



Europe
for Citizens



A NEW SCHUMAN DECLARATION

One of the main goals of the “NEW Schuman Declaration - Cross-Generational Conversation about a NEW Europe” project was to both familiarize young people with the history of the European Union and to encourage them to participate in realizing its present and in writing its future. As an immediate way to achieve this goal, a contest for thematic essays and drawings was held in the four countries that partnered in the project.

As planned, based on samples of the best essays we received and evaluated by competent juries, we compiled a “New Schuman Declaration” - thus it was written by young people from Bulgaria, Greece, Poland and Spain.

Each paragraph in the text below is the work of different girls and boys from the four different countries, united in their vision of Europe as our common home we all must take care for. We are proud that through our project we contribute to the growth of even more aware and responsible European citizens.

The young authors update Schuman’s ideas with their personal position, fresh outlook and youthful fervor, from which we can - and it is in our common interest - draw inspiration for the development of the European Union so that it becomes an even better place to live for all of us and the future generations.

The historic beginning of our European journey is being marked in a year when we are forced to think about the challenges that will shape the near future of the European Union. Through cooperation and joint work, in a spirit of openness and inclusiveness, it is possible to find solutions to these challenges, through concrete responses to the concerns and hopes of every European citizen in all the countries that are part of the Union, and through building tools for European solidarity.

The first two decades of the 21st century put human values to the test, confronting international political and economic entities with challenges that largely threaten the peaceful existence of all nations and peoples. Alarming climate changes, moments of crisis destabilization of the open economy and integration processes, the emergence and deepening of Euroscepticism and populism, cybercrime, the rise of terrorism, human and drug trafficking, and biological threats are just some of the many trials we face today.

In this context, the project “NEW Schuman Declaration - Cross-Generational Conversation about a NEW Europe” seems to fit perfectly. Despite the current problems, the achievements of the European Union are undeniable. Just think of the double protection of human rights provided by the European Convention on Human Rights and especially the Charter of Nice, the possibility to move, work and live freely in the Schengen area, the Erasmus projects that allow thousands of young people to enrich themselves through intercultural exchange, the social funds.

The Europe of the future is in the hands of young people, but young people must be properly educated, they must have a thorough knowledge of the structure, functioning, history and values of the European Union, without relying on the populist rhetoric of some national parties. In an increasingly

fast-paced and interconnected world, nationalist regurgitation seems both anachronistic and dangerous.

A compulsory class on “European Union” will be the way for the young generation to grow up with the idea of the European Union as a community in which everyone has rights but also obligations, in which everyone receives as well as gives. A union in which we are one, but not framed. We can be ourselves, express our position, be an “engine” for change.

Europe is the most favorable place to live in the world today, but it is also no stranger to economic and interpersonal difficulties. War, as history knows it, is present in our days now in an unusual form - stumbling blocks in the relations of Europeans due to a series of differences, uneven modernization of countries and unfairness in the remuneration of certain workers. In order to avoid possible verbal “bloodshed”, work is needed to reduce formalities, overcome discrimination, fair punishments for crime, and equal support for all Europeans leading a legal and socially acceptable way of life.

Although Europe is a union that promotes unity, I am concerned that in the future, if immediate action is not taken, the European system will begin to collapse due to racial differences and racism. Phenomena resulting from a lack of education and autonomous critical thinking.

I would like people to cooperate with politicians. Decisions about our lives should not be made in the interest of the government, but by taking into account the opinion of the people.

The concept of the politics of the governing circles and that of the governed peoples diverges, which is precisely why there are still wars in the world. Therefore, I believe that the great responsibility falls on young people to “write” a new definition of PEACE, a new program for POLITICS, a new MORAL CODE for Europe and the world.

Citizens and young people must play their part, but it is up to Member States to put the proposed ideas into practice. We are at a point of no return - either we leap into the future or the European idea risks disintegration.

Schuman once created the declaration so that a future global, perhaps nuclear, war could be avoided. But today is the time to realize that we are on the brink of extinction, not from war, but from our daily actions. The climate is changing dramatically and it will lead to catastrophic changes, so now is the time to act. Europe has recently been making many environmental decisions and is starting to think in the direction of stopping global warming.

Protecting the environment is important for the quality of life of today and future generations. The challenge is to combine ecology with the economy in such a way as to achieve long-term sustainable development.

Stricter criminal liability for environmental pollution, increased control over poaching - all this will help to solve environmental problems. These measures will not be so effective if they do not also raise people’s consciousness. It is necessary to raise the ecological culture of mankind, to form an understanding that nature should be used without harming it.

We are what we set as an example to our loved ones, our friends and our children. I appeal to all of us to be more responsible and to observe not only personal hygiene, but also global hygiene, in view of the polluted environment we live in. If we take our small steps towards big things, then our life will not be meaningless, but on the contrary - with a cause and a purpose for a better future.

I have a utopian idea of safe countries where girls go home alone at night without fear, wear the clothes they want without worrying about being attacked because of them. Girls wearing make-up however they like without being branded with various unpleasant definitions. Men for whom it is not

taboo to cry. Men who keep their hands where they should be, because a woman is touched only with permission.

Society must deal with old problems in order to find new solutions. Addressing the problem of gender discrimination and violence is an issue affecting many, if not all, walks of life. A woman should not be afraid of being a woman! A child should not feel fear! No matter what country we live in, we are all human. We need to empathize and show solidarity, not turn a blind eye because something didn't happen to us.

Europe is faced with the need to rethink the concept of border, which can hardly be reconciled with the idea of universal human equality, one of the fundamental principles on which European civilization is based. The refugee problem reveals the inevitable gap between the inclusive logic of universal human rights and the prerogative of the nation-state to exclude the undesirable. Indeed, as a result of a one-sided process of definition by countries of destination, the figure of the refugee is emblematic of the contradiction of a state-centric system in response to demands for justice and belonging in the current global society. It also demonstrates the limitations of our systems for protecting the poor and vulnerable, based on the fiction of national societies bounded by national fences.

But here Schuman's words have never been truer; "Europe will not be created all at once or according to one plan. It will be built through concrete achievements that first create de facto solidarity."

Schumann also talks about Africa. I think now is an opportune time for the European Union to show its humanity, empathy and philanthropy by deciding, for example, that all vegetables which don't meet the requirements of a 'commercial' type should be donated to starving countries instead of being thrown into landfill.

I dream of a civilization in which there will be no "small and big" ones, "poor and rich", "influential and insignificant". Differences in standard of living and influence are inevitable, and it is a primordial truth that underlies enterprise, imagination, will and industry, innovation and progressive thought. But all young people, and not just young people in Europe, should get an equal start in life.

There is no single plan to ensure the embodiment of an ideal Europe. The process of realizing a prosperous, green, united society is slow, but each effort brings us one step closer to the desired future. We Europeans must return to our roots, remember the ideals of our forefathers and work together for future generations.

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