



YOUNG  
EUROPEAN  
FEDERALISTS



# EUR+HOPE

*for the future*

AGENDA OF HOPE:  
*Analysis from  
Civil Society Organisations*



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# Introduction

by Christelle Savall, President of JEF Europe

**How do you feel about the future?** When asked which words best describe their emotional status, Europeans chose uncertainty, frustration, helplessness, anger and fear. Among all those negative emotions, **one positive shone through: hope.**

**JEF chose hope, to put back hope into Europe: EurHope.**

**1.5 million votes and 5,069 proposals gave us the Agenda of Hope: 15 priorities of young people for Europe's future.**

Our representative consultation, run together with Make.org and 50 partners also gave us 12 divisive ideas, and the list of federalist ideas that still have to be defended and advocated for: support to Ukraine, to equality, to human rights, more powers and competence for the European Union. Some other important priorities, like enlargement, are also missing from the consultation.

**Together with other civil society organisations, we focus here on the 15 consensuses among the youth and the path to their realisation.** For each of those ideas gathering 65% positive votes, we list the main measures needed, from better implementation of current measures, to new regulation, to new EU competences.

One conclusion from the campaign is that treaty change is required to cater for the proposals from young people and that there is public support to reform the EU.

We presented those priorities and paths forwards to European political parties and institutions, but **it is up to us all to make them happen.**

**Vote from 6 to 9 June and join JEFers all over Europe in standing up for the Europe we want!**

01.

## *Reinforcing transparency and ethical conduct of elected officials*



Although the EU ethics system is one of the most advanced among OECD countries (and above the average EU member state), the lack of ethical behaviour adopted by national or EU officials remains. One recent example is the Qatargate scandal, revealing allegations of influence-buying involving Qatar and Morocco in the European Parliament.

Frequent cases of revolving doors, at all levels, - where public and elected officials join the private sector and vice-versa - serve as a reminder that EU ethics rules are unfit for purpose. It is necessary to tackle corruption within the EU and improve ethical standards throughout institutions.



Citizens see a need for **stricter rules on transparency, conflicts of interest and revolving doors**. Instances of these forms of soft corruption often do not breach EU rules. The EU's ethics code should be strengthened throughout institutions and we should ensure it is applied evenly. Amendments to EU Civil Servants Staff Regulations and Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) would establish stricter rules against revolving doors, second jobs, and conflicts of interest. Interest groups and companies routinely fail to report the true extent of their EU lobbying activities, which citizens want to limit.

**The Transparency Register should be comprehensive and cover all EU officials and be made fully binding** through a Regulation, not just an interinstitutional agreement. A failure to comply should lead to sanctions. Officials and lawmakers from the institutions should only accept meetings with registered lobbyists and these meetings published in a public centralised database, together with meetings with officials from Permanent Representations. Citizens see that the EU would benefit from a **single independent EU Ethics Body with the capacity to enforce decisions** and ensure common minimum ethical standards to all institutions. As foreseen in President von der Leyen's Political Guidelines, the Commission proposed the establishment of a Common Ethics Body in 2023.

The proposal was criticised by the Parliament, who viewed it as unambitious. Yet the suggestions made by MEPs would not provide it with sufficient sanctioning powers which remain split under the domain of the respective institutions, European Public Prosecutor's Office and the European Anti-Fraud Office. An interinstitutional agreement between the Commission, Parliament and Council could be gradually expanded to all other EU institutions, agencies, and bodies.

1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**Written by JEF Europe together with The Good Lobby, based on the work of Alberto Alemanno, Jean Monnet Professor of EU Law, HEC Paris.**

## 02. *Strengthening the efficiency of European justice systems*



European societies are built on principles of democracy, rule of law and protection of human and fundamental rights. We see security and justice as cornerstones of our societies. The trust in the judicial system and fair proceedings combined with prevention of crimes are all pillars of a just and safe society.

If crime does not respect national borders, why should prevention of crime be confined to them? Criminal justice and prevention of crimes largely fall into the competence of the Member States. Lack of resources and competence at the EU level and national political interests can weaken action against cross-border crime when Member States choose to stay outside of cooperation.



Young people want to see strengthened and more efficient European justice systems. To do so, the EU needs to have well-resourced agencies for judicial cooperation and law enforcement, such as the European Public Prosecutor Office, Europol, and Eurojust, with the necessary competences to ensure that these structures have the capability to facilitate investigation and prosecution for crimes everywhere in the Union. **Participation in and cooperation with European level agencies within the justice and law enforcement areas should be mandatory to all Member States.** These agencies are fully tied to national authorities such as courts and police forces.

Young people also want Europe to take action to protect individuals from violence, support and protect victims of crimes, and prevent and prosecute crime. More effective prevention and prosecution of crime on the European level requires **the European level to have broader criminal law competence, shared with the Member States, to the extent necessary to make possible the use of regulations instead of directives.** This requires amending the treaties of the European Union. A complete European level judicial system independent of Member State level requires the adoption of an **EU criminal law** to uphold the principle of legality.

Such a European criminal law would make it easier **to prevent, investigate and prosecute cross-border organised crime.** This legislation should be adopted by the European Parliament. **A European solution on effective judicial systems requires transparency and trust of the citizens.** This requires upholding the separation of powers between legislative, executive and judicial branches, and creating an independent European level criminal justice system under European democratic oversight. Such **democratic control and separation of powers are necessary to ensure the rule of law and the protection of human and fundamental rights.**

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03.

## *Increasing citizen participation and their understanding of the EU*



The Conference on the Future of Europe, an essential exercise in citizen participation in European integration, highlighted the need for comprehensive institutional reform for a further democratic deepening of the EU. It still lacks appropriate follow-up.

Furthermore, the current participatory processes within the EU have proven themselves to be imperfect, be it in their legislative framework, technical aspects, or lack of institutionalisation. At the same time, a complicated institutional framework and diverging decision-making processes make it hard for people to understand the EU.



Citizens see a need for **stricter rules on transparency, conflicts of interest and revolving doors**. Instances of these forms of soft corruption often do not breach EU rules. The EU's ethics code should be strengthened throughout institutions and we should ensure it is applied evenly. Amendments to EU Civil Servants Staff Regulations and Code of Conduct for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) would establish stricter rules against revolving doors, second jobs, and conflicts of interest. Interest groups and companies routinely fail to report the true extent of their EU lobbying activities, which citizens want to limit.

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## 04. *Developing more efficient and accessible rail transport*



Rail travel works relatively well in a lot of European countries. However, with the current limitations to crossborder travel, rail is not able to compete with aviation. Indeed as soon as one wants to cross a border, there are rarely enough trains and stops are often needed to switch staff or locomotives.

Similarly, ticketing systems are national, so one will often have to buy multiple tickets to travel through Europe, which is more complicated and often more expensive.

Additionally, it often means a new ticket for the next train is to be bought in case a connection is missed, as it is not fully protected by EU passenger rights. Train tickets are often expensive, partially because of unfair taxation. Kerosine is not taxed, while the electricity used by most trains is. Value-Added Tax (VAT) on cross-border railway tickets also remains, whilst there is none on international flights.



Railway network planning needs to be coordinated on a European level to ensure that not just national connections, but also **cross-border connections are prioritised, including by opening more night train options.**

Infrastructure managers should be made to coordinate based on EU-level plans for international rail and the number of exemptions to standardisations removed to create a **Single European Railway Area.**

An **integrated ticketing system** is needed which enables you to book a single ticket for a journey by rail across multiple countries. The EU should legislate in order for an international ticketing system to be created, as the call for operators to do it independently has not been sufficient.

EU passenger rights should be taken into consideration while setting up this system to cover interconnections.

To **make rail more affordable** and help shift demand, both for people and for goods, **taxation should reflect the environmental impact of various modes of transport.**

Kerosine should be taxed, and VAT should at the very least be applied in the same way to international aviation as to international rail. An EU kerosine tax should be created creating a new **EU own resource**, that would increase the EU budget and with it its investment in green policies.

Moreover, there should be an EU-wide exemption of VAT on international rail as it is the case on international flights.

## 05. *Strengthening sustainable European industries and recycling*



Sustainability is widely acknowledged to be one of - if not the - biggest challenges for our society. However, companies and the productive sector are the ones to undertake systemic action to protect the environment as opposed to small and individual gestures.

Manufacturing, mining or construction, among other sectors, have a tremendous impact on the environment through their practices. For waste disposal, we observe the difficulties of consumers in obtaining a universal right to repair and repair still being economically inconvenient compared to buying new. In landfills, we see the results of these cross-sectoral issues: increased food, textiles, and electronics that are wasted are never recovered and reused.

Young people want to see **stronger fines and taxation against companies for their polluting activities**. Therefore, there needs to be an EU-wide **shift in the taxing system to target environmentally harmful**, resource-intensive, and high-income activities<sup>1</sup>, industries and individuals. This tax reform would provide the EU with own resources that can be used to **promote the reuse, recycle, and regeneration of secondary raw materials**, as well as to **help regions whose economies are deeply dependent on polluting economic activities and energy sources** through the Just Transition and Social Climate funds.

When reusing and recycling is not enough, mining **legislation that regulates and minimises the industrial exploitation of natural resources should be adopted**, under the Do-no-harm principle, with the inclusion of affected communities in mining approval procedures, and for the duration of activities.

Another front where young people express their concerns is on individual's recycling, reuse of materials and waste management. An effective circular economy model, with **a standardised system for sorting and separate waste collection**, should be set at the EU level, to make recycling easier and increase people's awareness of environmental rules. **Reusable packaging and packaging return mechanisms should also be adopted** as additional standard practices that contribute to reducing waste.

These measures should come hand in hand with a **universal right to repair**, that guarantees transparency and accessibility to spare parts and bans anti-repair practices, to be adopted as an effective method to curb waste generation. Similarly, measures need to be implemented to reduce the impact of construction waste via the adoption of **modular building methods** to reutilise construction and demolition waste.



## 06. *Promoting innovation in European agriculture and sustainable farming*



The Common Agricultural Policy funding structure still allows farmers to profit from arguably unsustainable practices. Subsidies are necessary to ensure stable incomes and food security, however this simultaneously acts to hide the true cost of unsustainable agriculture.

The lack of coordination between stakeholders has hampered the emergence of new markets addressing unsustainable aspects of the food system.

Ensuring that farmers can guarantee their livelihood and that sustainable practices and mid-sized farms can thrive is of great importance to young people. They therefore call for a broader and transparent **reform of the Common Agricultural Policy** (CAP), as it is not in line with the Paris Agreement and EU Farm-to Fork or the Biodiversity strategies.

The CAP funding model must be reformed within the framework of the European Green Deal and **increase funding to be earmarked for organic farming**, thereby replacing pesticides and fertilisers with organic alternatives. Similarly, methods to reduce the usage of antibiotics in livestock farming, while still combating the spread of diseases should be financially and legally promoted, as an important measure to protect consumers and guarantee a sustainable and quality agricultural food production. Young people want to see the EU provide **technical assistance to small and medium-size farms** on how to achieve EU-level certifications.

To curb the effects of unsustainable farming practices, there needs to be an **impact assessment along the supply chain** to foster the re-allocation of subsidies in the CAP. An important step in this direction is the creation of a “true cost accounting body” to assess the **impact of both unsustainable and sustainable practices** so that we can best reallocate funding away from the most environmentally damaging practices toward the most positive, including research funding.

Young people also want to see support for sustainable and eco-friendly agricultural practices and the research on sustainability in the sector. In the specific area of innovation and research funding, Funded Horizon Europe projects have demonstrated promising results, but they encounter obstacles when it comes to expanding their impact (fundings, lack of competitive solutions, and market entry barriers). It is necessary to **scale up innovative solutions that develop resilient supply chains**.

07.

## *Increasing the protection of biodiversity within the EU and beyond*



Biodiversity loss poses severe consequences for ecosystems and human well-being. The current era is witnessing a human-induced mass extinction event, with estimated extinction rates 10,000 times higher than natural historical levels.

Human activities, such as changes in land and sea use, overexploitation of natural resources, intensive agriculture, pollution, invasive species, and climate change, are the driving forces behind this. A striking 81% of habitats and 63% of all species in the EU are in poor condition, underscoring the pressing need for action.

Reverting the biodiversity crisis requires swift decisive action to protect and restore ecosystems to a state of environmental well-being. Young people want a **stop to deforestation and the protection of species and habitat**, on land and underwater. This entails investments in ambitious policies with well-defined targets, as well as **robust EU and national accountability mechanisms** to guarantee the timely achievement of restoration goals. Foreign trade policy must also be aligned with such goals.

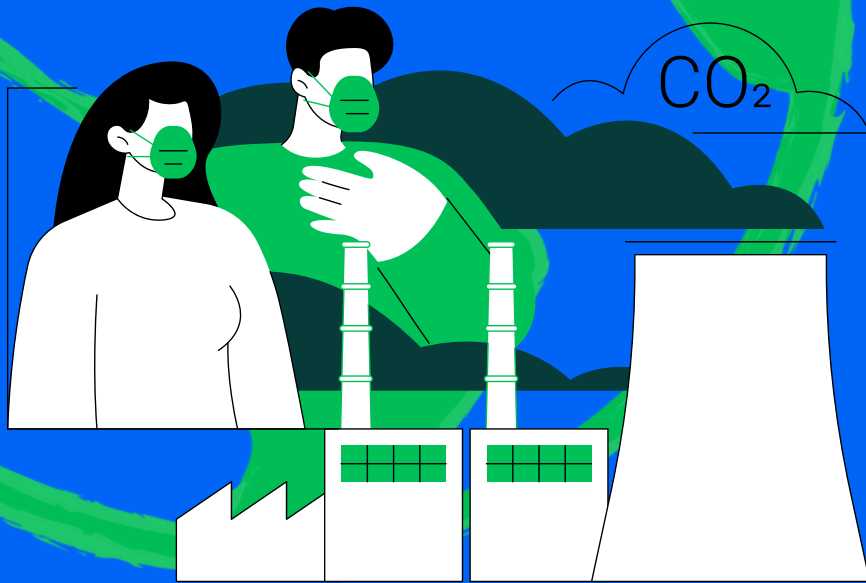
The adoptions of the 2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy and the 2022 Global Biodiversity Framework are commendable steps forward in fostering intergovernmental cooperation for biodiversity protection. However, it is imperative that **countries ensure their national plans and strategies reflect the necessary level of ambition**. These should be centered around nature-based solutions, which leverage natural processes to address both climate change and biodiversity loss, especially in urban settings. There should be targets for the share of polyculture cultivation, conservation agroforestry and permanent cover crops, in order to achieve the goals set out at the European level. Biodiversity policies should ensure **conservation efforts are inclusive and equitable**. To reach the 30x30 objective (protect 30% of the planet by 2030), protected areas should be designed with inclusive governance models to foster collaborative planning and management. Establishing inclusive platforms for civil society engagement, such as citizenship conventions, and decision-making bodies with representatives from local communities, affected people, young people, and indigenous groups is key.

There should also be **financial incentives for regenerative practices** and the removal of subsidies and quotas for those practices that lead to loss of biodiversity, water depletion and land degradation, through transparent and equitable support for farmers.



08.

## Accelerating the energy transition and the reduction of carbon emissions



The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warns of surpassing the 1.5°C global warming limit, challenging EU policies misaligned with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal.

Despite EU efforts like the Green deal, the Climate Law and Renewable Energy Directive, concerns persist about fairness. Policymakers often prioritise "emissions reduction" over a necessary phase-out of fossil fuels, evident in ambitious net-zero goals conflicting with record subsidies of €7 trillion to fossil fuels in 2023.

Explicit subsidies to and exemptions for fossil fuels must be removed, and corrective taxes imposed to raise fuel prices at national, European and global levels. This shift would encourage businesses and households to consider environmental costs, significantly cutting carbon emissions, improving air quality, and providing fiscal flexibility.

The **reform of the EU energy taxation directive** is however currently blocked by vetoes. The need for unanimity and delays associated could be removed through an EU Treaty reform. Furthermore, the EU could spearhead a new global treaty, utilising a Pillar Two formula - for the taxation of multinational companies - to tax CO2 emissions globally, even in countries lacking a carbon tax.

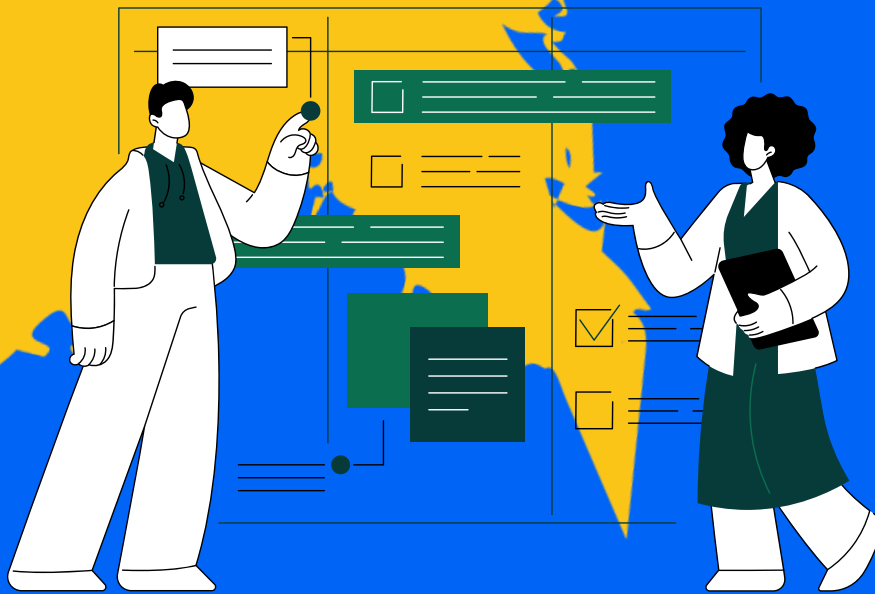
**Measures compensating vulnerable groups** affected by energy price increases due to climate policies should be strengthened and subsidy funds could be redirected following the tax reform. The EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS) and the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to price carbon, the Just Transition Mechanism and the Social Climate Fund to support are positive, but international collaboration and national-level actions are essential for efficiency. Young people demand the energy transition to focus on reliability and EU production.

Indeed, the move to a **Decarbonised Energy Union** is also one away from fossil fuels extraction and dependence on extracting dictatorships.

There should also be more research invested into the transformation of resource- and energy intensive industries towards a zero-emission industry, heating/cooling of buildings and energy storing. Finally, the energy transition should prioritise justice, involve youth, and ensure representation of civil society in decision-making.

09.

## *Promoting easier access to employment, especially for the youth*



The green and digital transition is rapidly changing the labour market, with new opportunities but also new skills to acquire. However, while companies are dealing with labour shortages due to lack of skills and the ageing population, the ‘youth exodus’ translates into a dramatic loss of talent in those particularly vulnerable regions.

In 2021, up to 1 in every 7 young people aged 15 to 29 weren’t either in education, training, nor employed, showcasing how the youth are particularly affected by the difficulty in joining the labour market, especially since the COVID 19 pandemic.

The EU needs to act more effectively on employment through further integration. Reforms of the European treaties should be pursued to **provide the EU with the political and economic tools** to face the changing labour market, while remaining competitive. The EU could then implement a plan for development and employment, funded by a proper EU budget. In parallel, young people want Member States to simplify and **harmonise standards and regulations in labour markets** and education.

Young people also wish to see effective measures at the European level in favour of quality youth employment. Increased youth mobility programmes such as Erasmus can encourage cross country mobility for young workers. Just like any other citizen, we must guarantee that working young people are offered a **minimum wage** in line with the equal treatment principle and applicable law and policies. To ensure they have the **freedom to stay in their home regions**, we must invest more in quality educational and employment opportunities to reduce brain and skill drain in less economically developed and peripheral regions such as rural and mountainous areas, islands, and outermost regions. Young people also want to ease access to job opportunities, scholarships and internships, with a single multilingual youth platform. Companies and governments should **invest in lifelong learning** and continuous skilling of the workforce to guarantee access to a quality, competitive job market. Furthermore the EU needs a **system of recognition and validation of learning outcomes**.

Policy-makers and social partners must address the lack of investment in skills development by promoting the **strategic role of vocational education and training** in meeting the objectives of the European Green Deal, as well as by setting up a European alliance for green skills. The technical assistance offered to Member States for new European funds for skills, education, and training needs to be intensified and the lack of awareness and understanding on EU funds available for local authorities and smaller companies, needs to be addressed.

Written by JEF Europe with  
contributions and input  
from SGI Europe.



## 10. Encouraging “Made in Europe”



Large scale digitalisation, changes in trade rules, and the climate crisis create new challenges and changes in industrial structures. Competition from China, the United States, and others has reached advanced levels, in a world that is increasingly being defined on protectionist rather than free market terms.

The COVID-19 crisis demonstrated the industries' vulnerability and the dependence of EU industry on global sourcing. The need to achieve circularity and minimise the environmental impact implies radical innovations in manufacturing and related value chains.

Although the process has started, the speed of change needs to increase.

Strengthening Europe's industrial autonomy and resilience, promoting homegrown capabilities and innovation, as well as reducing dependencies on foreign markets and promoting European product consumption, as opposed to imports, are essential. To that end, it is imperative to **relocate vital industrial activities back to Europe** to cover more of our consumption, ensuring shorter and more resilient supply chains and creating long-term, well-paid jobs for European workers.

Healthy national economies are the basis of a strong economic union. It is therefore of individual and common interest to Member States to strengthen the resilience and competitiveness of their economies by implementing structural reforms, especially **deeper fiscal, monetary, and social integration**, that will allow for a coherent European Industrial Policy and promote a systemic shift to social-ecological well being in the labour market. This requires **increasing the number and attractiveness of jobs in the industrial sector**, while at the same time **securing the environmental, economic and social sustainability** for future generations. Member States and regions also need to provide more **training in manufacturing, especially in tech**, with a focus on upskilling older generations and training new industrial professionals.

The industry must fully embrace digital technologies which provide the basis to increasing services around manufacturing and along the product life cycle. Moreover, more effective investment in research and innovation is necessary to see that **'Made in Europe' moves beyond a slogan**. Resilience does not mean protectionism, but to allow European industry to be viable and compete internationally, with a special focus on strengthening strategic industries. Notwithstanding this, competitiveness remains important and consumers must always be guaranteed sustainable choices. 'Made in Europe' must be well defined and the easiest and most affordable choice, most adapted to sustainable practices, including renting instead of buying.

**Written by JEF Europe with  
contributions and input from the  
European Consumer Organisation  
(BEUC) and SGI Europe.**

11.

## *Strengthening a sovereign EU voice in diplomacy*



The European Union was founded to promote peace and unity after centuries of conflict, yet the resurgence of conflict on the continent and its surroundings since the 1990s has shown the limits of the current system in the areas of foreign policy and defence.

Competing interests abroad, neglected defence capabilities and a reluctance to take an active role on the global stage has meant that the EU has not been able to live up to its potential as a global leader promoting peace, democracy and human rights. In order to uphold international norms in an increasingly turbulent world, the EU will have to become a stronger diplomatic force.

Foreign affairs continue to be decided at the national level, however **a more efficient and democratic foreign policy** is needed for the EU to meet the expectations of its citizens. The European Parliament has comparatively little power in this area which remains largely under the domain of the Council of the EU. Member States have followed different and sometimes conflicting foreign policies as no consensus can be reached. Competencies are also not clearly distinguished between institutions.

Thus, **foreign policy must increasingly become an EU competence by removing the unanimity principle** in the Council and giving increased democratic oversight to the European Parliament to ensure the EU's foreign policy is more transparent and representative. One of the main concerns among young people is Europe's security in light of the resurgence of war in the continent. The EU does not have its own defence force and the national character of European defence policy and industry has resulted in inefficient spending underperforming capabilities and weak geopolitical influence. **Achieving a true European Defence Union** is increasingly important to ensure peace.

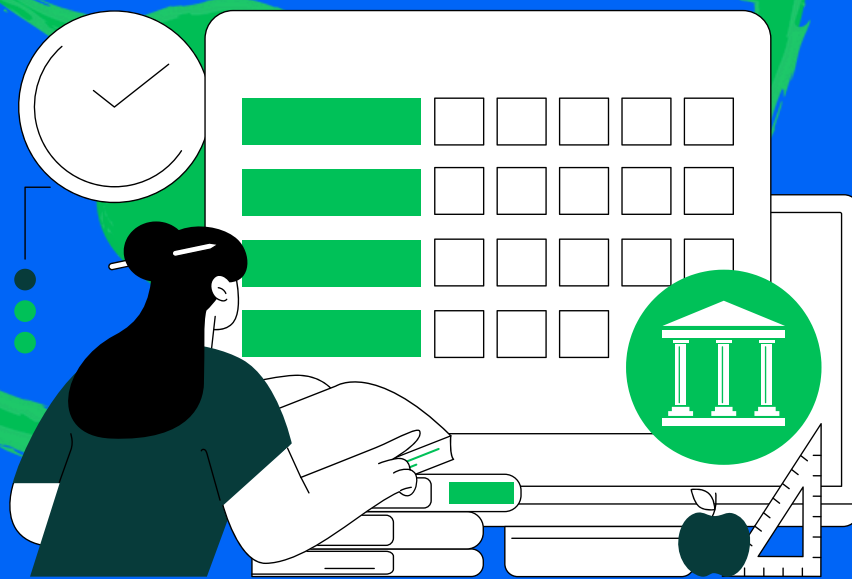
European defence capabilities need to be increasingly pooled together to establish a European defence force accountable to the European Parliament. The defence industries of the EU's Member States must be further integrated to create a more unified European defence industry which can meet European defence needs.

The EU's relations with the rest of the world has been a source of intense debate. While the EU in theory promotes human rights and democratic principles abroad, this rarely translates to its relations with international partners. **Promoting human rights and multilateralism across the globe must become a core principle of EU diplomacy and trade**, building closer political, cultural and economic links with democratic states and giving more democratic oversight to the European Parliament.

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## 12. *Enhancing measures at the European level to improve & coordinate education*



The higher-than-average unemployment rates of young people, the increasing social inequalities and the widespread lack of EU knowledgeability showcase that the education policies in Europe do not fulfil their role as a tool meant to decrease inequalities, raise awareness and promote values, while also preparing young people for the labour market and the entrepreneuring scene.

The EU does not address these problems suitably, while it tolerates inequality to access to high quality education and the existence of a multi-speed system in the European Higher Education Area.

Young people view education policy as pivotal to diminish social inequalities and see it as an accessible and inclusive public good. In this context, there is broad support that **all levels of education should be free** for everyone in the EU, while sizable inflation-adjusted scholarships should enable universal access to learning opportunities and to educational mobility, especially to people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal learning need to be better recognised. Income inequalities and barriers to educational mobility must be alleviated via a European plan for the **construction of affordable student residencies**.

An ambitious, inclusive and interdisciplinary **EU Citizenship Education Policy** is necessary for our education system to fulfil its social role. A **cross-sectoral approach to Active European Citizenship Education** through Erasmus+ must be adopted. Member States and EU institutions must develop together an interdisciplinary European Active Citizenship Education curriculum through participatory educational methods, on acquiring competences and EU knowledge. In addition, **education must be added as a specific area of action in the European Semester**, the EU framework for coordination and surveillance of economic and social policies. More targeted financial support for youth organisations involved in civic education must be granted.

Europe's diversity is rightfully reflected upon the diversity of our education systems. However, we need **common minimum standards for student participation in the administration** of educational institutes and for inclusion and anti-discrimination. Additionally, Member States and European institutions must take measures to ensure that the **Bologna Process fulfils its role to lead to the cohesion of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, as it is currently devolving into a multi-speed system. Finally, it is indispensable for all university diplomas to be automatically recognised by all employers and authorities in Europe in an unbureaucratic way.

**Written by JEF Europe with  
contributions and input from  
Erasmus Student Network (ESN) and  
the European Students' Union (ESU).**

13.

## *Strengthening EU action on inclusive and harmonised healthcare systems*



The economic crises have led to Member States cutting public spending leading also to reduced capacities in social and healthcare sectors.

Besides common action taken during the COVID-19 pandemic and the EU4Health programme, healthcare still largely falls into Member States' capacity.

Accessible and affordable high standards of healthcare for all in Europe remains a challenge, especially when travelling.

The EU and its Member States need **more cooperation**, in general and for facing future crises. Through coordination of services across borders, ideally better services can be delivered to people in remote, isolated and border regions as requested by young people. **Common care standards** and coordination could also improve access to cancer and other health screenings as well as to free psychological and **mental health services everywhere** which young people also proposed.

To develop a **European Health Union capable of delivering universal public healthcare that is free or affordable** as proposed by young people, the organisation and funding of health needs to be ensured on the European level through **own resources**.

If such structures are established on European level, their funding and control should be on the European level to avoid them from being dependent on shifts in Member State priorities, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

Now the EU can only support and complement national policies with regards to public health. Making **health a shared competence of the EU** through treaty reform to create a European Health Union could improve access to healthcare.

The EU could share patient data in a more flexible manner and initiatives such as EU-wide electronic identification would complement the European Health Insurance Card. This would help access services outside the country of residence, beyond emergency health care, as requested by the young people. The EU should support cooperation of health services and the interlinkage of their systems with relevant local authorities.

The EU should continue the **joint procurement** of medicine and medical material started during the COVID-19 crisis and coordinate research across the Union. It could for example establish a permanent European Hospital and Medical Research Institute to **pool resources for treating and researching** the rarest and most complex medical procedures and treatment, in particular for rare diseases as demanded by young people.

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14.

## *Creating a more efficient European legal framework for immigration*



The EU has proved itself totally unprepared and failed to protect human rights, tackle the humanitarian crisis faced by asylum seekers and protect immigrants from discrimination. Member states are reacting unilaterally and against the common European interest.

Negative narratives of media and politicians negate or misrepresent the importance of people with lived migration experiences as an integral part of Europe contributing to its prosperity.

We need **a common policy on migration, asylum, subsidiary protection and temporary protection** which fully complies with the European Convention on Human Rights and respects the non-refoulement principle. Young people differentiate between unregulated and regulated migration and asylum, and want to tackle so-called “illegal migration”. To do so, there needs to be **harmonised, fair and unbureaucratic rules and procedures for asylum and regulated migration**. Furthermore, the EU must enhance safe routes to combat smugglers and human traffickers and restore trust in its policy - for its population and for people seeking shelter or a better future in Europe.

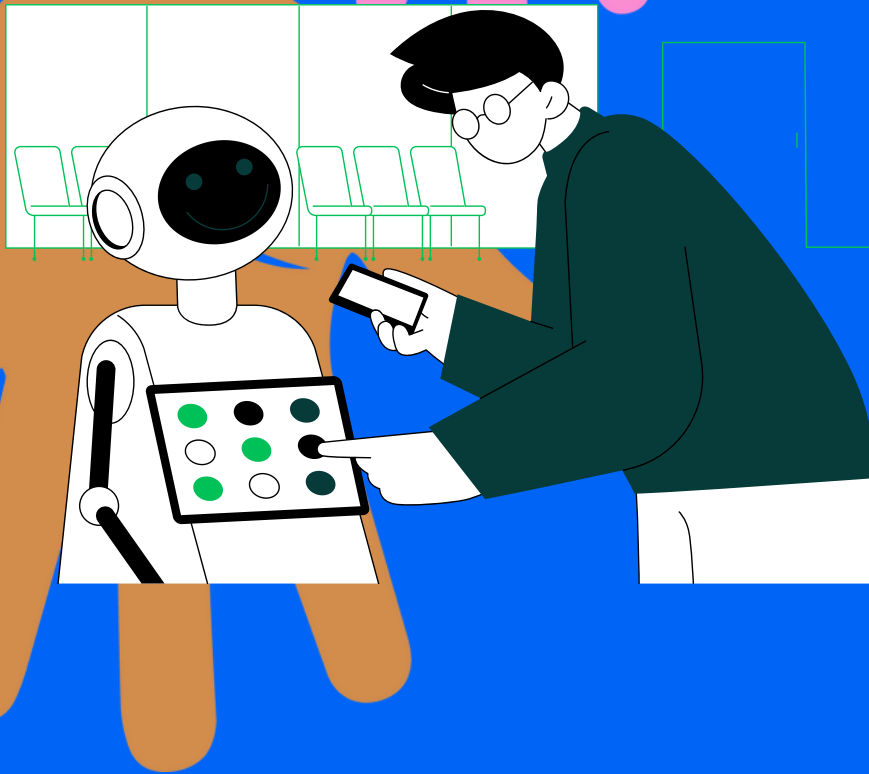
The **Common European Asylum Policy must fully respect EU values, human rights, and rely on responsibility and solidarity**, including with the countries of entry. Moreover, it is crucial that the processing of asylum applications be done in a timely and fair manner. Thereafter, appropriate assistance must be provided to refugees, while those not entitled to asylum must be repatriated. Every case must be examined individually, with respect to the dignity, agency and well-being of asylum seekers. Frontex has to respect European and international law and act in accordance with our values, to search and rescue all in danger in the sea, to abstain from push backs and be held accountable if not. Finally, we must raise awareness about the needed reform of the outdated Geneva Convention, while strengthening monitoring and enforcement to ensure that Member States respect their obligations under the Convention.

The integration of migrant communities requires coherent measures for their inclusion in the social, political and cultural life and for fair chances in education and work. EU institutions and Member states have to establish **mechanisms to assess and match the skills of immigrants with the labour market and to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications** - but also to support them in pursuing their education and upskilling, including a good understanding of the EU and awareness of European citizenship. A long-term vision presupposes cooperation with young migrants and organisations, to create a mechanism to report migrants' discriminatory experiences.

**Written by JEF Europe with  
contributions and input from Voicify  
- The European Forum for Youth  
With Lived Migration Experience.**

15.

## *Supporting research, innovation and technology in Europe*



It is essential to support research and development of Europe's own high tech and digital sector, with strong regulations guaranteeing both compliance and innovation, while also aiming for a socially thoughtful digital transition involving the social economy.

Skill and capacity building is needed to improve digital literacy, inclusion, and work prospects.

The EU should also foster startup clusters or centres of competitiveness dedicated to the general interest.

Young people want to see a **prioritisation of research and innovation** in Europe, to remain competitive on the global stage and effectively tackle future challenges while guaranteeing self-sufficiency. In this area, Artificial Intelligence plays a central role. To that effect, it is essential to **support research on high tech industry, digital affairs and Artificial Intelligence** in the EU, calling on Member States and private actors to mobilise investment. Besides the importance of funding, regulation needs to be a cornerstone of Europe's model of innovation. To that end there is a need to **set in place regulatory/supervisory bodies for Artificial Intelligence and new technologies** that ensure compliance with our values while not hindering innovation.

The establishment of Europe of research and innovation, with a dedicated European centre dedicated to scientific and technological innovation, to reduce unemployment, is also seen as a need by young people. In particular, the EU could create a **European model of startup clusters or centres of competitiveness dedicated to the general interest**, integrating researchers of the human sciences field and players in the Social Economy. The Social Economy, including civil society, has many assets for developing AI and digital centres of excellence in Europe.

Indeed, the push for a renewed wave of technological innovation must involve the wider society and benefit it via an identification and mapping of social needs and set out real economic models for inclusion through training and employment in the digital economy. To mitigate the negative consequences that digital innovation can have in society, setting up **training for all to reduce digital illiteracy** is key. In particular, it is important to **fund the wider digital transition of Social and Solidarity Economy organisations**, so that social economy actors master digital literacy/tools and promote digital inclusion. Being in direct contact with the most vulnerable groups, i.e. those who are far from employment and education, they have a direct way for action to guarantee solidarity and social cohesion.

Written by JEF Europe with  
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