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Education and mobility in Europe

I. Education in Europe

Education in Europe can be a national or regional prerogative depending on the countries of the Union, but it always remains an essential public policy to give a meaning to our European citizenship. Why should we be European citizen, if we remain enclosed in our own national boundaries? Education has been a tool for the development of nationalism, which led to the crumble of Europe during the 20th century. Nowadays, in the 21st century, education should on the contrary be a tool to promote dialogue and openness.

History is the most obvious example of a teaching that is largely influenced by national thinking. That is why we propose to have common History programs, or at least whole sections of these teachings in common, to foster the development of a European citizenship .

To make Europe meaningful for citizens, a better coordination and harmonization of qualifications should be organised on the continent. If the Bologna process allowed significant improvements in the reciprocal recognition of many university degrees, some fields still remain without any official recognition by the neighbouring countries. A new cycle of negotiations could help to permit the full recognition of diplomas in the European Union, whatever the level. In case of excessive disparities between diplomas, a “bridging system” should be implemented at least to validate the acquired professional skills .

Learning languages from other countries of the EU remains the main element of an educational policy, aiming to open pupils to others. Giving the means to all pupils to interact in other languages has to be the prior objective of this policy, instead of very scholar and abstract teaching. Hence, twinnings between schools and classes should be developed: we could imagine joint lessons via videoconferences; support the development of personal relationships through modern medias and new technologies, as a way to build lasting friendships across borders.

II] Mobility in Europe

The European Union must initiate an ambitious reform of its mobility policy. The Young European Socialists propose to extend the existing programs (interrails,...) in the field of European transport in order to establish a European pass, offering young people the opportunity to travel at a cheaper price. Following the creation of the Schengen area, it is our responsibility to go further in terms of free movement of the persons by increasing their mobility opportunities and extending the European rail network.

Furthermore, a harmonization of the existing rail networks has to be implemented. Our dream is to be able tomorrow to move freely from one place to another in Europe without thinking of railway changes.

On the other hand , the European Union must reconnect with the European twinning projects. For decades, the development of twinings proved to be an interesting project with a social and cultural dimension: Exchanges between countries for young students, discovery of local cultures... Nowadays, twinings are too often becoming a very symbolic act without concrete dimensions. This form of partnership and comprehensive cooperation has to be supported again- if not, the risk exists to let it disappear.

The Young European Socialists also propose to upgrade the European voluntary service by increasing the existing remuneration. It should be far more developed: through promotion campaigns in schools , experience reports from voluntaries,...

But this European mobility policy cannot be effective without the financial means. Therefore, we propose a levy of two euros on every inner-European flight.

III] Erasmus

The Young European Socialists can only support the existence of the ERASMUS program , established in 1987. This program is of huge importance for our generation in order to build relationships, but also to contribute to the process of the European integration. We therefore welcome its extension to the vocational stream and to high school programs (Comenius , Leonardo,...). This has to be continued and enlarged to a greater number of people- we could even imagine to see this program opened to every single young person in high school, regardless of their social origins or their scholar results.

Not only is it essential to maintain the part of the EU budget devoted to this program at its current level –as the European Socialists and Social Democrats in the Parliament defended it in 2013- but it should even be expanded. Indeed, it is necessary to increase the current amount of scholarships. An increase in ERASMUS grants would expand the number of students using the program.

Finally, the ongoing projects on the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Erasmus should be achieved. The opening of the program to neighbouring Mediterranean countries should be possible for every young person willing it. This would increase the exchanges between our countries, particularly between European and Mediterranean universities.