



**CENTRAL  
EUROPEAN  
YOUTH  
MANIFESTO**



# Preamble

As part of the EU-CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) program the project „**My Participation Revolution**“ supports young people from different backgrounds and countries along their way to becoming politically engaged and active citizens with an awareness of their European identity. The focus is on young people's forward-looking ideas and their expectations of European politics.

In spring 2023 numerous young people in **Austria, Poland, Italy and Slovenia** kicked off the “My Participation Revolution” project, following the slogan „Engage! Connect! Empower!“ In exciting, interactive workshops and national conferences, addressing forward-looking questions about European Union policy.

At two international conferences taking place in Vienna and Bologna in 2024, around 100 young people worked together to develop a manifesto on the following topics:

- 1. Sustainability and Consumption Issues**
- 2. Environment and Animal Rights**
- 3. Energy and Transport**
- 4. Migration and Integration**
- 5. Health and Social Issues**
- 6. Economy**
- 7. Work and Labour**
- 8. Education**
- 9. Digitalization, Social media, Data Protection, AI and Machine Learning**
- 10. Democracy, Participation and Civil Rights**

In addition, an e-democracy portal was set up, which offered interested young people the opportunity to contribute their ideas and to propose solutions digitally and to participate in the formulation of the manifesto.

We are proud to present the **EUROPEAN YOUTH MANIFESTO**, in which the demands of the young participants are expressed, addressing the political decision-makers of the European Union as well as national ones. The guideline of this manifesto is maintaining humanitarian and democratic principles and emphasizing the necessity of environmental protection and social justice, being the most important issues of the 21st century.

The project is funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union. The project is coordinated by Südwind (Austria), WeWorld (Italy), Buy Responsibly Foundation, FKO (Poland), and Focus (Slovenia).



# Content

1. Sustainability and consumption issues
2. Environment and animal rights
3. Energy and transport
4. Migration and integration
5. Health and social issues
6. Economy
7. Work and labour
8. Education
9. Digitalisation, social media, data protection & machine learning
10. Democracy, participation and civil rights



# SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSUMPTION ISSUES

## Introduction

Humanity is steadily destroying the environment, and the effects are already evident as seen in the increase in natural disasters, pollution and much more. These trends have already had an influence on our lives, and that is why we will concentrate on problems like food waste, fast fashion, plastic use and poor transportation practices. For instance, the wasting of food which results in about one third of all food produced going to waste, is a major issue on a global scale. By planning meals, controlling portion sizes and composting, individuals can reduce food waste on their own, but it is also critical that the EU promotes and controls the sustainable use of food. In addition, the speedy manufacture and disposal of inexpensive apparel contribute to the waste of resources, pollution and labor exploitation. The manufacture and use of electronic gadgets including smartphones and laptops has exploded as a result of the rapid advancement in technology. Although these gadgets are useful and convenient, electronic waste is a serious sustainability issue. Another important factor in environmental deterioration is the extensive use of automobiles and airplanes for transportation. The unsustainable practices of food waste, fast fashion, plastic use, and excessive reliance on planes and cars have far-reaching environmental consequences. Addressing these issues requires a collective effort involving the EU and the governments of its member countries as well as businesses and individuals.



# SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSUMPTION ISSUES

## Demands

### **Reduce food waste**

1. Start and develop anti-food wasting campaigns to inform people about food waste effects.
2. Create EU regulations that enable large companies to redistribute food instead of throwing it away.
3. Label products as "best before" rather than "expired"

### **Fight fast fashion**

1. Establish regulations on outsourcing the production to Asia  
- sanction ultra fast-fashion brands.
2. Subsidise local producers who follow human rights conventions and are environmentally friendly.
3. Extend producer responsibility - fashion companies take responsibility for the entire lifecycle, including disposal and recycling (circular economy practices = reduce textile waste).

### **Ban plastic packaging**

1. Advocate for legislation that requires all packaging used within the EU to be biodegradable or compostable.
2. Establish a standardised deposit-refund system and refill stations across the European Union.
3. Increase usage of hemp paper for packaging as an alternative.

### **Encourage reduction, repair and correct disposal of electronic devices**

1. Support companies which provide cheap repair services.
2. Establish expert groups to identify planned obsolescence in the production of electronics (fines).
3. Sanction technology corporations like Apple, which favour built-in obsolescence in their products. Support companies that endeavour to resell used devices.

### **Increase transparency in supply chains**

1. Expand the EU-wide quality seal "EUFRIE" to ensure eco-friendly practices, respect for human rights in labour environments, and guarantee quality and health standards. In this quality seal, a detailed breakdown of the pricing composition should be included. Companies holding this seal receive tax and customs benefits.
2. Put information about its carbon and water footprint on all products.



# ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

## Introduction

Nowadays, observing animal rights and environmental issues are two of the biggest challenges humans have to face. We are not only destroying our environment but also the animals' natural habitats instead of protecting nature we use it to our advantage. Animal testing for instance involves subjecting animals to often painful experiments in the name of human progress. Another example is using animals for entertainment in zoos or circuses. Likewise, overfishing and factory farming show man's ruthless exploitation of nature. Overfishing threatens marine ecosystems and factory farming raises ethical and environmental concerns due to the inhumane living conditions animals have to endure. The second crucial issue we need to address is climate change and the rampant consequences that will follow. The worldwide temperature is rising rapidly, causing fires, floods and the destruction of entire ecosystems. This leads to a number of problems, including, but not limited to, the rising of sea levels, largely caused by the melting of the global icecaps and glaciers, and the resulting refugee crisis, when islands and coastal regions will inevitably have to be evacuated. Returning to our first issue, climate change is already having a tremendous impact on all life forms inhabiting the sea, for in a changing environment, many of them face grave dangers, to the extent of extinction. All in all, we have to watch the environment more closely, because if we lose control over the process of climate change, we'll be left with severe consequences.



# ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

## Demands

### **Ban the sale of animal-tested products**

1. Subsidise development of alternatives for animal tested products. Test products in more humane ways without abusing animals.
2. Demand transparency and explanations. Companies should be transparent about their methods of production and the reasons for using specific methods.
3. Reduce animal testing to a bare minimum by banning animal testing for cosmetic and detergent products. Use alternatives as often as possible.

### **Reduce, reuse and recycle plastic**

1. Subsidise the search for organic alternatives to stop plastics polluting the environment.
2. Encourage an EU-wide campaign to promote deposit machines and cosmetic-container refilling machines in every neighbourhood.
3. Revise and update the laws about packaging to support biodegradable and reusable alternatives and decrease over-packaging.

### **Make processes in the recycling, fashion and meat industry transparent**

1. Print information about water and carbon footprints on products to help consumers make conscious decisions.
2. Fines for greenwashing so that people are aware and can make responsible choices.
3. Monitor companies by performing regular checks so that companies are following the transparency laws.
4. Establish independent groups to perform regular controls that the companies are adhere to the transparency laws.

### **Make cities more sustainable by insulating buildings, supporting public transport at the expense of car traffic and prescribing solar panels for all new buildings.**

1. Support eco friendly initiatives financially.
2. Increase taxes on cars to support cheaper public transport costs especially for people under 18.
3. Require EU countries to have 40% of the total energy coming from renewable sources.

### **Ban unnecessary hunting on land and water**

1. Create an EU-wide standard for hunting licences with mandatory schooling and training to do as little damage to the ecosystem as possible.
2. Establish independent expert groups to monitor hunting done as a regulation of ecosystems. The need must be verified by those groups.
3. Tax hobby hunting and support animal rights organisations and shelters.



# ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

## Introduction

Energy costs are rising across Europe and the world, starting in late 2021 and continuing in early 2022 due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the sanctions on Russia. The shortage of oil and gas has caused a rise in inflation. The European energy market operates according to the Merit-Order system, which means the highest price bid is the one traded on the market. The main source of energy in Europe is fossil fuels, which is one of the causes of ongoing climate change. This is why we need investments in renewable energy sources and nuclear power plants as soon as possible. Prices skyrocketed after the Russian invasion in Ukraine. Previously, Russia was an important source of energy for many European countries, which thus gained an economic advantage. Due to the lobbying of fossil fuel companies they can raise prices disproportionately and independently of the rise in costs and not face any consequences. The EU still relies on other countries for its energy production and does not aim at self-sufficiency. How can the EU become more independent of foreign energy? Why is the EU trying to make the same mistake as before with Russia, by trading with the Middle East, where human rights are violated everyday? European society is focusing too much on cars as the main means of transport when we should focus much more on expanding public transport infrastructure. Electric and hydrogen cars are important, because they are the future alternative for internal combustion cars. However, they cannot meet the demand for transportation. The main goal should be to close the city centers for cars in all of Europe and pedestrianize them so people are obliged to use public transportation or walk instead. Besides, agricultural and industrial goods are mostly transported by trucks in many European countries when they could be transported by rail, for which infrastructure is lacking in all EU countries. Trucks should only cover the "last mile", i. e. the distance from the station to the company site. This would significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions. By focusing on carbon neutral ways of providing energy no matter the economic status, everybody is able to have equal chances in schools, jobs and life standards.



# ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

## Demands

### **Reduce energy prices, control energy companies and expand renewable energy sources**

1. Implement new modern standards for construction of new buildings regarding better isolation and materials and efficient energy usage.
2. Increase usage of renewable sources of energy, windmills/turbines, hydro energy, solar panels, kinetic energy.
3. Freeze energy prices for households in areas of a green transformation to avoid social backlash and exclusion.

### **Reduce pollution of air, soil and water**

1. Fund small farms so they can grow food without pesticides and compete with big farms on a sales market.
2. Implement EU legislation that forbid and fine companies and bigger suppliers which release sewage into rivers.
3. Encourage an EU legislation obliging supermarkets to introduce a "local shelf" made up of national products, representing 20% of the total stock.

### **Find sustainable ways to dispose and recycle waste from nuclear power plants**

1. Create a European institution that will research and develop methods for the utilisation and recycling of radioactive waste.
2. Have mandatory EU guidelines that include already existing ways of recycling and reusing nuclear waste.
3. Provide education campaigns about the dangers of nuclear waste and raise social awareness.

### **Provide free train travel and expand public transport infrastructure**

1. Encourage free transport for students until 26 years of age by taxing fossil fuel companies.
2. Expand an EU wide rail network of transit lines and provide more destinations.
3. Help national governments to improve and extend public transport systems. Set minimum goals and provide incentives for reaching them.

### **Fine private jets for producing excessive carbon emissions**

1. Tax jet fuel and fund public transport development.
2. Limit carbon emission per year and impose harsh fines if the limit is exceeded.
3. Restrict national/ domestic flights if the route can be reached in 10 hours, by train etc.



# MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

## Introduction

Migration and integration are critical issues for Europe's future, impacting on social cohesion, cultural identity, the economy, and security. Addressing the complex issue of migration in Europe requires a multifaceted approach. At its core, our demand is for equitable treatment of all refugees, irrespective of factors like skin color, gender, or sexual orientation. Furthermore, we advocate against deportations to war-torn regions or push backs on sea. To facilitate successful integration, our focus extends beyond humanitarian aid. We emphasize the importance of language courses, quality education, and immediate access to employment opportunities for refugees. Government spending priorities play a pivotal role in this. Funds used for weaponry and war exacerbate the very conflicts that drive people to migrate. By fostering peace in third countries, governments can reduce the refugee influx and allocate resources more effectively. Media portrayal of migrants has long been problematic. Sensationalized stories depicting criminal behavior perpetuate negative stereotypes. Instead, we urge the media to amplify the voices of hardworking individuals striving to adapt to new societies, thereby nullifying pessimistic notions. Dehumanizing refugees and promoting unfounded fears of competition for resources are counterproductive. We must recognize that refugees seek safety and peace, and that their intention is not to exploit host nations. To combat racism and xenophobia, anti-discrimination measures are essential. Education plays a pivotal role in shaping empathetic future generations. Also, making dual citizenship accessible to all is crucial, and integration must be a priority. Additionally, recognizing misinformation through heightened awareness is essential to fostering empathy and understanding. In summary, addressing migration in Europe demands fair treatment of refugees equal to that of European citizens, access to education and employment. To ensure and maintain the Europeans' acceptance for refugees, it is necessary to establish a fair and responsible media portrayal of refugees accompanied by broad anti-discrimination campaigns. These multifaceted efforts can contribute to a more inclusive and empathetic society.



# MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

## Demands

### **Make sure that immigrants have immediate access to general and vocational education in the host countries.**

1. Provide funding for group therapy sessions for immigrants who are traumatised from war or socio-political issues. The trained therapists should speak the mother-tongue.
2. Finance free language courses for adults and children by teachers with an L2 level.
3. Encourage campaigns to promote networking and have meeting sessions within the community.

### **Urge countries to provide an easier pathway to citizenship for immigrants already in the country.**

1. Standardise recognition of laws making double citizenship for migrants and immigrants possible.
2. Provide lessons and other curricular activities regarding civic education and civil rights teachings at a junior and high school level.
3. Encourage multiple citizenship people to have the right to vote in political elections, governmental reforms and general voting sessions of their respective countries.

### **Punish illegal pushbacks more severely.**

1. Establish an unbiased EU constituted media channel with the aim of informing the general public of illegal pushbacks. Make official data public.
2. Create centres for immigrants in areas affected by the immigration crisis to quickly grant asylum after verifying their identity.

### **Establishing better integration programmes in the EU.**

1. Limit the amount of time to maximum of 4 months in asylum centres in order to hasten the application process across the EU.
2. Encourage the integration into the regular housing market.
3. Establish curricular activities in school for transcultural laboratories and more non-discriminating programmes.

### **Support easier access to the European Labor Market for migrants.**

1. Provide educational courses for migrants to refresh qualifications to gain quicker access to the job market.
2. Motivate the EU members to simplify the process of accreditation and facilitate the integration into the workforce.





# HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES

## Introduction

Stable mental and physical health is the cornerstone of high quality spare time, a successful education, a strong workforce and a stable economy. Fair democratic processes and active political participation both rely on fair social conditions.

Health is a fundamental human right. Everyone should have access to basic health services, no matter when and where they need them, without suffering financial hardship. In times of war, a pandemic and a climate and energy crises, the gap between the lower and upper classes is growing by the minute. The lack of medical professionals and the ridiculously long waiting time for a necessary doctor's appointment carries lifelong consequences for patients. Therefore, the EU needs to invest in preventive medicine and research to recognize diseases in their early stages.

Mental health problems are at an all time high, especially teenagers struggle, with their mental health and don't receive the necessary support. Addiction, whether substantial or behavioural, is a hidden part of the daily life of many, cutting social ties, destroying families and even leading to death. The lack of caregivers and other social workers is leaving people without care, meanwhile hundreds of thousands of homeless people struggle with reintegration into the job market. We urge the politicians of the European Union to prioritise people's needs and to ensure the highest quality of public and social services to improve the lives of the people of Europe.



# HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES

## Demands

### **Prevent rape, harassment and bullying and make criminal prosecution easier.**

1. Educate police officers on how to handle and help rape victims as part of their training and continual workshops. The courses should be redone annually.
2. Implement workshops in schools against bullying, rape and harassment.
3. Increase prison sentences for sex-related crimes.

### **Increase the number of medical personnel to cover the needs of the population.**

1. Expand scholarships for nurses and doctors.
2. Make medical jobs more attractive: Provide advantages such as free child care and subsidised psychological care for doctors and nurses.
3. Fund programs for students to promote jobs in the medical sector by visiting hospitals, universities and talking to medical staff.

### **Make psychological and psychiatric care more accessible.**

1. Ensure the presence of mental health professionals in schools so that they are available, at least 5 hours per month, for acute problems and further referrals. The students should be able to access sessions easily and anonymously via online bookings.
2. Establish online mental health centres or digitalize existing ones to ensure easy access for all patients, especially to support students and people living in rural areas.
3. Expand mental health support in rural areas by establishing group practices to take in patients from several smaller towns in one centre.

### **Include people with disabilities in all aspects of daily life.**

1. Create an EU-wide map that documents accessible paths, transportation, bathrooms and other accessible facilities to help disabled people plan their journeys and everyday life.
2. Raise awareness of disabled people from a young age in kindergartens and schools. Provide workshops with the direct involvement of disabled people.
3. Make the inclusion of people with disabilities in the design process of specialised infrastructure obligatory, especially in large companies.



# HEALTH AND SOCIAL ISSUES

## Demands

### **Lower the rate of homelessness.**

1. Implement housing-programs to give homeless people a place to live and find work again. The program should create community-housing with support from social workers, so they have a place to stay where they can find a job, which under some circumstances can also be provided by the state.
2. Fund programs for accessible drug rehabilitation facilities.
3. (Re)-integrate homeless people into the job market with (re-)educational programs.



# ECONOMY

T EU

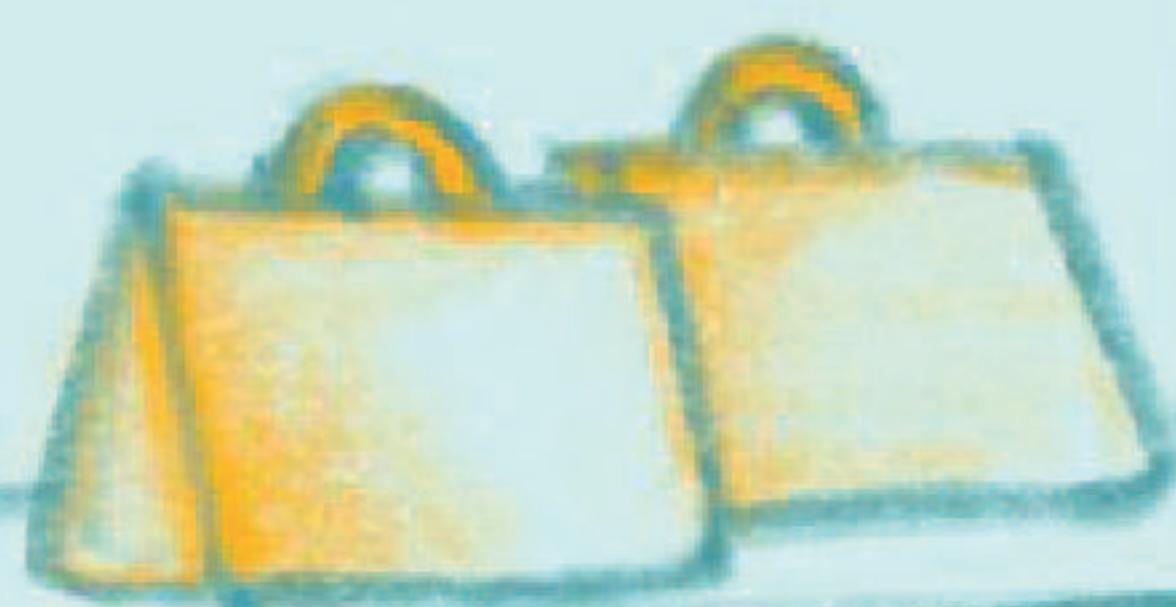
2024

## Introduction

In the modern world, many goods available to EU consumers are only available through import. This is because many goods can not be made in the EU at a competitive market price or due to other factors such as unsuitable climate and lack of natural resources, therefore, such goods must travel vast distances before reaching our single market and are subject to shifts in globalised supply chains.

To avoid such risks, actions must be put in place that incorporate fair trade practices, provide fair wages, and put more focus on sustainable practices, including supply chains. Additionally, ensure the replacement of large quantities of low-quality goods by better-quality items to reduce unsustainable overconsumption, which is often a product of excessive advertising that fuels our fear of missing out and coerces us into unnecessary shopping. The market is also slowly becoming monopolised, which is hurting the general consumer. On the international stage countries such as China are quietly building an anti-European alliance through economic pressure, which in practice allows them to exploit and slowly monopolise the access to the raw resources of the world and drain all the profits from local economies.

Overall, the world is weary of constantly hearing headlines about economic stagnation and inhumane working conditions, therefore we must start to shift the European economy to a greener, fairer, and more sustainable one for the world to follow.



HANDMADE



# ECONOMY

## Demands

### **Protect the European market from being flooded by low-quality foreign products and avoid unsustainable consumerism.**

1. Introduce a standardized sustainability scale and smart packaging on all products and provide education on the mentioned topic. Focus on quicker development of smart packaging that informs the consumers of all information about the product including but not limited to ingredients, all of the countries of origin and production, information about the company and its mother company, what kind of energy was produced for production, the products expected life-time, and sustainability of the whole process. Make the scale standardized and transparent in order for consumers to understand how it was rated.
2. Implement higher import tariffs of single use plastic products or ban specific single use plastic products like plastic bags for fruit and vegetables. Focus on making plastic alternatives, such as paper or biodegradable bags, more accessible due to their lower prices compared to plastic bags. Implement a necessary return system of plastic and glass for all European countries in order to decrease unsustainable consumerism.
3. Stricter regulation on returned packages of clothing. The EU should fine the companies for not reusing the returned clothing that are returned with no explanation. That would ease the burden on European transportation problems and promote mindful shopping. Include a CO2 tax for all returns. If the company is unable to sell the excess products, they should be obliged to give clothes to charity.

### **Make the EU economy less dependent on non-renewable energy sources to tackle climate change, create a sustainable society, and make the EU less susceptible to foreign crises.**

1. Ease the process of applying for funding sustainable energy sources. Simplify the application process by giving more detailed information and a walk-through of all needed documents. Provide a group of industry professionals, who will explain and help with the application process, giving unbiased help.
2. Invest in innovation and research of sustainable solutions. Expand funding for all research and development of sustainable solutions, especially for long term projects. Increase funding for universities' research departments which are often neglected when it comes to sustainability due to their complexity and lack of profitability.
3. Inform and educate people on nuclear power plants and their safety to moderate more usage of nuclear power as a transitional energy source. Organize more programmes or projects related to nuclear power within the European Union. Help NGOs spread the word about nuclear power and fund their marketing. Offer grants for countries trying to expand their already existing nuclear power plants.



# ECONOMY

## Demands

### **Implement stricter antitrust laws to avoid monopolization and reduce the disproportionate political influence of multinational companies.**

1. Implement the law forcing the parent company owning the subsidiary to be clearly written on the packaging next to the brand name. The parent company name should be written next to the original brand name in order for consumers to identify what brands belong to what parent company. That would help consumers make more informed decisions and would also lead to higher competition.
2. Limit the market share of a specific company in their industry globally at a maximum of 40%. More in depth analytics of market share and better regulation of companies establishing monopolies through mergers and acquisitions. Identify industry leaders and block their M&As in case it would increase their market share over 40% since by then the competition is irrelevant due to their uncompetitive prices.
3. Establish potential anti-lobbying measures by increasing unbiased groups of independent industry professionals. Establish a group of industry professionals which can offer their unbiased view and block M&As that would hurt the competition of the market. The group of people should not be in any way associated with the companies or industries in discussion. Include the civil society as well when it comes to deciding about acquisitions and mergers as a fail safe.

### **Support small, regionally operating businesses**

1. Reverse tax reliefs for sustainable national companies. Identify national businesses that are producing sustainable products or services and offer them reverse tax reliefs in order to lower their prices and make them more accessible to consumers. Tax reliefs would also be able to support longevity of products' lifetime since sustainable companies are aimed at extending the lifetime of products' usage.
2. Increase financial support for start-ups. Support for start-ups with financial means, which would indirectly make the company more competitive in the global market with the help of further development and research. Also offer support with help of bureaucracy and applying for tenders or funding.
3. Advertise local business by implementing the "Made in Europe" label on their products. Standardize the label "Made in EU" which would only be on labels that are completely developed and produced in the European Union. The standardized label would be the same for all products therefore, it would support all European companies and offer clarity to the consumer.



# ECONOMY

## Demands

**Stop heavily subsidizing the meat and dairy industries and start promoting plant-based diets and sustainable farming practices.**

1. Invest in plant based alternatives and lab grown meat. Investment in research and development of plant based alternatives and lab grown meat with the help of funding, tax reliefs and subsidies. Also, offer support to NGOs marketing the lab grown meat in order to familiarize the population with new eating habits.
2. Reallocate subsidies for the marketing of the meat and dairy industry to the marketing of plant based alternatives. Develop a long term plan of moving the funding from meat and dairy industry, especially its share meant for advertising, to the advertisement of plant based alternatives, vegetables, and fruit. Raise awareness about the positive consequences of consumption of plant based food. Offer transparency of ingredients in plant based alternatives and promote that they are made out of organic and not chemical ingredients.
3. Increase funding of re-education programmes for farmers to transition into plant based farming. Offer education and information to farmers trying to transform their production from meat and dairy to plant based alternatives which would support the European farmers to move forward to a greener future. Thus, making the European prices of such products more competitive.



# WORK AND LABOUR

## Introduction

The last 50 years have seen an enormous change in our markets and our working conditions but the system has stayed relatively the same. Now we have to adapt the system to the modern working world, especially in the last few years due to the Covid Pandemic and the Ukraine war.

The pandemic caused a huge call for home office, better working conditions and more mental health care in various sectors. The average working hours are often too long in terms of efficient productivity. People working in the health sector are not able to work fully focused and concentrated for so many hours. The EU must discuss the four-day week now, in order to have benefits for both sides and to decrease the risk of developing mental and physical illnesses.

In addition, the unemployment rate in some EU member countries is unacceptable. However, we still don't have enough specialised workers in many sectors. That's why we need immigrants and refugees. Moreover, many of them live in inhumane conditions. We simply cannot accept that immigrants and refugees have to wait many years to get their asylum status. How can they be integrated without the chance to work? Besides immigration, emigration is also a significant issue in the EU. Brain drain and the exploitation of universities in other EU countries must be discussed and regulated. We all live together in a community, but it won't work if we don't work together.





# WORK AND LABOUR

## Demands

### **Equal work equal Pay**

1. Improve leaks of salary lists
2. Harder punishments (penalties) for betraying workers rights
3. Offer workshops for children about a bigger variety of gender equal jobs

### **Brain drain**

1. Establish working experience in the same country as the university
2. Improve programmes of universities and companies cooperating for future jobs

### **Shorten waiting periods**

1. Provide lessons of the country's language
2. Provide job placements in and during the asylum and or immigration process
3. Shorten accreditation periods for academic degrees outside the EU

### **Work related illnesses**

1. Fund free therapy for workers with mentally challenging jobs
2. Implement more regular health checks for employees
3. Finance protective clothing and hygiene articles for all employees

### **Tumor of our society: Unemployment**

1. Lower unemployment benefits over time
2. Increase courses for unemployed people
3. Lower unnecessary work requirements for certain unskilled jobs



# EDUCATION

## Introduction

Democratic governments depend on educated citizens. Even though we are living in the 2020s, our generalized educational system is still decades behind from what we learn to how we learn it. Teachers are underpaid, overworked and disrespected and an entire generation is suffering the consequences. We cannot allow the apathy towards the education of our youth to go on any longer, it is setting a dangerous precedent for the future. The divide between the genders is starting in schools and is influencing students in the delicate years of peer socialization. The inequalities we face in life have trickled their way into our education system and into the developing minds of our youths. Our curriculums often enforce gender roles through the bases of sexual education, home economics and biased religious education. Religious classes are often biased, Christian-centered or subjectively taught depending on the religious inclination of the teacher. Our students who are in the toughest stages of seeking higher education are left to fend for themselves when looking for housing, this is especially true for exchange- and international students.



# EDUCATION

## Demands

### **Make teaching attractive**

In the EU, the scarcity of teachers demands immediate attention and measures for improvement. This crisis is profoundly impacting students' capacity to access the essential knowledge they require. Schools are grappling with insufficient teaching staff, while those educators in service are burdened with overwhelming workloads, leading to burnout and a pervasive sense of underappreciation. Addressing this crisis is essential to ensure a conducive learning environment for our youth and to safeguard the quality of education across Europe. Our demand expands on the European Trade Union Committee for Education (EUTCE) campaign to help make the teaching profession less of a risk to go into and a higher valued job.

1. Implement endangered profession scholarships for teaching professions which are compatible with state scholarships.
2. Finance studies related to teacher's labour input to raise awareness in the EU
3. Encourage sensitivity training for teachers regarding disabilities in students.
4. Expand the Erasmus+ program to include international exchange opportunities for practical work for teachers.

### **Religion classes should provide equal information on all religions**

1. Require that all religion classes held in public schools should be unbiased and factual representations of all world religions and religious theory.
2. Encourage and support sensitivity training for teachers regarding different religions.

### **Fund and support education programmes on climate change**

1. Provide more funding and support for climate change education that must include ways to combat the crisis both for school integration of climate change topics and for non formal education about climate change.
2. Encourage more action and participation in sustainable development programmes in schools, including things like in-school recycling, sustainable development of the school itself and sustainable living life skill courses that would set students up with the necessary knowledge and a consistent example for further development and a sustainable lifestyle.
3. Introduce an EU-wide "Green student" competition on the topic of climate change, with an attractive and sustainable reward.



# EDUCATION

## Demands

### **Install more professional sex education classes**

In addressing the fundamental right to equal education, it is essential to recognize and address the inadequacies of current reproductive health education curricula, which often fails in providing young people with comprehensive knowledge about themselves and their peers. We have identified the urgent need for a shift in sex education, guided by updated guidelines mandated by the European Union to ensure uniformity and quality across the member states.

1. Advocate an inclusive approach to sex education, transcending traditional gender boundaries to equip everyone with essential knowledge about reproductive health, menstruation, birth control, and both female and male anatomy. This education is to precede the onset changes of puberty and menstruation.
2. Promote and encourage healthcare workers to provide brochures and information on sexual education at family doctor offices, not just gynaecologists.
3. Fund, encourage and support courses to prepare new and existing parents for easier communication with their children regarding sexual health, internet safety and social media as a part of the already existing courses for preparation of future parents.

### **Provide affordable and appropriate student housing for university students**

A persistent challenge that a significant portion of European students are facing is finding adequate accommodations while studying and are sometimes prevented from going to their preferred universities or at the preferred time. We suggest providing additional funding allocated to universities to ensure a sufficient supply of student housing. Additionally, regulations for reserved accommodations for international and exchange students. Lastly, establishing a centralized informational platform within universities for enhancing the process of finding accommodation.

1. Establish new regulations for allocation of campus accommodations specifically reserved for applicants from abroad. Universities should be mandated to reserve a portion of their dormitories.
2. Fund universities to ensure a sufficient and affordable supply of student housing.
3. Encourage an EU-wide centralized informational platform within universities offering support and guidance for students looking for on and off campus accommodation alongside host-family contacts



# DIGITALIZATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, DATA PROTECTION, AI AND MACHINE LEARNING

## Introduction

In an era in which technology is the “heartbeat” of society and shapes the way we live, work, and connect, awareness of digitalization is necessary. Recent developments of the technology of Artificial Intelligence have raised awareness and led to controversial debates about the potential impact of technological progress on our society. Furthermore, it is more important than ever to involve multi-stakeholders. We need appropriate rules, regulations and laws when it comes to digitalization, social media, data, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. Currently, there are not any written regulations or laws which could prevent the unregulated use of AI and provide control over important systems and infrastructure. Additionally, since the digital world is changing so fast, school systems need to be adapted to prepare young people for the new digital environment. Nowadays, most jobs require a minimum knowledge of digital skills. Imagine a world where data flow uninhibited, where information is a currency, and where the boundaries between reality and the digital realm blur. Envision machines that not only mimic human intelligence but surpass it, potentially replacing millions of jobs, endangering individual privacy and public trust through content manipulation tools and AI-generated deepfake videos. We need to prepare for the developments the future holds in store for us. And the future is now.



# DIGITALIZATION, SOCIAL MEDIA, DATA PROTECTION, AI AND MACHINE LEARNING

## Demands

### **Improve awareness of racial, gender, socio-economical, political, and cultural bias in AI development**

1. Create an advertisement campaign to educate the public about different kinds of AI biases.
2. Establish an independent testing institution to rate AI products on the severity of their biases.
3. Include awareness of AI biases into school curriculum.

### **Develop guidelines for dealing with ethical problems**

1. Make content warnings for problematic content mandatory on social media or other internet platforms and regulate comments.
2. Force social media platforms to tell their users exactly where their data is being sold.
3. Highlight the dangers to parents of posting their children on social media.

### **Integrate digital education into school education (raise awareness of positive and negative aspects, e. g. possible impact on mental health)**

1. Raise awareness of social issues caused by digitalisation, extremists, job applications, safety authorities can access personal devices.
2. Teaching safe and responsible use of AI.

### **Restrict children's digital media access for their own protection**

1. Establish awareness campaigns for parents.
2. Require tiktok, reddit to use identifications to ensure users are 16+.

### **Develop regulating tools for use against digital manipulation, fake news, and hate speech**

1. Change legislation to make it illegal to depict any person in a negative way through AI generated content.
2. Force organisations to have non-AI backup solutions for every process that uses AI.
3. Force AI companies to reveal and publish all training data.



# DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS

## Introduction

"Democracy requires effort, deserves bravery, needs leadership."

European Parliament President, Roberta Metsola, G7-Conference in Berlin, 2022

The recent decline in voter turnout in the EU-elections, especially among younger people, poses a huge threat to our democracy. For instance, the last EU-election had a voter turnout of just barely over 50%, which is less than in a majority of national elections. There is also a notable contrast between regions, with central and eastern Europe generally having lower voter turnouts than western regions. Another problem is the imbalance in the availability and accessibility of information regarding politics and democracy itself. Due to fake news and the lack of independent and unbiased journalism and media in some countries, misinformation had and still has the opportunity to spread quickly. Additionally, freedom of press is not fully developed in all member countries, some even going as far as not reporting about any political opinion opposing the governments at all. The shift in attitudes towards civil and political engagement has its own set of challenges. Not educating people, especially youngsters, about politics has been a powerful tool of anti-democrats, assuring that yet another generation doesn't question the ones in power. Often, it's not the lack of interest that keeps Europe's youth from education, but the current school system. This is why we, as representatives of European youth, demand the following actions on the part of the European Union:



# DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS

## Demands

### **Establish mandatory unbiased political education in secondary schools**

European politics should become a mandatory subject in every country of the EU. The school program should contain a core equal for all the member states, who can add topics and specific focuses but cannot derogate from this minimum standard. Moreover, schools should institute periodic moments dedicated to an overview of all the parties operating in the country, training teachers and/or inviting experts in order to guarantee unbiased information.

1. Establish European politics as a compulsory subject in all EU countries' school curriculums.
2. Standardise the core curriculum for European politics, with the flexibility to add additional topics or key aspects.
3. Encourage EU members to organize periodic sessions to provide unbiased information about all political parties in the country, including training teachers and inviting experts for comprehensive coverage.

### **Organize easily accessible youth parliaments**

In order to encourage wider participation in youth parliaments, teachers should inform their students of this opportunity or directly invite representatives of youth parliaments in schools to present it. Moreover, people with high public visibility (e.g., influencers) could help spread the word through their channels.

1. Provide teachers with resources and materials to inform students about youth parliament participation opportunities.
2. Require representatives of youth parliaments to go to schools to present the opportunity directly.
3. Encourage public figures or influencers to help promote youth parliament participation through their channels.



# DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS

## Demands

### **Organize campaigns on how to properly inform yourself on current EU policies, also in non-election times**

Social media should play a key role in information about EU policy. On the one hand, every country should have its own platform, managed by experts, informing people about current EU policies by posting fact-checked information and debunking fake news; on the other hand, European institutions should rejuvenate their social media channels to make them more appealing to young generations through engaging content (e.g., videos, graphs, etc.). Moreover, in non-election times, public constructive debates should be organized where ruling parties are held accountable for the promises they made during electoral campaigns and confront themselves with oppositions. Finally, public financing to parties should be reduced and regulated by a transparency policy according to which political parties cannot overstep the budget they are allocated for campaigning/advertisement and can only get private financing from selected sources to prevent corruption.

1. Establish country-specific social media platforms managed by experts to disseminate fact-checked EU policy information and debunk fake news.
2. Revamp European institutions' social media channels with engaging content like videos and graphs to attract young audiences.
3. Organize public constructive debates outside of election periods to hold ruling parties accountable for campaign promises and allow them to confront opposition, while implementing transparent regulations to limit political party financing and prevent corruption.

### **Provide laws in more understandable language**

Making legislation more understandable for everyone would make people feel more aware of their rights and more entitled to claim them, enhancing participation in public life. For this reason, legal language should be simplified through a human-checked AI tool, which would translate technical terms into more accessible phrasing.

1. Simplify legislation using a human-checked AI tool to translate technical terms into accessible language.
2. Enhance public awareness of rights and entitlements by making legislation easier to understand.
3. Promote participation in public life through improved accessibility to legal information.



# DEMOCRACY, PARTICIPATION AND CIVIL RIGHTS

## Demands

### **Strengthen European cooperation and identity**

In order for young generations to feel European as well as national citizens, learning opportunities about the languages and traditions of different member states should be promoted by making encounters and exchanges easier. This should be done by introducing scholarships for young people who were active in politics (e.g., campaigns, youth parliaments) and want to study in European universities, as well as a universal evaluation system/easier credit conversion among European universities and high schools to facilitate exchanges and make students feel closer to other countries' issues. Finally, in order to foster youth engagement in EU-sponsored activities, more funds should be allocated to these programs. These funds can derive from the abovementioned budget cut in public financing for parties, but also from a progressive tax for European mobility, or a little participation quota only for those who have the economic means to cover for those who cannot afford travel costs or other side expenses.

1. Introduce scholarships for politically active youths to study at European universities, fostering cross-cultural learning and understanding.
2. Implement a universal EU evaluation system and streamline credit conversion among European universities and high schools to facilitate student exchanges and promote European citizenship.
3. Allocate more funds to EU-sponsored youth activities to encourage engagement.





MY PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION  
EUROPEAN YOUTH MANIFESTO

Authors: European youth of the project "My Participation Revolution"

Design: Katja Graf  
Claudia Orecchia (@claymentinw)  
Enrico Sebastiani (enrico.sebas@gmail.com)

Published by: Südwind (Austria)  
We World GVC (Italy)  
Buy Responsibly Foundation, FKO (Poland)  
Focus (Slovenia)

Contact: Südwind, Laudongasse 40, 1080 Vienna, Austria.

Published July 2024

Co - funded by:



Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union

Organized and implemented by:



**FOCUS**

Supported by:

