

# CENTRAL EUROPEAN YOUTH MANIFESTO



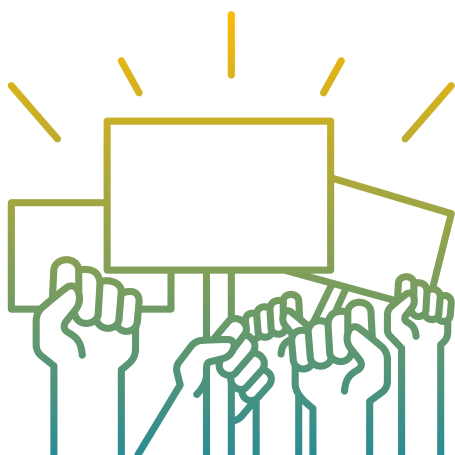
# PREAMBLE

Young Europeans from four different Central European countries joined a common project: **MY REVOLUTION**. Our goal is not just to discuss youth rights and youth participation, but to fill these words with life. We build a bridge from important milestones in the past – like the first European Parliament elections in 1979 and the Fundamental Rights Charter 2000 – to the present. We looked at the eventful political times of **1990**, especially the end of the Cold War as well as the end of Apartheid in South Africa. We connected these moments of change in Europe's recent history with present youth movements, like *Fridays For Future*. For us, participation means not just electing our representatives, but also formulating our political ideas and demands and communicating them to those in a position to implement changes.

More than 300 young people living in Austria, Italy, Poland, and Slovenia met in workshops at the end of 2021 to learn about and discuss the year **1990** and its political happenings. On this basis, we developed our political demands for today, which are connected to the time of change of the **1990s**. At two international conferences in Ljubljana and Vienna in March and April 2022, around 80 of us had the chance to exchange thoughts and arguments in person and finalize our political demands, which we will present to Members of the European Parliament and other politicians.

The outcome of this cooperation is the present **CENTRAL EUROPEAN YOUTH MANIFESTO**, in which we express our common demands. We address them to the political decision-makers of the European Union, as well as national decision-makers. We highlight the importance of maintaining humanitarian and democratic principles and we emphasize the necessity of environmental protection and climate justice as the most urgent questions of our time.

The framework for our cooperation is the project „**MY REVOLUTION – Reflections of 1990 for youth rights and participation today**“, funded by the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union. The project is coordinated by Südwind (Austria), WeWorld (Italy), Buy Responsible Foundation (Poland), and Focus (Slovenia).



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# I. YOUTH THOUGHTS ON THE CURRENT SYSTEM



The first chapter of the present manifesto is dedicated to our thoughts on the current socio-economic system – with a focus on the critique of capitalism and neo-imperialism. It is out of question that the current way of our system meets its limits every day and that change is needed urgently. We believe it is essential to understand the underlying system and mechanisms as well as their shortcomings to understand why they are failing – like a doctor must understand the disease before treating it. Only through this critique and analysis, we can start to understand how to replace it with a better system that will enable decent life on a liveable planet.

## **1. The ruling capitalist mode of production is unsustainable, exploits workers, and destroys nature.**

The leading cause for many of the problems we discuss in the manifesto is the capitalist mode of production. People who own the means of production – capital – have more power. They have to exploit workers, who have to work for a living, to make the highest profit because of the competition. This leads to the destruction of workers' health and lives and has brought us to the environmental crisis. It is clear that this imbalance in power needs to be addressed in order to move to a fairer way of production and living.

## **2. Our elections systems are not democratic and direct enough.**

We believe that our representative election systems are not democratic enough. In some countries, we can only vote for representatives of the parties who more or less have destructive neoliberal ideologies. We believe that our election system is not democratic enough since we do not directly elect the people who represent us. Therefore, we have no possibility to recall politicians who do not work in our interests and do not feel our interests are being represented.

## **3. Against the imperialistic role of NATO and other (sub-) imperialisms.**

We believe that NATO plays an imperialistic role in the world by enabling the USA to spread its economic interests through non-economic means. It keeps aggressively spreading and provoking non-NATO countries. Therefore, we believe that NATO should be either dismantled or fully reformed to prevent it from serving private economic interests.

# II. YOUTH DEMANDS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, MEDIA & DEMOCRACY



In these last few years, we have witnessed a decline in democracies all over the world and alarming incidents of human rights violations. Especially the current war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine has shown how fragile democracies can be if their sovereignty does not get respected. This war has been accompanied by many human rights violations as well as violations against international law. We demand that such acts of aggression are not left unanswered and that the affected people get the support they need. After all, it is especially crucial right now to show aggressors worldwide that democracy is one of the most valuable and important human achievements that must - and will get protected.

But we do not only demand to address these recent acts of aggression and human rights violations by Russia. We also demand all other democracy backslidings in the EU to be seen and addressed. The disregard and cutting back of democratic values and core principles like the freedom of speech, the right of asylum, or respect and equality must not be tolerated. We, as citizens of democratic European countries, must use our privilege and give a voice to those in need. The same we expect from our representatives in the European Parliament.

We chose equality and equity as the overarching subject of our demands regarding Human Rights, Political Participation, Media, and Democracy. We believe that all the following issues regarding these topics are connected to inequality and therefore should be addressed from an intersectional and holistic perspective.

## 1. Intersectional Equality and Equity

- We demand zero tolerance for any form of discrimination based on race, sexual orientation, gender, and religion. Regarding religious discrimination, it is especially important to us to ask for no tolerance of islamophobia as there are alarming numbers of related discrimination incidents and hate crimes EU-wide. Minority rights must be protected and respected in all EU countries, and we expect the EU to act accordingly by all means.
- We also call for the promotion of more diversity in positions of power and decision-making. It is not enough to talk about the importance to include people of all genders, ages, migration backgrounds, religions, or (dis)abilities. There must be more binding efforts to fill these words with life.
- Accordingly, we call for the promotion of more diverse religious spaces to increase tolerance and access. However, the funding of religious institutions by the states should be limited, especially regarding prevalent religions in EU member states. We demand that politics and education do not stand under any influence of religion or religious institutions.

## ★ 2. LGBTQI+ and gender rights

- We demand marriage to be legal for everyone – regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, and sexual identity – in all EU countries.
- Relatedly, we demand more legal protection for LGBTQI+ individuals. It is essential to protect the rights and lives of LGBTQI+ individuals EU-wide, as they are often one of the most vulnerable groups in our society – especially if they are faced with intersectional discrimination. For example, young LGBTQI+ people can also face the consequences of climate change more harshly if they are forced to move out of their family homes and live on the street. They are also frequently victims of hate crimes, especially if they are suffering from multiple forms of discrimination.
- Regarding the protection of LGBTQI+ individuals, we also ask for the removal of barriers to gender-affirming transitions. Everybody must get the access they need in order to feel themselves in their body – including minorities and the youth. There is no reason to restrict transition journeys for young people out of fear they have not thought it through. No one should be deciding over someone's identity other than the individual themselves – no matter their age. The solution should be focused on giving them access to all the support and information they need to make an informed decision – and not blocking access to it.
- We also demand a more inclusive sex education in schools to increase visibility and tolerance of LGBTQI+ individuals and topics. Hereby the access to inclusive and LGBTQI+ sensible sex education would also be increased, which is especially important now that we see a shocking conservative turn-around regarding sex education in the US. Offering inclusive and sensible sex education only increases the (sexual) safety of young people, which should be at the center of this kind of education.

### 3. Sexual Freedom

- We call for better and easier access to a legal process and victims' rights in the case of sexual abuse and assaults in all EU countries. Sexual abuse in all forms must be prosecuted.
- Relatedly, safety in public spaces for people of all genders and sexual identities must be ensured – also legally. Such crimes must be prosecuted in order to protect the individuals and to show no tolerance for sexual assaults and harassment. This is especially important to prevent femicides, which are at an alarmingly high rate in Austria, for example.
- We also ask for the promotion of sexual consent legally, like is the case in Denmark, so a “culture of femicide” can be prevented.

### 4. Youth Rights and Political Participation

- We demand the promotion of a sustainable way of living in order to achieve intergenerational justice and to allow the youth to live a sustainable life as well.
- Furthermore, we demand to increase the democratic participation of young people in the EU by lowering the minimum age for voters to 16 years of age as well as the minimum age for politicians to 18 years of age EU-wide. In order to achieve that, we ask MEPs to make suggestions to their national states or parliaments. Another way to increase youth participation could be regular meetings with politicians on a local and national level.
- Regarding general political participation, we ask for more referendums to be held nationally but also on EU level to increase the democratic engagement of the public.
- Finally, we demand an increase in the implementation of digital tools (for example, Apps like the “Citizens’ App”, websites or platforms) through which the public can keep up with current debates and decision-making processes in the EU. Hereby, transparency, as well as accessibility and accountability of political decisions in the EU, would get increased.

### 5. Transparent Media

- We call for state-owned media to be politically neutral and objective. Especially in some states in Eastern Europe, it can be observed that some media outlets are increasingly influenced by political agendas. This must be prevented on the EU level to have a higher instance to keep the member states accountable.
- Accordingly, we demand the promotion of rule-compliant journalism to prevent the spread of fake news and propaganda as well as the misuse of freedom of speech.
- Additionally, freedom of speech should be promoted in all EU countries where it is not fully realized yet. We believe the EU must make efforts to enforce the solution of such human-rights-related issues in their relations with all member states by checking related developments regularly and making improvements conditional if necessary.
- Lastly, we ask for more political education for students in schools in the EU, as well as more education about the current socio-economical system. We perceive the current education systems to be unsuitable for preparing students for life as young adults. Therefore, those topics and skills should already be addressed in school in order to support young people to navigate through life in our society and to also encourage their identity as politically participative citizens.

# III. YOUTH DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, ANIMAL RIGHTS & CLIMATE CRISIS



The environmental crisis is truly a crisis of consciousness which confirms that everything on our planet is interconnected, interdependent and complementary. Most people know that the natural world is facing challenges and degradation, but only a few are fully aware of the realistic dimension of the situation and its extended effects on human welfare and all other life on earth. Our generation has been given the task of overcoming perhaps the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. We are here to secure the stability of our future environmentally, economically, and socially, for we cannot destroy its biodiversity, alter the climate, and continue living off the wealth of future generations without condemning ourselves and the basis of our civilization in the process.

The recent natural disaster in the past two years – like the wildfires in Australia or the US, the flood in Germany, and now the floods in Australia – are serious warning signs. These warning signs are not taken serious enough though, as the insufficient results of COP26 and other political decisions globally regarding climate change show. We need to change now and reduce the harm we caused and currently are still causing to our planet. That is why we, the European youth, demand the following immediate changes:

## CLIMATE CHANGE

### ★ 1. Stop burning fossil fuels

- We demand a binding and quick exit from fossil fuels and fossil energy in all EU member states. The current war in Ukraine has exposed the strong dependence of EU countries on fossil fuels, especially from Russia. We are aware that energy security has to be ensured before pulling out of the current era of energy. However, the current energy crisis due to the Russian war must not be used as an excuse to fall back on those harmful ways of energy production. We also condemn the still ongoing cooperation regarding fossil fuel matters with the Russian regime. By still paying Russia millions of Euros daily, the EU is undoubtedly helping to finance Russia's acts of aggression against Ukraine.



Instead, the focus must lie on serious efforts to invest in and expand clean energy alternatives, like solar-, wind-, water-, geothermal energy, or sustainable hydrogen. It has been known for decades that this step is inevitable and now European countries must deal with their failures in this matter instead of trying to delay such actions further – because that is simply not an option much longer.

## 2. Transportation Emissions

- Another step to reduce our impact on the planet is sustainable mobility. We ask for the enabling of such by providing easy and cheap access to transportation alternatives. Primarily we ask for universally available electric public transport.
- We also demand the increase of electric car-sharing and bike-sharing offers as well as the development of better bicycle infrastructure. These alternatives must be accessible for anyone to increase their usage and to achieve a successful transition to sustainable mobility.

## 3. Meat Consumption

- Regarding the consumption of meat, we demand to stop taxation for vegan food. It is out of question that a plant-based diet is better for the planet and for one's health. Additionally, meat "production" or the raising and feeding of livestock contributes to the CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions. Therefore, high taxation on plant-based foods should be avoided to facilitate a change of these unsustainable food consumption habits.
- Furthermore, we demand to stop financing the meat industry and to tighten respective laws and standards to halt the continuing of the cruel and unethical practices that are inherent to this industry.
- We also call for the increased promotion of the sourcing of protein from insects.
- Another demand of ours regarding meat consumption is to disclose the water consumption per product on the product information. We believe consumers need to be able to keep track of the energy and resources that went into the products they buy in order to be able to make fully informed and sustainable decisions.
- Finally, we demand the introduction of more vegan and vegetarian options in school canteens and other canteens. Concerning this matter, we ask for the introduction of one "Veggie Day" in schools per week.

## ANIMAL RIGHTS

### 4. Stop Industrial Farming

- Related to our last demands, we ask for the ban of any form of poultry breeding that is not free-range. Cage-rearing but also floor systems are unethical practices and should not be tolerated anymore.
- We also demand to stop animal testing globally and in any case. It is simply not ethically justifiable to abuse other species when there is already enough scientific knowledge to avoid such practices.
- And lastly, we call for a ban on commercial fur production. Like animal testing, it cannot be justifiable to breed and kill animals for the single purpose of fashion. There are countless innovative alternatives to real-fur products in the textile industry nowadays. So, such practices are nothing but cruel and cause unnecessary suffering.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS**

### **5. Limit plastic packaging to one single type**

- In order to reduce plastic pollution and waste, we ask MEPs to promote the use of only one type of plastic packaging. Hereby, it would be easier to recycle these plastics efficiently. Also, the packaging could be made reusable and there could be established a deposit system for packaging.

### **6. Stop the use of pesticides to save biodiversity**

- We demand the ban of harmful pesticides and agrochemicals to protect our biodiversity. Biodiversity is one crucial factor in our planet's functioning and cannot simply get recovered once it is harmed. We also ask for a reduction in overusing foil for temporary use.

### **7. Easier repairing possibilities**

- We ask our MEPs to advocate for binding standards to make goods and products easier to repair/ get repaired. Using products longer will increase their product lifecycle, which is a crucial aspect of sustainable consumption. By using products longer (by being able to repair them), fewer other goods will be demanded and therefore this will lead to a slowing down of production. This is what we need for a change towards a sustainable and post-growth economy.

### **8. Develop ways to increase the longevity of non-meat products**

- We ask to support research regarding the longevity of non-meat products as this is another crucial factor to reduce the waste of foods. Saving food is important as over two billion people globally are already suffering from hunger or food scarcity. This number is projected to rise even more drastically by 2030, therefore it is important to save the resources we have and work on potential solutions.

# IV. YOUTH DEMANDS ON HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ISSUES



In recent years, we have seen a reduction in social services, which has impacted the life quality of our society's middle and lower classes. The gap between rich and poor in Europe has also widened, resulting in a decline in the quality of life for the majority of the population, both in Europe and globally. The deterioration and cuts to national healthcare systems' financial and staffing levels result in indecent healthcare conditions for citizens, which violates their rights. We require a new approach to healthcare priorities and social issues that will halt existing political and economic dynamics in our society and demand fairer and more social behavior. Over the last two years, the entire world has been plagued by a pandemic that has paralyzed the public health system and destabilized citizens' lives, resulting in numerous health, economic, and social consequences. During this time the mentioned issues became widely visible. But it became also clear that our healthcare systems are overburdened and need to be supported urgently. We urge European Union politicians to be more aware of people's needs and problems and to ensure the highest quality public and social services in order to improve people's lives.

Therefore, we call for:

## ★ 1. Free and accessible abortions

We demand access to free and safe abortions EU-wide, until at least the 12th week of pregnancy. Every pregnant person must have the right to decide about their own body and life, therefore such access to this health care procedure is crucial. Abortion must also be possible in all EU countries after the 12th week if the mother's (or expecting person's) life is in danger or if there are serious problems with the fetus.

## ★ 2. Universal healthcare system

We ask MEPs to work towards a universal healthcare system. The goal must be that anyone in the EU – regardless of their citizenship or residency status – has access to healthcare.

### **3. EU-wide app for personal documents**

- We call for an app that is accepted and accessible in all EU countries in which important personal documents (e.g., COVID certificates, national insurance, European health care, ID, driving license) can be stored on one's phone. Especially with the high mobility between EU countries, there is an increased need for an easy and universal method to have access to all personal documents in a non-physical form.

### **4. Better social security**

- We ask for better-quality social security. Particularly pensions should be calculated with the inflation and living circumstances in mind (e.g., location-based high rents; high medical bills etc.).

### **5. Free digital education**

- We demand the availability of free digital education for all. Education is not only a human right but also a necessity in order to access other human rights. Therefore, there should be more efforts to make education widely available in the EU. Additionally, the increased support for digital infrastructure is connected to this demand.

### **6. EU-wide state scholarships**

- We ask for the introduction of state scholarships for all students studying in the EU – regardless of their family background, financial situation, or grades. Education must be accessible to all students, and the current lack of scholarships or the high bureaucratic requirements are standing in the way of this right.

### **7. Accessible student housing**

- We demand the building of more student dorms. Accordingly to our last demand, the question of housing plays a crucial role in whether young people can afford their education or not. Therefore, access to housing options should be increased and held at low financial costs – for all nationalities.

### **8. Universal basic income**

- We demand the introduction of a universal basic income to reduce societal inequality in the EU. Such an introduction requires a lot of changes and efforts, but it has been studied that a universal basic income would allow people to sustain themselves financially with dignity. It has also been shown in numerous studies that such a basic income would not make people “lazier” as most people would still be depending on the income of a job. Instead, a basic income would allow them to look for a job they want to pursue and therefore can even increase motivation and productivity.

### **9. Building more cheap public apartments**

- We call for the building of more public apartments that are financially accessible. We see a need to act upon the increasing privatization of real estate and residential buildings, as this process goes along with higher rents that more and more people cannot afford.

## 10. Regulations on rent

- Lastly, we demand to regulate rents by introducing a maximum price per m<sup>2</sup>. We see a necessity for such a measure in order to combat the above-mentioned developments regarding rents.

# V. YOUTH DEMANDS ON MIGRATION AND MOBILITY



Migration and mobility are among the most pressing and topical issues currently being debated and discussed in Europe and around the world. The management and strategic approaches to this issue must focus on human existence. Population movements are a timeless phenomenon with periods of recession and outbreaks. In any case, transnational agreements and local authorities must treat refugees with respect while safeguarding their human rights and dignity. With the recent war in Ukraine, we have seen an unprecedented willingness in the EU to receive refugees and to support humanitarian aid. While we appreciate these efforts, it has also shown that European countries treat refugees of different nationalities unequally. Some refugees from Ukraine were even faced with racial discrimination and hindered from fleeing.

Such actions must be condemned, which is why we call for the equal treatment of all refugees. Asylum and the seeking of refuge are human rights and no country or institution should be allowed to decide upon an individual's "refuge-worthiness" without a proper and comprehensive asylum procedure. We need an organized and human-centered approach to manage migration and ensure that laws and rights are uniform in all EU member states. We believe that the following points are worthy of attention and demand a prompt response by the EU.

## MIGRATION

### 1. Framing of Migration

- We believe that the communication surrounding migration and how it is presented - especially in the media - need to be reviewed. Migration is a human phenomenon that has existed for thousands of years and has positively contributed to human development. We should not let it become a political issue that divides people instead of being a tool for embracing diversity and multiculturalism.

## ★ 2. IUS Soli

- We demand the right to citizenship in the country where a child is born, even if the parents are citizens of another country or do not have citizenship in the country they currently live in.

## 3. Comprehensive and accessible language courses

- In our opinion, migrants often find it difficult to integrate in schools and academic life or in professional working environments. While some countries do offer language courses, the hours are not long enough or quality resources are not provided - and evidently they are not sufficient to guarantee a high level of integration. As a result of this we ask for more comprehensive and complete language courses to be offered to migrants when they move to another country and actively seek to integrate into society.

## 4. Free language-teaching system

- Specifically, we are asking to create a serious language teaching system. One that is free of charge and where migrants can dedicate time and effort towards learning the target language. For example, 5 hours a day for 2 months before enrolling to a school and this study time could also count towards or be considered as regular school attendance.

## 5. Recognition of qualifications

- Often migrants face difficulty in having previous learning achievements recognized. Therefore, we call for the recognition of qualifications obtained in other countries to be simplified and, above all, for them to be accepted and transferable.

## 6. Simplification of bureaucratic processes

- We demand that bureaucratic processes be improved. It is not uncommon that migrants face lengthy waiting times to obtain official documents or permits. Furthermore, the costs associated with obtaining these documents at times can be too high. Taking this into consideration, we demand improved and cheaper bureaucratic processes.

## ★ 7. Equal treatment of refugees

- Currently, we are witnessing the welcoming and accommodating of Ukrainian refugees by many European countries. We are highly pleased to see this positive approach. However, rather than stop here, we believe that the current situation represents a real opportunity to expand the welcoming efforts of EU member states. If Ukrainians fleeing war can be received and helped, we ask the European Union to offer the same support to populations fleeing war and or persecution in countries outside of EU borders, for example: Afghanistan, Somalia, or Syria.

## MOBILITY

### ★ 8. Eco-friendly transportation

- Naturally, many European countries and their governments are encouraging citizens to use eco-friendly forms of transportation. In order to realize this goal, we ask the EU to provide increased levels of funding to member states.
- Relatedly, we believe that with increased funding, eco-friendly public transportation networks could be financed. This would significantly reduce urban pollution levels, for example, electric buses and trams in cities.
- Additionally, we ask for the creation of more bike lanes that are not only an attractive option for commuting within a city but are also a safe alternative to driving.
- Lastly, connecting urban and industrial zones with the surrounding suburban or countryside areas could significantly reduce the number of cars on European roads. We believe that if public transport options are extended to rural zones and offer a viable alternative to driving then the number of motorists would drop and consequently so would pollution.

# VI. YOUTH DEMANDS ON SPARE TIME AND CONSUMPTION ISSUES



During the last decades, European government policies have been dominated by GDP, which does not reflect the quality of life. Let us start with a new measure that values the most precious and scarce resource we have: our time. The time we all need to have a family life, relax, pursue other interests, or be active in our local communities. A related challenging question is how we invest our free time regarding the consumer habits in our society. A common denominator of these two issues – spare time and consumption – is the quality of the choices that ultimately determine who we are and shapes future generations.

We, European youths, are asking for initiatives and policies that will encourage and promote responsible consumption and enable young people to invest their leisure time in a wide range of activities that will not be subject to economic discrimination. Therefore, we demand changes in the following fields:

## 1. Localisation and Local Initiatives

- The recent pandemic and now the war in Ukraine have shown how fragile our global supply chains are. Therefore, we ask for the (continued) support of local businesses and industries, as it is especially crucial to have local production infrastructures and businesses during such challenging times. The support will also guarantee local workplaces and contribute to the nation's GDP.
- Additionally, we call for subventions for local products and initiatives to support the local market.
- Another demand of ours regarding this topic is to distribute subventions more equitably. Local governments often have the means for subventions but therefore they also have the power to distribute them. We believe that citizens should be allowed to decide how these subventions should be distributed, perhaps by establishing a council of residents.

## 2. Low carbon activities

- Similar to the demands we voiced in *Chapter V*, we believe the field of mobility also has to be considered when it comes to consumption and free time. We, therefore, want to stress our demand for free city bikes as well as free (and improved) public transport.



As elaborated above, we believe EU member states need to increase the offer and subvention for sustainable mobility alternatives and therefore also further develop the existing infrastructure. Regarding the last point, we ask for the introduction of more car-free zones and last-mile solutions in order to make the transition as easy as possible for citizens and increase the quality of life in cities.

### 3. Shopping

- We call for the promotion of food sharing in EU member states. Regarding this demand, it is most crucial to abolish national laws that criminalize collecting food waste from bins. Instead, it would be expedient to implement laws that require restaurants and shops to donate leftover food (or products that are past their best-before date) to social institutions or organizations like homeless shelters or food banks. This could be supported by offering respective education at schools or by changing the system regarding the “best-before” date in order to reflect the value of food in a better way.
- We also call for comprehensive control of the ban on single-use plastics, that was implemented in the EU in 2021. This ban was an important step towards more sustainable consumption and production. But it has to be made sure that companies are following this ban, for example by introducing (higher) financial fines.
- We also believe it would be beneficial to disseminate more recycling bins with clear descriptions and instructions in order to achieve a higher recycling success. Therefore, we call for a ban on general bins in public places and the introduction of separated recycling bins instead.
- However, it is important that the waste does also get sorted accordingly and does not get mixed up again in the sorting plant, as is the case in Poland for example. This is why we ask for the establishment of an effective monitoring process of waste recycling in the EU. Here we want to especially call for the monitoring and control of organized criminal groups which are profiting from illegally dumping toxic waste in landfills, like in Italy for example.
- Finally, we call for the implementation of more refill- and recycle systems in the EU, like PET machines, refill options for cosmetics and foods, or zero waste shops with products without packaging. The EU could support such practices by subsidizing products and systems like this in order to encourage innovation.

### 4. Supply Chains

- We believe factories for products sold in the EU should be located in the EU as well wherever possible – or at least controlled by the EU (supply chain laws, external quality control, certificates, etc.). As mentioned above, companies that sell products in the EU (or have their headquarters in the EU) should be legally responsible for the impact of their supply chains on the environment and human rights globally.

## 5. False Advertising

- Advertising can have harmful effects, especially if health- or environment-damaging products and services are getting advertised. Therefore, we ask for the implementation of an independent commission (consisting of experts and authorities) to select and approve advertisements.
- Additionally, we demand more efforts to increase diversity in advertisements as well as regarding the kind of products offered. This could be achieved by putting pressure on decision-makers and producers with subventions or fines.
- Lastly, we call for fair distribution of product prices. Bigger parts of the profits should be paid to workers and their social insurance and the disproportionate payment of profits to CEOs and managers should be prevented by law.

# VII. YOUTH DEMANDS ON WORK AND LABOUR



Some crucial milestones in history that changed people's lives for the better in the majority of European countries are strongly related to acquired workers' rights such as reducing working time to eight hours per day. These better working conditions were gained by organized struggle of the working class and never given freely by those in power. Recent historical experiences have shown that rights that were gained in the past are not guaranteed to last.

Therefore, from the militant attacks on the working class brought upon by neoliberalism in the 80s, to the collapse of real-existing socialism and with that a realistic alternative to the capitalistic system, we have seen the living standard of the working class in Europe decline. Even worse, that once-radical neoliberalism has become the dogma of most, if not all, political parties in our political space. That is a symptom of capitalism's inherent need to endlessly expand, regardless of human and natural cost, which in recent decades tipped the scales in the struggle on the side of capital.

Therefore, we believe that a renewed working-class movement, with clear objectives and demands is necessary to improve the lives of people in Europe, and by battling imperialism, globally.

## ★ 1. Democracy in the Workplace

- Most workplaces are run undemocratically, by unelected managers or owners who put profits before actual needs of the community, health and life of the workers and planetary boundaries. If workers and the local community would have a bigger or total control of the workplace many of these problems could be addressed, leading to a more democratic society within planetary boundaries. Therefore, we ask for more democratic and fair practices in the workplace and the prevention of workers' exploitation due to power imbalances.

## 2. Higher minimum wage

- We demand the minimum wage to be calculated every year with relevant data, especially in times of increasing prices or inflation like we are facing now.
- Additionally, the state should not subsidize workers' wages as is the practice in some sectors.

### ★ 3. Equal pay for equal jobs

- Furthermore, we demand that workers receive equal pay for equal positions, regardless of gender, race, or sexual orientation. It is not acceptable that this is currently not a matter of course in our society.

### 4. Against super-exploitation of foreign workers

- We call for tighter controls on the super-exploiting of immigrant workers in the sectors, in which they typically work, like construction, or agriculture for example. The EU should enforce laws that guarantee acceptable working conditions for everyone in the EU.

### 5. Restructuring of the current way of working

- We ask for the (radical) shortening of workweeks or work hours. Such measures would lessen production, which is necessary (and also possible) in the times of the all-encompassing environmental crisis. It would also enable workers to spend their free time developing their potential and active engagement in politics.

### 6. Strict separation of work and leisure time

- We demand a better legal basis that limits or prohibits employers to reach out to workers outside of working hours, with possible exceptions for emergencies.

### 7. Earlier retirement and livable pensions

- Similar to shortening workweeks and work hours, we call for the enabling of earlier retirement with livable pensions.

### 8. Exponential taxation on income, property, and wealth

- We demand the increase of taxation scaling with income, property value, and wealth. Those who own more should contribute more, so at least a part of the wealth created by workers gets equally redistributed.

### 9. Permanent jobs instead of precarious ones

- We call for the banning of flexible, precarious jobs without appropriate benefits and security. Permanent employment should be the norm. However, before banning precarious employment, the situation of precariat workers should be improved.

### 10. More workers per shift

- In many sectors, the workplaces are understaffed. Therefore, we demand improved regulation of those sectors, so that more workers are employed. This would lessen the workload and preserve the workers' health.

## **11. Transnational regulation of Transnational Companies**

- We demand the regulation of companies by the country of origin of the owner, not by the countries where production takes place. This would make outsourcing of dirty and dangerous industry a less viable economic strategy for the capitalist class, which would keep production in domestic countries, prevent outsourcing of exploitation and environmental degradation, and - because of presumably better regulations in domestic countries - reduce their absolute amount.

## **12. Higher taxation for unethical products**

- We are calling for a higher tax for products, which are not respecting worker rights and nature protection regulations. Similar to previous demands, such a measure would make outsourcing less lucrative and therefore lessen the exploitation of workers and nature.

## **13. Regulations regarding “green” jobs and companies**

- So called “green” jobs should be regulated more strictly to prevent greenwashing and enable an actual green transition. Therefore, we ask for more efficient regulation of these cases and the potential implementation of reliable and transparent standards or certificates that are standardized EU-wide and independent from the private sector. See the following demand for a broader perspective on the issue.

## **14. Large scale state intervention for the green transformation of production**

- The all-encompassing environmental crisis with the climate crisis as its most burning facet is arguably the worst threat humanity has ever faced. Similar to other turbulent times, like the second world war, the market should be curbed by intense state intervention to create domestic production of basic necessities and food in the Western, imperialistic countries. The workplaces should experiment with alternative ownership structures, be green, well-paid, with good working standards, and unionized. This would enable a forceful, radical, and all-encompassing restructuring of society to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, without the working class bearing the brunt of social and environmental issues coming with it. Therefore, we ask for the strengthening of the economic role of EU member states in this transition.

# VIII. YOUTH DEMANDS ON EDUCATION



Education is intrinsically valuable and perhaps acts as mankind's most effective tool for personal empowerment. Education takes on the status of a human right because it is integral and enhances human dignity through its fruits of knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Education's principles and the educational system itself should follow the current needs of contemporary societies and students' lives. Modernization of educational systems is considered necessary as it will contribute drastically to the betterment of students' development and the overall structure and operation of the educational mechanism. We believe that knowledge, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, and holistic approaches are some of the important areas to identify and improve.

## 1. Religion

- We are calling for the removal of mandatory religion classes in public schools and the provisioning of optional classes covering all world religions as we believe this would be highly beneficial. It would provide students with the option to study the religion(s) that interest them the most in a free and participatory manner.
- Additionally, classes on atheism or agnosticism could be useful tools to ensure divisions and or segregations do not emerge between students. The beliefs of all should be respected and freely pursued.
- As public or state-run schools are financed by governments, we ask for the removal of mandatory religious classes. Linking the church and state through our education system could potentially cause divides or exclude those of different faiths.

## ★ 2. Sex Education

- Regarding sex education, we believe that European schools should follow the WHO guidelines & standards for Sex Education teaching in schools to ensure a uniform comprehension of this topic.
- We request the provision of gender-fluid spaces and non-binary spaces in schools to guarantee that every individual student feels safe and comfortable with their own sexuality and identity at school.
- We ask sex education to be provided by all schools and not be left in the hands of families. Only if high-quality sex education is provided EU-wide, we can guarantee the provision of a common standard and the establishment of similar knowledge among all students.

- We believe that sex education should not be solely about reproductive health. Instead, it should also cover issues such as emotions, care, love, relationships, and respect.
- Additionally, we ask that sex education professionals will be provided to all schools to guarantee an objective and clear learning environment. Sex education is an extremely important topic, and it should not be the responsibility of teachers or professors who are not qualified to teach it.

### 3. Curriculum (skills and knowledge)

- We demand the revision and updating of curricula and their contents. Too much emphasis is placed on old material or content which doesn't reflect the world we currently live in.
- We ask that more classes on human rights and racism education be provided. While these topics may divide people, we believe a more informed and aware student population would be better equipped to deal with issues such as these in their lives.
- We believe that the education system needs to provide more practical "life skills" classes to students. Students often graduate without knowing how to pay taxes correctly or adopt problem-solving skills when in difficult situations.
- We demand classes on new technology and, related to this, developing research skills and capacities. Furthermore, students need to be taught better how to use the internet and all its resources to their advantage when researching or studying.
- Environmental and sustainability issues are ever-present in the media but are lacking in the curriculums of many schools. With this in mind, we ask for more classes on these issues in order to better tackle these problems.
- We believe that often schools do not take into consideration the mental health of their students. Therefore, we ask for greater awareness and or training of teachers to identify and act accordingly in case a student is suffering from mental health issues.
- Not all classes are given the same amount of learning time or focus. In our opinion, students lack knowledge in many areas of importance and we believe that re-organizing school timetables would provide a more balanced educational experience.
- A special focus must be given to the teaching and learning of foreign languages, with a communicative approach based on oral and aural skills (listening and speaking) rather than grammar studies. Translation competence has to be encouraged and some subjects should be taught in foreign languages to increase language exposure.

### 4. School systems

- The school system should foster students' abilities that could complement their daily life and various other activities other than through assignments and homework. These could take the form of promoting sports, arts, activism, etc. among students.
- We ask that schools provide not only high-quality educational services but also high-quality amenities that students could access. Furthermore, teachers should receive fair and decent salaries for the important role they play in educating the youth.
- Updated teaching methods need to be provided as not only do students learn and thrive in different environments or scenarios, but they can also educate us on our differences and our similarities.

- We believe that evaluation tools used by schools are outdated and arbitrary. Too much emphasis is placed solely on exams and not on students' participation, cooperation, and commitment for the entire school year.
- The education system fosters an unhealthy level of competitiveness among students. They should be taught how to work together instead of focusing solely on themselves.
- Many European countries have different education systems that give priority to different topics or courses. A common education system in Europe would ensure that all students are learning similar topics and have similar levels of education. Furthermore, a common approach may make it easier to identify areas of interest and help students decide when selecting the areas in which they would like to specialize.
- We believe that many European classrooms experience overcrowding which reduces one-to-one contact with teachers. Therefore, we call for increased funding for schools to ensure class numbers do not exceed more than 20 students.
- Special attention must be given to foreign students, who should not be penalized during their development process of learning the language of the country they now live in. Intensive language classes must be provided free of charge, as well as classes in their mother tongue.



MY REVOLUTION 1990  
Central European Youth Manifesto

June 2022

## MY REVOLUTION 1990 CENTRAL EUROPEAN YOUTH MANIFESTO

**Authors:** European youth of the project "My Revolution 1990"

**Editors:** Sarah Hertwig, Timotej Pavlin, Viliana Vaklinova, Maxwell Lacken, Camilla Serlupi, Živa Kavka Gobbo, Maciej Skinderowicz (et al.)

**Design:** Sarah Hertwig

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

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

Published June 2022



Co-funded by:



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



Bundesministerium  
Kunst, Kultur,  
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport

Organized & implemented by:



Supported by:

