

**CENTRAL
EUROPEAN
YOUTH
MANIFESTO**

PREAMBLE

Remembering the revolutionary events of 1917 and 1918, characterized by the Russian Revolution and revolutionary events all over Europe, the end of World War I, the fall of the Habsburg Empire and the establishment of new independent and democratic republics, as well as remembering more recent revolutionary events like 1968, 1989 and the Arab Spring, we - over 300 young people from Central European countries Austria, Italy, Poland and Slovenia - come together from youth centers, youth organizations and schools coordinated by Südwind and VHS Vienna (AT), GVC and Comune di Bologna (IT), BRF (PL) and Focus (SI) to call for modern social and economical revolution and reforms. We demand changes in European Union policy as well as national policies and ask to improve the quality of our community's life. We highlight the importance of maintaining humanitarian and democratic principles in social services and business, and we emphasise the necessity of environmental protection.

The framework for our joint organizing is the „My Revolution - Reflections of 1917 for today's youth“ project funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme, Strand European Remembrance.



We are handing over our demands in the European Parliament at the „My Revolution – Youth Roundtable“ and various meetings on national levels to present fruits of our long debates on national and international level, which took place during two European Transnational Youth Conferences in Bologna 8th - 10th June 2018 and in Vienna 20th-23rd September 2018 with over 80 youth participating in each. As the result of vivid discussion, we raise the following demands.



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

Youth demands on Political Participation

After discussion about political participation it is clear that the youth is active and want to be involved in decisions about their futures through different types of political participation.

Young people often find themselves marginalized from mainstream politics and decision making. They struggle to gain the respect of public officials and are seen as lacking the skills and experience to engage in political activity and lead positive change in their communities. This exclusion, combined with limited educational and economic opportunities, can leave young people both idle and frustrated with the status quo.

It is clear that the youth is craving to be involved in the process of making decisions about its future throughout different types of political participation. We call for a decision making process which is transparent and inclusive and in which the people have the power to contribute to development of the society.

The political representatives of the people must respect their will by implementing the law based on their demands and needs. Therefore we call for a system, in which democracy is participative and not just representative.

Youth holds progressive ideas, fresh vision and open-mindedness. It is the youth who will respond to the consequences of decisions taken today, therefore it is the youth who deserve to be listened and recognised by heads of governments and politicians.

Engagement of youth should work in two political ways:

1. Traditional forms of political participation(voting, petitions) within the current political system should be strengthened on a larger scale and petitions taken more seriously. It is important to broaden horizons of young people by running educative campaigns on voting procedure and encourage them to get interested in local politics by eg. organising meetings with local politics and explaining political programs, showing possibilities to influence local environment, e.g. by creating petitions.

2. Alternative forms of participation such as individual and practical initiatives, aside other forms of self-organisation. More support should be provided for participative democracy; e.g. through creation of youth community councils, organising youth conferences, supporting youth political movements and NGOs.

Demands on youth participation:

- In education compulsory and unbiased courses in basics of economics and in politics should be included.
- Media should provide true, transparent and objective information and show different realities (e.g. from other parts of the world, from alternative communities). Therefore a firm policy should be established against so called "fake news".
- Youth needs to be motivated for engagement by youth exchange through peer-to-peer debates and exchange, without the older ones imposing their ideas as »truths« on them.
- Those in power as politicians and government representatives should be open for the debate with young people and take their opinions into serious consideration.
- Decision and policy makers should keep their political promises: We want to be able to follow political processes that are transparent. In a democratic society political responsibility is an universal and fundamental principle. Politicians should be held accountable if they break their promises. Therefore a common EU web platform should be established, where can be followed implementation of policy/promises step by step.
- Non-citizens should have the right to vote after 3-5 years, after a course on the basics of politics and economy has been provided.
- Migrants should have the possibility to decide in which country they would like to vote (country of origin or country of residence).
- Voters should have the possibility to make an informed decision when voting (e.g. on the voting sheet there should be the information on main program points of parties).
- the advertising in election campaigns should be regulated – e.g. no populism, program points of parties should be clearly marked on banners and posters.
- Youth should be represented through local and youth councils, youth parliament, youth organisation and representatives of youth should be included in different decision-making bodies.
- "-Isms" like eurocentrism, nationalisms, essentialisms, culturalisms should be avoided as they lead to dogmatic views and do not enhance participation and free discussions.

Youth demands on Education

The internationally agreed goal on education – the sustainable development goal 4 - SDG4 states that *"Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world's greatest problems."*

Quality and inclusive education builds foundations of well- informed and active involvement in community's life and encourages conscious and informed political participation on different levels of society.

Therefore we call for the implementation of **the right to free, public, inclusive, accessible and high quality education for all young people and children**, with support for under privileged – be it physically, psychologically, socially or coming from different backgrounds, such as immigrants and different varieties of the other. As the SDG4 sets it as one of the goals to *"build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all"*.

We call for an educational system, which supports **social interaction, emotional intelligence and creativity**, focuses more on student's qualities and less on his weaknesses, develops **personal skills and knowledge** and applies it in **practice**. The **modern technological inventions** should be used in methodologies of learning, such as digital and e-learning materials and courses.

A contemporary educational system should integrate crucial contents – global education topics, environmental and intercultural education, practical skills development (also) through experiential learning methods.

We call for the youth to have the possibility to be involved and included in developing educational systems as a way of influencing the educational systems development in order to put in practice the value of inclusiveness and cooperation. This could be realized by conducting evaluation surveys among students.

Basic principles:

- 1. Free, public, inclusive and high quality education**
- 2. Global education as an integral part of in formal education**
- 3. Contemporary and action oriented school system**

Therefore we call for an education which:

Is practical, critical and holistic – integrate new topics in the school curriculum:

- Consumer education: responsible consumption and sustainable development;
- Basics of politics, economy and media;
- Environmental education and environmental protection;
- Philosophy and intercultural education included in earlier stages of schooling;
- Healthy lifestyles and the impacts of environment on health;
- Critical and creative thinking, not only about art but through art;
- Emotional intelligence development;
- More educational projects which lead to gaining practical skills and knowledge;
- Placing greater emphasis on foreign languages education and have more time for languages practice in curricula;
- More outdoor lessons;
- Holding meetings with professionals who would give the picture of their work to students;
- Using the capacities and knowledge of youth by including them into serious solution finding processes and practical approaches: e.g. school projects focused on solution-oriented environmental education;
- Promoting science through practice and experience;

Is supporting cooperation and openness – through inclusive methodologies

- Cooperation and exchange: students exchange should be available in all schools, cooperation among schools and with other institutions (public, non-governmental, private) should be strengthened;
- More discussion sessions, sharing knowledge and peer-to-peer education;
- Limit the number of students per class to less than 30;
- The curricula should be more open with mandatory subjects and a possibility to choose the other subjects by the students;

- Focusing more on student's qualities and less on weaknesses;
- Teachers should be evaluated;
- Teachers should take a neutral stand, especially when talking about political issues;

Follows contemporary technological developments in public school systems

- Provision of new communication tools and lectures on how to apply them/ digitalized classes/ IT security;
- Increase financial means for high quality educational too;
- 24 hours libraries;

Implements in practice the principles of global education

- Providing non-meat based meals in educational institutions;
- Environmentally friendly buildings;
- Education and awareness raising on topics such as responsible consumption and economy, sustainable lifestyles, community building and community projects;
- Projects that help learning languages through communication with people who are talking in different (native) languages;
- Safe spaces for pupils and students;

Is inclusive, supports integration and intercultural learning

- Integration of immigrants in schools, university classes and kindergardens;

Understands the importance of lifelong learning

- Support in after school orientation in order to identify the steps for further education (e.g. university) and professional future (i.e. career advisor), implementation of technical skills into practice;

Youth demands on protection of environment and responsible consumption

We, the youth of central Europe have noticed, learned and experienced the importance of balance between nature and people. We all know what pollution does to water that we drink and air that we breathe and soil that we grow our food on. Its effects are widely documented, researched and known. Not only the effects that it has on the environment but also what it does to our bodies and overall health. And even for the economy. Sooner or later we will have to clean our mess as our existence is at risk. If we start doing our very best to protect the environment that we live in today, we won't have to deal with our future pollution too much.

This is what we as youth have talked and discussed about. Our proposals and thoughts show what we think and especially what we want to achieve for our future as humans and the environment as well.

The issues outlined below should be indispensable in the consciousness of today's society. The state of our environment is devastating. We, the youth will bear the consequences of the actions present day decision makers will take. Along with other actions we demand the elimination of plastic and harmful substances used in the packaging necessary to maintain the health of the environment and people. Environmental topics should be popularized in schools and among the whole society. The following demands must be implemented as soon as possible and follow the recent developments in limiting single use plastics.

Main principles:

- **The environment is a common good;**
- **Natural resources should be used carefully;**
- **We have to change lifestyles and consumption;**
- **Global and environmental education are crucial;**
- **We urgently have to act on all levels of society;**

Responsible resource use and recycling

- Working on a legal framework that supports the development and serious implementation of sustainable consumption and recycling methods, such as:
 - reducing of packaging and prohibit plastic products - especially from food industry - and use alternative and really eco-friendly materials. Also higher taxes should be put on plastic products
 - stop using materials and mixed materials that are difficult to recycle;
- Efficient systems for returning packaging for recycling;
- Allowing your own reusable packages in shops and supermarkets for weight fruit/vegetables;
- No food waste – sanitary regulations in markets;

Sustainable Lifestyle

- Popularization of eco-lifestyle in school and in media;
- Caring about clean water;
- Caring about bees and wild pollinating insects;
- Collecting renewable energy e.g. by solar panels;

Youth demands on work and labor

The majority of medium and large companies pay higher wage rates to men than to women, according to the latest government figures. Jobs typically associated with women (e.g. teachers, nurses, midwives), are usually undervalued and treated as less valuable than those associated with men and are often associated with lower wages. Although many policies and recommendations try to counteract this fact, the reality shows a different picture. Therefore the EU should act on the issue and ensure the end of such practices. The technological development and recent scientific findings show the opportunity and benefits of shorter working week and higher employment rates. It's high time to transform technological development and innovation into a possibility to significantly reduce working hours rather than the number of people employed. Any change in this direction should be strongly encouraged. Internships today are often abused for unpaid work in private and public institutions. Therefore the abuse of free and obligatory labour should be ended, internships should be paid.

Gender equality:

- We demand the implementation of fair pay for all workers, without gender discrimination.
- We ask the EU to encourage a profound change in mentality by urging member states to provide economic incentives for companies, businesses and public administrations to equally employ men and women for each position of staff, even if traditionally associated with women or men.
- We consider it necessary to make maternity easier. Today in Europe the possibility of being pregnant is a factor of discrimination. Employers tend to hire men rather than women to avoid “the risk” of pregnancy and maternity leave. Our request is that any behavior that overturns this scenario is explicitly encouraged and full retribution for women during pregnancy and breastfeeding be ensured.
- All the member states have to support the cost of health treatment in favor of minors in a state of illness or temporary or permanent disability, guaranteeing the mother, father or guardian the possibility of being able to abstain from work to support the necessary care and accompany the child to recovery or follow him/her during growth. This possibility should be established as a right in any company or institution.

Minimum living wage to support decent life with fewer working hours

- Any change in the direction of decreasing the working hours direction should be strongly encouraged, while the trend towards a decrease in the number of employees (because of technical improvements such as robotization, digitalisation) must be counteracted, in order to reduce unemployment and guarantee everyone a job with less time at equal pay (at least minimum living wage which ensures decent life).
- We also demand to support active and deserving students with appropriate scholarships and allow them to continue their studies regardless of their economic background.

- An universal basic income should be guaranteed to all young people looking for a first job to reward their willingness to find work and act accordingly.
- A survey must be carried out on economic differences between European states, comparing equal work remunerations and differences in working conditions.
- The same economic conditions should apply for the same types of job positions in all countries of the EU in order to encourage effective mobility. Particular attention should be paid to the area of education, due to the differences of payments among teachers in the EU countries,
- Internships must always be paid. The possibility for young people to carry out training periods in companies voluntarily or through government programs is extremely important. Too often, however, it happens that the same companies exploit this opportunity to have done work at no cost. A fair payment of internship's hours should be legislated by the EU.
- Appropriate payment of shifts and overtime on Sundays or public holidays should be ensured. Private companies who opt to stay open in these days or maintain full use of the production facilities should be required to pay a higher salary.

Labor contracts

- We ask EU to encourage private companies and public administrations to limit the number and duration of limited-term contracts. After two years of precarious employment (casual employment) companies should be obliged to turn them into permanent contracts. Incorrect behavior, such as firing a worker and re-employing him or her in a member company to avoid permanent employment, should be discouraged and sanctioned.
- A high level of quality of work contracts must be ensured, which implies health protection and social benefits for everyone. The exploitation of labour, such as illegal work, jobs with no contract whatsoever, or contracts that do not correspond to reality (undersized) have to be avoided.

Youth demands on social issues and health care

Providing high quality services of health and social care to all people is a state's duty

Privatisation in health-care sector, health insurance domain and social services is leading more and more to a two-classes medical and social system that excludes certain groups of people (e.g. people with lower income, migrants / people with certain legal status, people with special needs, etc.) in our society from high quality service. It is a clear task of the states to ensure the access of all people – without any discrimination - to a high quality level of public health and social care.

We ask the EU to implement regulations which force states in a stronger way to take more responsibility to guarantee highest quality service in the sector of health and social care in all European countries.

1. Demands to improve the health status of all people in Europe through:

a.) Public Healthcare System:

Improvement of infrastructure and the quality of medical service in hospitals and medical offices also in rural areas by:

- increasing the number of a health service workers, by encouraging youth to pursue a career in this field, by e.g. offering higher wages or longer and paid leave
- greater recognition of the work of nursing staff
- appropriate payment and working hours for professionals in hospitals
- availability of high quality equipment and latest technologies
- stronger focus on preventive medicine during education of doctors and nurses
- providing affordable accommodations near hospitals for family members of a person who needs medical service.

b.) Reforming the State National Health Insurance

- by including the coverage of dentist treatments and psychotherapy.

c.) Education

- by including preventive medicine and information about a healthy, sustainable lifestyle into both, the general basic education system such as kindergarden, school, etc. and adult education.

2. Demands to improve life situation for vulnerable groups especially for people with special needs and mental illness by:

- providing job search assistance, psychotherapists, personal mentors who support people in their everyday life;
- promoting and providing EU funds for companies employing people with special needs;
- support special business concepts that support the integration of vulnerable people e.g. with down syndrome – positive examples are a Café in Cracow/Poland, a restaurant in Ljubljana/Slovenia, which enable greater independence;
- providing more financial support for vulnerable groups to cover their special needs e.g. special food & medication, transportation, housing, etc.

3. Demands to ensure affordable and sustainable ways of mobility to all people in a society through:

Development of public transportation service that uses clean technologies – also in rural areas - instead of private motorised transportation like cars. Guarantee free / affordable prices (e.g. discount for students and young people) on public transport for everybody.

4. Ensure affordable and sustainable housing options to all people in a society through public housing schemes

– also to young people who often have a lower income and are additionally challenged by organizing a more independent life for the first time.

5. Support young law-offenders through reintegration programs, psychotherapies and education such as anti-violence workshops instead of stigmatization and isolation..

6. Increase public facilities for young people where they can meet, discuss, play, do sports, work alone or together in a group, develop creative skills and increase their knowledge according to their interest: such as youth centers, sport and spare time facilities, nice and safe places where they are not disturbed.

7. Increase easily accessible opportunities to all young people to participate in international youth meetings and international exchange of young people.

Youth demands on migration and mobility

Today we are facing a rising discrimination of people from different non-EU countries. The migrants, fleeing from harsh conditions (war, political discrimination, climate change and other) face a number of difficulties and barriers when coming to Europe. The human rights of asylum seekers are often not respected. The EU has a duty to ensure that human rights of all people in the EU, including those without legal status and without citizenship are respected.

Migration as one of many options not a necessity

- EU should stop contributing to crises and war and should reduce its climate change and environment impact that leads to enforced migration due to loss of possibilities for living;
- Support migrant origin countries and help solve their problems without neo-colonization and war;
- EU should provide higher financial support to UNHCR to help refugees in transit countries.

Relocation and financial support

- More financial support should be provided to countries receiving more migrants (e.g. Italy, Greece) in order to develop and implement programs supporting them;
- The EU has to ensure that each EU country follows EU regulations on relocation quota.

Improved and faster procedures and equal rights to work

- The asylum procedures should be improved and be faster;
- The family reunification procedures should be shorter and more effective, with special emphasis on migrant children and unaccompanied minors;

- Refugees and migrants should be allowed to work and participate equally in the labour market without discrimination;
- Freedom of movement for refugees and asylum seekers in EU (not depending on officers good will and money) has to be ensured.

Integration as a two way process

- More free and extensive language courses in host country language,
- Native language courses for migrants should be provided free of charge;
- Additionally also English language courses should be provided free of charge
- Mixed classes to better learn the language with additional language classes at the beginning of the process of learning languages;
- Access to good jobs and good job education should be improved;
- Increase free social services and counseling for migrants on social and legal issues;
- Better and smaller housing units should be organised for migrants instead of big camps proven to be unsustainable;
- Housing for migrants and refugees should be organised in mixed neighbourhoods and not in isolated and detached locations.
- The local communities should have a possibility to be educated and fairly informed on migrant cultures vice versa and migrants should receive education on local culture;
- Communication programs also for adults to fight stereotypes should be provided;
- The media that increases and spreads hate and fake news and stereotypes on migrants should be regulated and regarded as hate speech.

More exchange programs in education to increase youth mobility and support sustainable mobility

Youth demands on freedom from discrimination

In line with Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." we raise the following demands for a world without discrimination.

- Each personality is equal. People should be able to develop their own personalities freely as they want without any categorization, stereotyping and discrimination. (e.g. no questions about gender/sexuality/religion/origin in school, job, etc.);
- A person is free as long as he/she is not limiting the freedom of others and everybody should take responsibility for their actions;
- People with disabilities and mental illness should receive special assistance especially on the labour market (see above);
- Society should not force stereotypes: e.g. through dressing, different toys (a child can play with dolls or cars, no matter the gender, a child can wear the color and type of clothes he/she wants to wear);
- Abortion should be a personal decision made by women, but can involve the potential father. There should be doctors available locally, who can perform the abortion. The doctors in public sector should not deny the right to abort to women who wants to do it. Doctor who do not want to do the abortion should advise the patient to another doctor, equally accessible.



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