



YOU PART

Engage. Connect. Empower

**EUROPEAN
YOUTH
DEMANDS**

PREAMBLE

In the European Year of Youth 2022, young Europeans from six European countries joined a common youth participation project: YOUPART. Our goal is not just to discuss youth rights and youth participation, but to fill the words “ENGAGE – CONNECT – EMPOWER” with life. For us, participation means not just electing our representatives, but also formulating our political ideas and demands and communicating them to those in a position to implement changes – at local, national and European level.

More than 150 participants, 13–24 years old, came together in local and national workshops in all partner countries: Austria, Czechia, Italy, Slovenia, Greece and Serbia. 60 young people plus youth workers and members of the partner organizations met at two YOUPART Youth Conferences in Vienna and Prague. We got to know each other face-to-face, discussed ideas and worked on demands. Now the time has come to present the outcome of this participatory process to Members of the European Parliament and other politicians.

The present list of EUROPEAN YOUTH DEMANDS is the outcome of the YOUPART cooperation in 2022. Developed and edited in ten topic groups, we express our most important common demands. We address them to the political decision-makers of the European Union as well as national decision-makers.

This list of demands itself is a powerful statement of truly participatory processes and practices. It demonstrates how democratic participation and engagement of young people can be significantly supported. We emphasize the importance of maintaining and strengthening egalitarian, democratic principles and human rights-based politics for all people! Despite all crises and conflicts, we believe that it is possible to fight for and create a better future for all people – a future of peace, freedom, equality, solidarity and climate justice.

The framework for our cooperation is the project YOUPART, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project is coordinated by 12 organizations:

Südwind (Austria), bOJA (Austria), WeWorld (Italy), Associazione Culturale Oltre (Italy), Humanitas (Slovenia), Mreža MaMa (Slovenia), Ekumenická Akademie (Czechia), Defence for Children International (DCI) (Czechia), Kainotomia & SIA EE (Greece), InnovED. Center for Education and Innovation (Greece), TOC. Timočki Omladinski Centar (Serbia), Narodni Parlament/People’s Parliament (Serbia).



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01

YOUTH DEMANDS ON HEALTHCARE

Provision of high-quality healthcare is one of the most essential and the most important services that must be provided to EU citizens. Despite some differences between the countries, we believe that there are many shared challenges existing in the field of healthcare that must be tackled. In our opinion, governments do not invest enough funds in the provision of healthcare. In addition, there is a lack of proper fund allocation within the health care systems due to hospitals not having necessary financial management skills.

Some other challenges that EU citizens face in the field of healthcare are also connected with finances, for example there are shortages of doctors and other medical staff, patients face long queues, insufficient and old-fashioned medical equipment is used in hospitals, etc. Due to the work overload and low salaries, many doctors and other medical staff cannot perform their tasks in a sufficiently accurate and patient-friendly way.

Based on our experience, certain aspects of health, namely mental and sexual health, remain taboo subjects to the detriment of many EU citizens. Because mental health is not part of the school curricula in most of the European countries, going to the psychologist remains a stigma. We also believe that more attention should be paid to sexual and reproductive health to avoid health problems, among them also psychological problems and lack of confidence among youth.

To solve the above-mentioned challenges, we demand the following:

1. FINANCES

To increase spending in the field of healthcare and solve problems that are related to the lack of funds (such as insufficient number of doctors, nurses, lack of modern medical equipment etc.). We demand EU politicians decrease military spending on the EU level and reallocate funds to the healthcare system.

Additionally, we demand taxation of the products that have negative health effects and the companies that produce them - the money collected through taxes should be invested into the health system. This would deter people from buying unhealthy products and incentivise companies selling them to transition to healthier alternatives.



To ensure efficient spending of money that would benefit patients, we also demand introduction of stricter criteria for obtaining European funds, stricter monitoring and evaluation of spending and basing future grant allocations on these results.

To improve financial management, ensure efficient allocation of funds and appropriate spending. We also ask EU politicians to develop and introduce programs that would enable exchange of experience / knowledge and good practices in the field of management between successful and less successful countries.

2. MEDICAL STAFF

Finances should be increased not only in hospitals etc., but also in educational institutions for medical staff to provide better training and to be able to train more staff than they do currently due to the limited number of students accepted.

Furthermore, we demand the formation of a clear and logical list of tasks certain medical staff can perform. Some tasks do not require much training, so they should not require a highly trained doctor to perform them. On the other hand, some do, and these should be assigned to the experts.

3. LOW QUALITY OF SERVICES

To improve the general attitude of medical staff towards patients, we demand the introduction of stricter criteria that would govern the relationship between doctors or medical staff and patients. We also call for the introduction of psychological tests for staff working in healthcare in addition to the introduction of an obligatory subject “Interpersonal skills in medicine” for students of medicine to contribute to more empathic behaviour towards patients.

To ensure more humane attitudes and friendly behaviour towards the patients we also demand that all patients have the possibility of giving anonymous feedback on how they were treated by their doctor. Monitoring and evaluating this feedback and sanctioning of doctors and other medical staff who get unsatisfactory feedback should be guaranteed.

On the other hand, doctors and medical staff should also have an opportunity to receive psychological support to work through the stress and difficulties of their job positions. This would result in better relations between doctors and patients, would prevent doctors from burning out and would also prevent conflicts at work.



4. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

We demand the introduction of sexual and reproductive health education to schools and raising awareness about this topic through workshops in high schools in order to prevent a range of health problems among youth and to increase their confidence and knowledge when it comes to sexual and reproductive health.

In addition, we demand provision of affordable female hygiene products, which should be free of charge in institutions like schools and shelters.

5. MENTAL HEALTH

In order to educate and raise awareness about the importance of mental health and to eliminate the stigma connected with going to a psychologist or psychiatrist, we ask for obligatory workshops or informative sessions in high schools that would provide youth with information about where to find support in case of mental and psychological problems. These workshops would also help youth understand that mental health problems are something that all of us can suffer from and that it is something normal to search for medical support in case of problems. In this way we would eliminate the stigma connected with going to the psychologist. In addition, these workshops should present strategies a person can adopt to improve daily mental health (e.g. meditation).

In addition, we demand that every youth in European secondary schools have the possibility of regular visits to psychotherapists within their school and education system.

6. PREVENTIVE HEALTH

We also demand EU decision-makers to increase funding for the preventive health sector: promotion of healthy lifestyles, consumption of healthy food, exercising sports etc. For everybody to have the possibility of living healthy, prices should be reasonable (for example for healthy food), infrastructure available (playgrounds etc.), urban environment – friendly and not polluted etc. Schools should ensure high-quality physical education and raise awareness about healthy food.

By doing so, the general health of the population would improve, which would also lessen the strain on the healthcare system and in turn lead to shorter queues and better quality treatment for those who really need it.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON LGBTQIA+

Studies show that for several LGBTQIA+ people in the European Union it is still not possible to be themselves without feeling threatened. They still feel unsafe about showing affection in public, gender identity or sexual orientation. There is also a high risk of poverty and social exclusion. Since one of the main causes is still discrimination (LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 | European Commission), we base our demands on these studies as well as on Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and especially on Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU on non-discrimination: “Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.” So these are our demands:

1. RIGHTS OF LGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

- Equal laws for all genders in all countries! Add a law to protect queer people from discrimination and make provision penalties for those who discriminate against them.
- There are 10 countries in the European Union in which same-sex-marriage is still not allowed. The possibility to marry the same sex has to be a right by law in every European member state.
- Adoption has to be a right of every family construction - no matter the sex or gender.
- We call for the rights of transgender people, referring to costs for gender reassignment surgeries to be covered by public health and insurance schemes in all member states of the European Union.

2. LGBTQIA+ TOPICS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

- Add sex and gender education in various subjects; biology and ethics for example.
- We demand the inclusion of queer topics in various (school) media.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

1. ABORTION

As we all know, abortion has always been a very debated topic throughout the history of politics, but we think something solely linked to a woman's body shouldn't be anybody else's decision but hers. Unfortunately, there are various reasons why this change of mentality is proving very difficult:

- **Religious mentality:** Religion has always played a fundamental role in Western and European society since the Middle Ages. Today, it still influences millions of people, of whom some ultra conservatives think that women shouldn't have abortions because in the Bible it is stated as a form of murder.
- **Most leaders are men:** The lack of female politicians and female representation results in women's issues not being handled properly or even not at all.
- **Patriarchal society:** Despite all the progress being made for women's rights these days, the imprint of our society remains a patriarchal one, where one way or another the male components remain the most advantaged and privileged ones.
- **Inadequate awareness and provision of abortion:** Although "abortion" is a topic that is discussed almost every day over the news, on TV programs, or in interviews, not a lot of people are properly educated about it.

During our discussion, it struck us that none of the countries that we're from (Italy and Greece) have sexual education in schools. Therefore, in our opinion, sexual education courses should be offered, in which people are informed about pregnancy and abortion, along with safety precautions during intercourse etc.

Furthermore, even though all the members of the healthcare system are well educated about abortions and therefore able to perform one, we should also mention bioethics, specifically the belief that doctors should always help the patients in need, no matter what the condition/sickness is.

Therefore our DEMANDS are:

- **Make abortion legal in every European country (including Poland and Malta).** No political institution should come between a woman and the right to make choices for her own body.



- **Make sexual education a mandatory school course, so young people learn about protection, pregnancy and the proper behavior that promotes respect in interpersonal relationships in line with women's rights / gender equality.**
- **Make abortion free of charge (blood tests and medicines): for women who don't have the economical means and for women who have mental health issues / drug problems.**

2. RAPE

The fact we still have to talk about women being raped and how to prevent this monstrosity in 2022 deeply saddens us. We identified several reasons:

- **Lack of sensibility from the authorities when a woman reports a rape: The victim is forced to go through traumatic event once again, just not to be believed most times.**
- **Patriarchal society: once again, the mindset of most people is the one of a society that puts a man first.**
- **Very light consequences for men's actions: rapists get very little jail time, and lots of trials are biased in favor of the attacker.**
- **Objectification of women: The belief that women are only made to create lives, therefore being treated as nothing more than "baby makers".**

While discussing possible solutions, we all agreed on the fact that while the families should start educating children about respecting other people's bodies, we also thought that education about the legal steps against tutelage of women are lacking. For this reason, we suggest, once again, mandatory courses of sexual education in school.

So we hope that our proposals and demands will be taken into careful and urgent consideration, in order to protect more and more women. Our demands therefore are:

- **Make stricter laws for rapists that stipulate longer prison sentences, as well as hold stricter trials during which any type of gender-oriented bias is not allowed.**
- **Create a protocol for rape witnesses; so that everyone who comes into this situation knows how to act in order to protect and help the victims.**



3. GENDER GAP IN EMPLOYABILITY

As of today, we still experience differences in salaries between men and women, even for the same amount of hours or the same position. Reasons for this include:

- Sectoral segregation of women in low-paid, feminized sectors. As stated on the European Commission website, (https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/gender-pay-gap-situation-eu_en), 24% of women tend to be employed in underpaid sectors such as education.
- Hierarchy gap: usually the highest positions (CEOs) in any type of organization are occupied by men.
- Stereotypes
- Career choices are influenced by family responsibilities: women are less likely to accept a full-time job due to their role within the family and their “obligation” to take care of their children.

In our opinion, balancing the wages between genders could be a possible fit. Furthermore, stopping the basis of employee pay on salary history (previous jobs of a person) could also help our cause. Therefore, we demand:

- The investment in affordable high-quality childcare and early childhood education so that long-lasting structures are created that support both working parents and their children; increasing women’s opportunities to keep a job, excel in the workforce, and consequently lower the gender pay gap.
- Passing of a EU-wide paid family and medical leave insurance program, because caregiving responsibilities most often fall to women and mothers, so women are more likely to have to leave the paid labor force to provide family care.
- Encouragement of men to take parental leave! Mandated equal parental leave will help to minimize the motherhood penalty. Men may often be hesitant to take parental leave due to stigma or being afraid of facing financial and career disadvantages at work. Making the new norm mandatory will help us move closer to gender equality.

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YOUTH DEMANDS ON INTERCULTURALISM

1. EDUCATION SYSTEM

We believe that with globalization our world is continually exposed to many intercultural contexts and we have to rethink the education system that should promote interculturalism in schools through practical and interactive activities.

- We ask for the introduction of an intercultural mediator who helps in the process of expression of cultures (from the same country or from different ones). These professional figures shouldn't be someone already included in the school staff, but should be hired and trained in this specific field.
- We demand to implement free language courses for foreign students to ensure that different languages are not a barrier to integration.
- We, also, call for raising awareness of young people to know about and join experiences like exchange programmes.
- We want some school hours per week (for example 1 or 2 hours) dedicated to intercultural education in which films, food, dances, customs and traditions of different cultures are shown. This learning should be aimed at both students and teachers.

2. WORK, PERSONAL GROWTH AND POLITICS

We also believe that the exposure of people to intercultural contexts shouldn't take place just in the school sphere but also in the working one and in the recreational one.

- According to what we said previously, we demand the training of professional staff in interculturalism both for greater cohesion in the operating group and to implement the success of the company in a given culture.
- Absolute intransigence towards racism and xenophobia! We ask to improve legislative protection towards spontaneous expressions of culture and intercultural events in public.
- We, as young citizens of Europe, would like to have more funding for personal cultural activities such as theatre courses, dance & yoga courses. Culture has to be affordable!

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- **We demand more funding to renovate unused spaces in order to create public centres in which people can directly learn about their own culture and the cultures of others; funding of activities such as workshops, exhibitions and festivals.**
- **Finally we call for the promotion and allocation of funds for events of cultural and religious minorities.**

YOUTH DEMANDS ON SCHOOL EDUCATION

1. MODERN EDUCATIONAL PLANS

We see a problem in the fact that there is a lack of awareness of finance, media, environment, sex education and politics in education. All of the topics listed are important for the development of a young person, but we still believe that the topics have not been addressed enough in school, especially since school, as an educational institution, is supposed to help us prepare for the responsibilities that adulthood brings.

We are proposing that the lesson plan is flexible. Which means that it would include more practical lessons and more optional subjects, which would bring more diversity into the plan. Pupils would be included into planning the lessons, as that would enable their needs to be better met.

At the same time we are proposing that there should be a focus on inclusion by introducing programmes that support diversity.

We propose to include lessons which are oriented on the market, recognizing the fact of digitalisation in our societies, since technology is more and more closely connected with our daily life. The usage of it can not only be bad, but we need to teach new generations how to use it. For that reason we are proposing an optional usage and learning of technology. For example, if a pupil wants to use a computer or an iPad during the lesson they should be able to (of course within the agreements with the teacher). There should also be education on how to use computers and the internet for their education and not only for entertainment.

We demand guidelines for including modern problems to framework educational plans. Therefore we propose that the lessons and school teaching plans should be updated regularly. The updates should be in line with modern pedagogical approaches. We propose that the updates are at least every 5 years, and include not only school books and lesson plans but equipment as well. Support educational programmes and manual with EU grants!



2. PUPIL-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP & ADVANCED EDUCATION

The second problem that we recognize is that teachers don't have enough respect, which impacts the relationship between pupils and teachers and that relationship is crucial for building a quality education for further generations.

We demand better advanced education for teachers. We want that the teachers should have regular seminars and workshops to improve their teaching and development of their soft skills as well. The seminars and workshops would help support them to be more flexible and aware, and therefore they would have the skills to teach and learn the lessons that we are proposing. We would purpose that the seminars and workshop should be done at least once a year.

3. FUNDING

The third problem that we would like to address is funding. We think that we need to be aware that funding is an enormous factor in the quality of education. Fundings are different depending on each country. We recognized that in certain countries the school system is underfunded and that is affecting the quality of education and the opportunities that pupils can have.

We believe that there should be more funding into the school system, especially regarding the teacher's salaries, as we believe that (in most countries) they are not high enough for the important position that they are playing within our society.

We demand to support the countries which need to work on their quality of education with more funding, which would allow higher employment.

4. SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The fourth problem that we would like to highlight is that we are noticing that in many schools there are not enough counselors. As we are aware, mental health is really important, and at the same time it is hard to spot a person who needs support early on. It is important that we can take care of our mental health and that we get the tools and the support we need to face our struggles in the years that are crucial for developing as a person.

We propose that schools should employ more school counselors, which would allow a more individualistic approach, which in our opinion, is more than needed for spotting mental health issues among pupils. That would allow pupils to get the support that they need to develop as a human being.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON YOUTH WORK

Youth work is commonly understood as a tool for personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. Youth work is a keyword for all kinds of activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. It belongs to the domain of “out-of-school” education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The main objective of youth work is to create opportunities for young people to shape their own futures.

The range of themes that youth work covers is just as diverse as the types of people and organizations involved. Political activism, street work, sports activities, social enterprise and leisure-time activities can all be part of youth work.

1. FORMAL EDUCATION

For instance, in Serbia, education for youth workers is not recognized by any major institution. What this means is that educational facilities (primary schools, middle schools, high schools and higher education levels such as universities), centers for social work, federal institutions like hospitals and police do not recognize youth work as it is not included in formal education. They do not claim it as worthy of being included in everyday life for the general youth population.

There is no formal, reliable and constant education for youth workers in Serbia - like there is in other European countries. The only way for a person to seek and complete education for a liable and recognized degree of youth work is to complete a course that is not held up to a regular schedule. Our issue with this is that there is no constant flow of formally educated youth workers, therefore creating low demand for people with this type of education.

- We demand to recognize the importance of youth workers in the educational system directed at the growth and development of youth - in all European countries.
- As for the situation in Serbia and countries with similar problems, we demand to include a dedicated major in universities and similar educational institutions called “youth work”. This could also attract more young people for this important social work.

2. EMPLOYMENT

Youth workers aren't employed in major institutions (educational, federal/municipal and health institutions). Considering the Serbian situation, youth workers are recognized only by the country and the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Affairs. However, youth workers have received their occupation code but no other information about their profession. This makes it impossible to have a reliable social worker with a contract employed.

- We propose to develop visibility for youth workers in the labor market and to involve them in every aspect of decision making about the youth population.
- We demand to create a law to require a youth worker in every institution that impacts the general youth population. Depending on the importance and size of the general institution, to meet the declared requirements there can be more than one social worker employed.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON SPORTS

Playing sports can promote a healthy lifestyle and teach young people transferable skills that they use far into adult life. Being part of a team teaches valuable social skills and discipline. They learn how to share, value diverse skill sets, trust others, and support, empower and encourage one another.

1. FUNDING IN SPORTS

In our opinion there is a lack of sports centers and sports communities. Therefore we propose to improve existing facilities and build new ones where they are needed.

In our experience, there is a lack of well-educated personnel. We believe that better training for available personnel should be provided.

- We demand a constructive and dedicated funding plan for the development of local sports activities.
- We also demand development of modern facilities and events in every urban center where local school tournaments can be hosted in every sport.

2. EDUCATION OF SPORTS IN SCHOOL

In our opinion there is a lack of educated professors who will provide proper guidance in schools. There is also a lack of promotion of the availability of proper facilities. We believe that the educational system should develop a better system for the subject of physical education.

In our opinion we should hire former pro-athletes as teachers which will open new working positions for them and new perspectives on their working future. This will increase the quality of physical classes in schools.

- We demand improvement of the lessons in schools by hiring new ex-professional athletes.
- We also demand more training for the current professors with dedicated seminars.
- We also demand the increase of school budgets for wages and for sport equipment which will improve their motivation.

- Additionally, we demand involvement of more young people in making local plans for sports activities at the local level.

3. INSPECTION OF FIXED MATCHES, ILLEGAL BETTING & GAMBLING ADDICTION

A “fixed match” is defined as follows: The action or practice of dishonestly determining the outcome of a match before it is played. In our opinion there is not enough inspection regarding fixed matches, especially in the lower leagues. We believe there is an issue in the common practice of fixed matches in most sports. In our opinion there should be stricter regulations and penalties for people from the sports industry who are involved in fixed matches.

- We demand improving the existing departments of sport matches inspection by hiring more inspectors to investigate further suspicious cases.
- We also demand the creation of a new legal framework and reinforce the existing ones (EU countries) about the betting companies to prevent people of the sports industry from betting illegally.
- Additionally, we demand to establish more support groups for gambling addicts, which will help them to overcome their gambling addiction.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON ECONOMY

We, the European young generation, ask ourselves how to improve the European economy and social justice. For several years, the European population has been living in almost a permanent period of difficulty. On top of that, the Covid-19 pandemic and the various wars are increasing economic and/or cultural poverty conditions. For young people, the prospects are precarious in terms of employment, wealth distribution, consumption capacity and, to put it simply, economic and cultural sustainability.

As students, we started from this reflection to make analysis and to compare the local economic mechanisms present in the different European countries. We tried to highlight some common negative aspects and value virtuous economic experiences and processes. On balance, we decided to present 4 important points:

1. ENERGY MARKET REGULATIONS

As the energy crisis is affecting our everyday life and raising the cost of living, we urge the European Parliament to consider advising member states to put a price cap on the energy (electricity, gas, and fuel) and water consumption for households. We understand that inflation adjustments are necessary and are in favor of them.

In our “ideal utopia”, we believe in order to prevent a scenario like this from happening, the energy companies should be mostly owned or controlled by the state government and the remaining company stock could be sold only to the country's citizens. Energy companies should supply the domestic market first, then sell and export the excess. Ethically speaking, we also believe that energy companies should use the extra profit to keep the cost of energy low instead of profiting. Use remaining profit to reinvest into better technology for keeping the price low, based on climate-friendly renewable energy source production capacities.

We propose the creation of a controlled independent commission or board of advisors who would check on the governments (i.e. ministries of energy) in running the energy section.

2. DOMESTIC MARKET SUPPORT

To propel the growth of the economy, we urge special tax breaks for small domestic businesses, which would be an obligation to use those funds for reinvesting and

raising salaries, as a boost to help them stay in the market and compete against other companies and corporations. To secure the position of those companies, we urge the government to give advantage to them during government bids by firstly giving the bids to the domestic companies and only after opening them to everyone.

Additionally, it is our view that countries should use the resources naturally available to them and invest more in those industries which have a natural competitive advantage. In our opinion it's important to encourage workers to go into sectors that help their country's economy by working with the country's natural resources.

3. FAIR PLAY IN THE FINANCIAL MARKET & TAX ADJUSTMENTS

As technology advances and new financial instruments are developed, the question arises as to how they are used. Crypto market transactions allow for payments of illegal activities. We have recently seen some of the crypto exchanges collapsing due to fraud and poor regulation (FTX as an example). Furthermore, many transactions on those markets seem to be of dubious intent and are speculated to fund illegal activities. Hence, we demand stronger market regulation of these instruments.

In order to reroute investors from speculative crypto to a more regulated regular stock market, we propose as a short-term solution to lower the tax on capital gains from selling long-term and short-term stock.

Moreover, in order to encourage the redistribution of income, we are of the opinion that the tax scheme could be optimized. For instance, individuals' income tax should be lowered, companies and corporations would be taxed the same or higher than before. This would encourage consumption, while increased value added tax would enable states to secure income.

4. TRANSPARENCY

Firstly, we demand support from the education system and the media to fight financial illiteracy that allows corruption to flourish. To increase the transparency of the use of state funds, we urge resources to provide detailed, yet understandable information to the general public (creation of a portal or websites). The information should relate to how the government gets funds and to whom they are distributed and how the funds are being used and spent. More responsibility and accountability should be put on governments and the recipients of the fund.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENT

1. ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS: VOICES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

We ask EU-institutions to listen much more closely to environmental NGOs and take their expertise into consideration whenever it comes to policy-making. There exists a big alliance of environmental NGOs reflected on EU-Level (European Environmental Bureau, the "Green Ten"), representing civil society of all European countries. They still get way too few possibilities to contribute to progressive EU-policies. EU-institutions shall implement mechanisms to give NGOs' voices more weight. Co-finance projects where needed in order to focus on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life below Water), and 15 (Life on Land).

2. POLLUTION & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Water pollution is a serious problem that people encounter every day even if they are not directly aware of it. Bad waste management is causing great amounts of trash and highly toxic substances to be directly disposed of in oceans, rivers, and lakes, which causes the destruction of water ecosystems.

Non-recycled waste causes major pollution of the environment, because we are not able to properly dispose of this kind of garbage.

We ask to improve the waste management systems for countries in Europe by providing ways for further developing recycling systems, waste separation systems and taking better care of existing landfills.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A big problem is the (non-)effectiveness of current learning programs that focus on environmental issues and prevent the destruction of the environment. There's also a general lack of information regarding ecology and the importance of environmental issues and their danger to our everyday lives and our future.

We demand to improve the quality and quantity of (practical) education on environmental issues for everyone, including toddlers. We want this done by incorporating a subject and a program of active learning in formal education - from preschoolers to university students.



4. NEGATIVE IMPACT OF COMPANIES

A lot of industrial companies have a negative impact on the environment because they often don't follow the rules and obligatory preventive measures, set by governments to protect and save the environment and wildlife. Not following these regulations results in losing natural habitats of animals that are on the verge of extinction, and will also lead to the potential destruction of ecosystems.

We demand creating a license with strict criteria about environmental issues that would be obligatory for running any EU company. When breaking any of the regulations, the license of the company in question will be taken away and the company will be shut down (until it can get the license again). Examples of such criteria are water filters for wastewater, chimney filters, recycling program, reduced plastic packaging, and eco-friendly packaging.

We also ask for a list of general rules for protecting endangered species for European countries to be made, and also to define penalties for breaking said rules. All of the rules and penalties should be valid and unchanged in all of the European countries.

5. ORGANIC FARMING

We call for a stronger support of companies and agriculture with the best environmental performance. We ask to support local organic farms to grow and protect plants, fruits, vegetables and animals.

6. ENERGY

Not enough energy is being produced by renewable, green sources which also leads to the exhaustion of fossil resources that take a lot of time to be naturally produced. Every energy source, even green ones, has problems - batteries and storage of solar energy, wind power can harm birds, hydro energy affects the availability of water for birds, animals, and the local population, etc.

We demand to stop financing fossil energy production.

We want more research to be done on green energy sources (solar, wind, water,) and since (too) many European countries still (have to) rely on nuclear energy, make it as safe as possible to minimize the fatal risks of nuclear power plants - while developing exit strategies and alternatives. This way, the quality and reliability of these energy types can be improved.

YOUTH DEMANDS ON MIGRATION & REFUGEES

Migrants and refugees, even though those are different groups of people, have always been on the worldwide surface. The common ground of these identities a person or a group can imply is that both are moving either across an international border or within a state. Migration and its dynamic reflects the interplay of push and pull factors of new countries. A refugee is someone who was forced to leave his*her homeland and/or country: a displaced person who fled war, violence or persecution and has crossed international borders to find safety in another country (Geneva Convention on Refugees, 1951). However, it is a necessity to stress that first a displaced person in another country is an asylum seeker and after he*she applies for asylum in a state and his*her application is accepted, he*she can adopt refugee status.

Having in mind the situation of both groups, we considered some of the problems that they may face in their life when being a migrant in a new country, an asylum seeker or a refugee. These problems are administrative ones but also have an impact on their social and economic life.

- We believe that the most common social problem that refugees and migrants have to deal with is discrimination in every form that it can be found. That could mean that they need to deal in their everyday life with marginalization, racism and stereotypes about their origin, ethnicity, skin color, religion, hygiene etc.
- Considering the problems that are social and economic, we can assure that a lot of times they do not have the same job opportunities and job offers as citizens of the country they had to go to.
- A huge issue is the lack of language courses the states offer in order to help them deal with the linguistic problem.
- Moreover, refugee children often are not able to attend public schools in the states or even if they do try to graduate it is common to drop out or have to deal with marginalization in school.
- Another problem that is mostly an administrative one is the process to get the asylum identity from a country. To be more specific, in countries that are mainly hot-spots of asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, DR of Congo, Sudan and Iraq the process may take 2-3 years.
- Lastly, a huge problem can become the sexual assault and harassment of both men and women that are refugees while crossing the borders of the states. These two as well as all the problems that have been mentioned can be considered as violation of their human rights.



While discussing the various problems we also considered some solutions:

- The best solution to prevent the forced mobility of large refugee movements would of course be to fight the causes of flight; stopping wars, resolving conflicts between states, reducing conflicts in the countries of origin, promoting peacekeeping and improving socio-economic living conditions with viable prospects for the future.
- Provide language courses to migrants that need to extend their linguistic skills.
- Provide and offer long-term language courses/educational programs to refugees in order to improve their communication skills.
- Create job opportunities to resolve the lack of employment.
- Develop social cohesion strategies to prevent discrimination.

The DEMANDS that we, the European Youth, believe that you should take under consideration are based on the problems and solutions that have already been mentioned:

1. We demand general improvement of human rights-based policies and politics!
2. We demand that the EU stress the importance of the states to ratify and implement the new package of 9 instruments that may help the countries to control the refugee camps and solve some administrative problems of the asylum seekers (European Commission: New Pact on Migration and Asylum, setting out a fairer, more European approach).
3. We demand that the states that host asylum seekers from hot-spots or known refugee camps (Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany) should recognize and apply the Reformed Qualification Regulation (European Commission: Building on the progress made in 2016) in order to guarantee the rights of refugees.
4. In our opinion, consideration should be given to the healthcare of migrants and refugees. That means that the EU should provide better healthcare and mental healthcare both to refugees and migrants due to the fact that they often deal with depression and PTSD.
Furthermore, mental health should be provided to the solidarians as well in order to “help the helpers” that often deal with burn-out.
5. In order to resolve some problems the stakeholders (NGOs, state governments, universities etc.) should take some policy action to further facilitate the support of the refugees and migrants. For example, they can implement activities with locals and refugees as well as secure better management of the fundings.

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6. We demand the provision of extra language curriculums to the refugees both children and adults, before attending school. To be more exact, children, before being settled to a classroom with other children of their age, need to at least know the A1 level of the language of the state that is established in order for them to be able to communicate with their classmates. It is a necessity for adults to have the basic level of a language in order to communicate and deal with everyday life errands, work and life.

7. We demand not only the improvement of the living conditions of the people that are living in refugee camps, but also to monitor the improvement.

8. As members of the European Union, but also as citizens of countries with refugee camps, we believe that Europe should also improve the sanitary conditions of the refugee camps.

9. Furthermore, we demand the consideration of a training provision for the improvement of skills (hard and soft skills) that are needed for employability.

10. In our opinion, it is high time for NO MORE PUSHBACKS! Therefore, the funding should be used for improving the well-being of refugees and migrants instead of misusing them on measures that systematically violate human rights at the European borders as well as on EU territory.

11. Lastly, we demand to improve the policy of gun possession, military production and distribution. Create campaigns against them in order for states to become “safety countries” - and of course to promote peacekeeping at all levels.

YOUPART “ENGAGE - CONNECT - EMPOWER” EUROPEAN YOUTH DEMANDS

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