising public administration and political processes, such as e-voting, while acknowledging and addressing existing inequalities between and across Member States in the level of digital advancements of public administration.
- 7. Improve citizens' ability to engage in local decision-making.** We urge Member States to invest in digital platforms and call upon the EU to support this work by developing templates and best practices.
- 8. Support and promote the digital transformations of European businesses** by allocating funds to support small and medium-sized enterprises across Europe. The EU should ensure that European businesses have easy access to existing tools such as the eIDAS to increase competitiveness.
- 9. Ensure equitable access to government programmes regardless of employment form.** Contractors, freelancers and gig workers often have working conditions poorly suited for government programmes such as unemployment aid, which has been made especially clear during the ongoing pandemic.
- 10. Levy taxes of services rendered in the EU at the point of consumption** to ensure that tax revenue is fairly distributed.

## Vision for Health Policy<sup>5</sup>



### Mission Statement:

We envision a Europe that strives for equal access to health care for everyone, focusing on both mental and physical health. A future Europe that promotes eHealth solutions, self-sufficiency in pharmacy and focuses on strengthening the WHO and European health institutions.

### As Young Europe Ambassadors, we call upon the EU to:

- 1. Continue to make healthcare and treatment more accessible** by encouraging healthcare in rural areas, lowering co-pays and promoting cross-border cooperation. Pursuing a fundamental right of access to healthcare for all European citizens should be a vital priority.
- 2. Strengthen Europe's self-sufficiency** in the field of pharmaceutical ingredients, fundamental drugs and medicines while maintaining and supporting original international supply chains.
- 3. Secure the production of vaccines within the EU;** ensure sufficient supplies for its Member States through Advance Purchase Agreements with vaccine producers; adapt the EU's regulatory framework to the current emergency; **speed up the development, authorisation and availability** of vaccines while respecting strict safety standards; consider the priority groups for initial stages of deployment.
- 4. Invest in top quality research** with the aspect of self-sufficiency and the future role of public healthcare in preventing disease and protecting citizens.
- 5. Support the development and implementation of eHealth solutions** such as telemedicine. Stress the importance of enshrining these solutions and the protection of personal patient data in legislation.
- 6. Encourage Member States to improve the exchange of medical information** to enhance cross-border cooperation and interoperability of digital health solutions.
- 7. Coordinate on health policies** both on global and European levels. The EU should support the WHO in its role of global leader by raising non-binding funding while strengthening EU institutions that should take a more active role in tackling European health issues.
- 8. Provide better educational training** around mental health diseases through the creation of courses designed to **eliminate stigma and misinformation**.
- 9. Set up a fund to give out grants** to mental health charities to **support mental healthcare systems and mental professionals**.
- 10. Support everyone and especially frontline workers** by ensuring access to adequate mental healthcare in the face of the **extra stress and anxiety posed by COVID-19**.
- 11. Enable and promote expert advice** on the benefits, risks and importance of COVID-19 vaccines through a unique online campaign.
- 12. Ensure that the EU continues to play its part** in resolving the coronavirus pandemic. **The EU will only be safe if the rest of the world is safe.**

<sup>5</sup> For more ideas of young people on the future of health policy, please checkout the policy recommendations produced by EYP's Health Think Tank [here](#).



## Legal Notice:

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