

# **JEF Europe Strategy 2021-2024**

Together for a free and united Europe

In recent years, Europe has been going from one crisis to another, with the European Union prioritising ad-hoc intergovernmental problem-solving over a long-term vision for the structural improvement of the system. As a federalist organisation, JEF Europe is a movement of young Europeans unhappy with this status quo and committed to changing it to respond to global challenges and realising its democratic values. Being aware that a European Federation will not be established overnight, we have to constantly monitor the political situation for external windows of opportunity for political change, while at the same time keeping the network members motivated for continuing a fight that does not always yield visible results in a short-term perspective. For that reason, JEF Europe needs a strategy for its external engagement and internal growth over a medium-term period.

This strategy was developed following a round of network-wide consultations in September 2020. It aims to operationalise the long-term political and organisational goals articulated in JEF Europe's Statutes and Political Platform, and define the objectives for the organisation in the period 2021-2024. These objectives are formulated under four main themes: network unity, inclusive development and capacity building, political and social impact, and communication and media. The document outlines priorities and responsibilities for the whole network, aiming to involve JEFers at the European, national, regional and local level in their implementation. The strategy will be complemented by annual action plans containing progress indicators, whose implementation will be monitored by the organisation's Executive Board.

## **1. A Committed JEF**

Commitment to a common cause is what keeps organisations and social movements together. JEF is a mosaic of more than 250 sections in over 30 countries defined by a shared pattern of commitment to a more united and democratic Europe. This diversity is an asset that should be cherished, but can, at times, also lead to major differences and struggles to find a common denominator in certain areas. JEF Europe should strive to balance its ambition to find a common vision of one Europe with respect for the diversity of opinions and approaches, as reflected by the principle of subsidiarity.

At the same time, speaking with one voice externally can only make the organisation stronger. This is why JEF should strive to coordinate its advocacy efforts between the European, national and local levels, ensuring that the organisation fully benefits from its extensive network of members. This cooperation should take place both vertically and horizontally to strengthen synergies and cultivate ownership of the federalist struggle by all its members.

### **Objectives:**

- 1.1. Ensure all members share a commitment to the basic vision of a united and democratic Europe by raising awareness of federalism within the network, including through the Federalist Academy.
- 1.2. Regularly consult members on the political direction the organisation should take and coordinate political advocacy efforts across the whole network by sharing guidelines for action, including in the area of communication and social media.
- 1.3. Continue coordinating pan-European projects and campaigns that involve large parts of the network in shared activities.
- 1.4. Extend the role of Political Commissions to become spaces for continuous and inclusive political debate beyond the preparation of resolutions.
- 1.5. Continue the efforts to keep the 'Friends of JEF' active, as well as finding new ways of engaging the alumni group.
- 1.6. Motivate all network members to become active at the European level, compete for political positions, and develop professionally as part of the network.

## **2. A JEF that works for all**

No organisation can exist without its members. The more, and more committed, members JEF has all over the continent, the stronger it can speak up for a federal Europe. Being a youth organisation, JEF should offer attractive opportunities for critical pro-European engagement to young Europeans representing different generations and coming from different regions of the continent, as well as different backgrounds. Promoting European unity, it should also aim to have capable members in as many countries as possible. This is why it will continuously strive to develop its network both quantitatively and qualitatively, extending its size and strengthening the capacity to reach its objectives. The growth of the organisation as a whole should be also reflected by the individual growth of its members.

Achieving this will not be possible without ensuring respect for diversity. Inclusion is key to keeping the organisation open to everyone who shares its values, as well as ensuring the wellbeing of all members. JEF Europe should create a safe and accessible environment where everyone can grow and contribute in a rewarding way, while aiming to go beyond the 'usual suspects', both as communication target groups and potential members.

The capacity as well as external and internal accountability of an organisation is to a large extent determined by its commitment to competency, quality, transparency, and sustainable financial management. To remain an effective and resilient organisation, JEF Europe should continue its professionalisation based on these values while promoting them at all levels of the network.

### **Objectives:**

- 2.1. Ensure adequate resources for network development and capacity building by distributing relevant tasks in the Secretariat or creating a dedicated position.
- 2.2. Support the creation of a stable and active section with at least 50 members in each European country that has more than 5 million citizens.
- 2.3. Provide organisational, technical and financial support for sections to build their capacity to promote federalism internally and externally, especially in places where JEF presence is weaker like the United Kingdom, Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the South Caucasus.
- 2.4. Organise regular capacity building training courses for JEF members using non-formal education methods and prepare resources for activists.
- 2.5. Provide more opportunities for volunteers to gain professional experience within the organisation.
- 2.6. Support the development of Task Forces to make them attractive spaces for transnational JEF activism and help them contribute to the long-term work of JEF by producing outputs for the whole network.
- 2.7. Roll out a membership database with delegated access for the whole network.
- 2.8. Create an open library of events and resources organised and produced in the network.
- 2.9. Prepare statements and campaigns on social affairs as well as projects that can build bridges with and engage members from marginalised groups.
- 2.10. Continue to raise awareness of the JEF Code of Conduct during all activities.

- 2.11. Develop an evaluation strategy with quality indicators, as well as collect and analyse feedback and self-evaluation consistently from all levels of the network.
- 2.12. Create a central database of lessons learnt and use it regularly while planning events, campaigns and other activities as well as preparing strategic documents.
- 2.13. Continue diversifying the sources of funding and revenue incomes.

### **3. An Influential JEF**

JEF Europe advocates for the creation of a democratic European federation based on its Statutes, Political Platform and Resolutions. Federalism should become part of the agenda of all political parties and be a common ingredient of policy-making in Europe, contributing to an ever closer Union that speaks with an increasingly coherent voice and gradually encompasses the whole continent. This Europe we want can better address its own challenges and promote multilateralism globally, supporting world federalism as the next step towards making international relations peaceful and people-centric.

JEF Europe will continue developing innovative policy solutions and seek their implementation at the European, national and local level, in cooperation with its Members and external partners, to maximise its policy impact. True to its transpartisan character, it will foster policy dialogue across party lines and create bridges between decision-makers and citizens, especially younger ones. JEF members and young Europeans at large should be at the forefront of this change, confidently promoting federalism as a solution of the present and new generation for the ills of the old system.

#### **Objectives:**

- 3.1. Put federalism on the agenda of political parties and decision-makers through coordinated political advocacy and awareness-raising using potential windows of opportunity.
- 3.2. Promote policy documents as sources of concrete solutions that can be embraced by governments and institutions to address major contemporary challenges.
- 3.3. Actively contribute to the development of political thought in Europe by participating in panels, debates and research initiatives involving subject-matter experts.
- 3.4. Strengthen cooperation with federalist MEPs and MPs, in lockstep with JEF national sections, by fostering and supporting the creation of federalist intergroups (such as the Spinelli Group) in the European Parliament and in national parliaments, as well as further develop relationships with Political Party Youth Organisations and decision-makers beyond the usual political circles.
- 3.5. Continue developing partnerships with other organisations through permanent platforms such as the European Youth Forum and Civil Society Europe, or ad-hoc project consortia, raising awareness of federalism inside these structures, as well as finding synergies for greater political impact.
- 3.6. Cooperate and coordinate with other pro-European and federalist organisations and associations, when possible, to achieve common goals;
- 3.7. Embrace thematic areas of activity (e.g. environmental protection, education, sports) as strategic venues for federalist advocacy and partnership development.
- 3.8. Maximise the synergy between its policy and activities, ensuring that implemented projects are in line with the political agenda of the organisation.
- 3.9. Continue raising awareness on European affairs through non-formal education at the local level, including through the Europe@School programme.



#### **4. A Loud and visible JEF**

Nationalism is often the default methodological approach of most decision-makers and citizens. Federalism might, in turn, be perceived as too abstract and linked with numerous taboos that have to be dispersed through skillful communication. To achieve its goals, JEF should therefore be able to send clear and impactful messages to broad audiences, while making federalism understandable, relatable and attractive to all Europeans, especially younger ones. As the Covid-19 pandemic has made the reliance on online communication even greater, JEF Europe should seize the opportunity and strengthen its presence in the European digital sphere.

Developing partnerships with the media is crucial for a successful communication strategy. This is why JEF Europe will seek ways to develop and expand its media presence on the local, national and European level, aiming to become a recognised contributor to public debates on European issues.

Communication campaigns are an effective political advocacy tool that can be also used to increase the visibility of the organisation, while referring to issues broadly discussed by the European public. JEF Europe will continue implementing its regular campaigns and develop new initiatives that support its political agenda and bring the network together.

#### **Objectives:**

- 4.1. Take a strategic, data-driven approach to identify key target groups and determine the most effective ways of reaching them, to encompass the whole network at European, national and local level.
- 4.2. Make its communication accessible to broad audiences and engage its Members in preparing different linguistic versions of key messages and promotional materials.
- 4.3. Develop relationships with key media outlets (e.g. Euractiv, Financial Times, Politico, EUobserver, national press) by offering contributions on relevant topics and exploring possibilities to increase the quotation of press releases.
- 4.4. Organise campaigns and petitions involving the whole network on topics linked with federalism, such as institutional changes in the EU, rule of law, human/fundamental rights, the socio-economic situation and climate change.
- 4.5. Complement its quality political statements with the occasional use of smart visibility stunts social media actions to raise awareness of certain issues.