

## 1 **Why a discussion on the Future of Europe**

2  
3 The European Union has been strong for the weak ones and weak with the strong ones. Over the last decade,  
4 inequalities have risen, social marginalization increased to unprecedented levels since the European project  
5 began, the social mobility is stuck and education becomes more expensive and less valued at the same time.  
6 Thus, the EU, “founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule  
7 of law and respect for human rights” has been failing the goal of providing equal opportunities for all. In the  
8 name of the fiscal rules, the EU has looked away from the clear symptoms of social malaise, letting it  
9 transform into nationalism and resentment towards the European project.

10  
11 By deciding to draw the attention to the fiscal rules more than to the people needs for a way too long time,  
12 the EU helped the financial institutions recover from the crisis better than the young people who, in times of  
13 crisis, try to emancipate themselves and build their future on a solid basis. Those who need to rely on the  
14 welfare system the most were the ones hit harder by the crisis, due to the decision to pursue the austerity  
15 dogma and therefore cut the public expenditure for healthcare and social services.

16  
17 There are of course domestic reasons why more than half of the British citizens decided that leaving the EU  
18 would benefit them. But besides those, there are the above-mentioned choices, made over and over, that  
19 we believe have been encouraging Brexit.

20 As dramatic as it is, Brexit at least worked as a brutal warning for the EU. It has hardly been truer that the EU,  
21 and the project for peace and transnational cooperation that it represents, cannot be taken for granted.  
22 Therefore, the European Commission and the European Council launched the Future of Europe initiative to  
23 get a real discussion about how to deal with Brexit, how to prevent that no other country wishes to leave  
24 and how to reform the Union itself.

25  
26 **YES is joining this discussion through its dedicated network. Our goal is to collect contributions, generating**  
27 **a grass-rooted discussion and facilitating a transnational dialogue, thus a common view, in the community**  
28 **of the young European socialists.**

29  
30 There is quite a big amount of questions that might be asked about the EU, but there is a fundamental one  
31 from which we believe that it is necessary to start the discussion with: **why just a few-and-well-educated**  
32 **people know how the EU functions?** Undeniably, closing the gap between citizens and the European  
33 institutions is a goal that must be on top of the agenda. Otherwise, how to expect citizens to understand why  
34 the EU is important and how it represents their interests if they can't easily understand how it works?

35 Moreover, when trying to close the gap between the EU institutions and the population they work for, social  
36 policies must be the driver thriving to bring the EU policies on the ground and enlarge the well-being of  
37 people. In this regard, we can only be happy that the European Commission is eventually looking more  
38 thoroughly at the social dimension of Europe, for instance, but we are also concerned about the fact that it  
39 lacks an analysis of what really brings Europeans together and what drives the European identity among its  
40 citizens. And it might be too little too late.

41  
42 **That's why YES is carrying out its discussion on the Future of Europe with an open method and approach,**  
43 **where each progressive activist can contribute and help to shape YES position on this fundamental matter.**

44  
45 **This paper is meant to kick-off the call for contributions while pinpointing our key priorities for the Future**  
46 **of Europe. We aim at going beyond a good will to “Reform Europe”, we want to discuss realistic actions**  
47 **and solutions and use the network and structures that YES managed to build in last 25 years in order to**  
48 **fight for them. Please feel free to join the discussion!**

51 **The future European Union must work for all**

52

53 **The European Union would be considered an unquestionable asset by the European population if it**  
54 **implemented social policies that enabled the youngest generations to work, emancipate themselves and**  
55 **build their future.** Enabling them, therefore, to contribute to the knowledge, skills and progress of the whole  
56 society. While our social cohesion falls apart, the EU should focus on the promotion of intergenerational  
57 social inclusion, building a society where not just the young, but also the old can add their experience and  
58 feel an essential part of society rather than a burden on it.

59

60 ***The Progressives to champion the change of the EU into a democratic entity***

61 ***For a supranational democratic sovereignty***

62 *One of the reasons of the alarming retreat that the parties of the socialist family are undergoing, at least in*  
63 *the past decade, is their difficulty in shaping their national political agenda within the broader frame of the*  
64 *European stage. At the national level, they suffer the constraints imposed from Brussels, while at the*  
65 *continental level they seem to be unable to reach the critical mass to hold a significant grip on the course of*  
66 *European politics. More in general, the socialist and democratic parties have lost their place in the debate*  
67 *about Europe, which is now dominated by two seemingly opposite narratives: a liberal and conservative*  
68 *Europeanism, and an illiberal and reactionary anti-Europeanism. In this scheme, the place for the left is*  
69 *virtually non-existing, and it is reduced to an ancillary role of support and mitigation of one or the other right-*  
70 *wing narrative.*

71 *On the one hand, left-wing forces across Europe are struggling to define an autonomous profile against the*  
72 *overwhelming shadow of conservative liberalism that has occupied the centre of the European political*  
73 *debate since the outburst of the crisis. The conservative block, rooted onto an ideological stance based on*  
74 *ordo-liberal economics, on a weak understanding of the role of the political institutions, and on an*  
75 *intergovernmental appraisal of the European integration, has substantially shaped the European response to*  
76 *the financial, political and ultimately social crisis, and it still constitutes the reference of a significant part of*  
77 *the ruling classes across the continent.*

78 *The parties of the socialist family, on their side, have been, first, subtly attracted by the underlying ideology*  
79 *of the conservative block during the decade that preceded the crisis, when they were in government in many*  
80 *of the biggest EU Member States, and they participated in the shaping of the political and economic*  
81 *architecture that spectacularly failed once the crisis erupted. Then, in the decade that followed the breakout*  
82 *of the crisis, they have been much less subtly pushed towards that block by supporting austerity measures*  
83 *that largely contributed to increasing inequalities, weakened social protection systems and labour rights, and*  
84 *ultimately to social and political distress. As a result, even where the parties of the socialist family have*  
85 *attempted at producing alternative solutions, and to open new fronts of political confrontation against the*  
86 *conservative recipes that failed so far to pull Europe out of the crisis, they did not manage to gain the trust of*  
87 *a significant share of the public opinion, and to gather an actual social movement to support them.*

88 *On the other hand, following the overall shrinking of the 'traditional' battlefield, the remaining political space*  
89 *has been progressively but not steadily occupied by an illiberal right-wing block. In this field, the criticism*  
90 *towards the European integration is rooted in a deeper rejection of the fundamental pillar of the liberal State,*  
91 *from the division of powers to the role of limitation and legitimation of the power fulfilled by the fundamental*

92 *rights recognised at the constitutional level. The seeming lack of an alternative to the European status quo*  
93 *means that protection of middle-class households from the upheavals of globalisation is being increasingly*  
94 *entrusted to the national State. Far from understanding the appearance of those instances simply as an*  
95 *opinion movement or a ‘sentimental’ swing amongst the European peoples, we acknowledge that this*  
96 *ideological frame is grounded in an autonomous and relatively homogeneous political field, and, most of all,*  
97 *there is an actual social block that progressively solidified behind it, across the frontiers of the different EU*  
98 *Member States (and beyond). To acknowledge the existence of this social block means for us not to legitimise*  
99 *it but to respond to the root causes that are driving European citizens into nationalist resentment, and to*  
100 *restore trust into a democratic transnational project for peace.*

101 *Making the case for a popular support for a democratic EU requires to firmly stand against the third threat*  
102 *for such a project. Indeed, part of the left-wing movements that emerged during the years of the crisis, in*  
103 *opposition to the ideological shift and to the political conduct of the socialist and social democratic parties,*  
104 *have also proposed a radical switch of perspective as regards the dynamics of the European integration and*  
105 *(in some way) as regards the very foundations of liberal democracy as such. Far from being assimilated within*  
106 *the far-right block, they have however suffered from a certain ideological subordination as regards some of*  
107 *their core instances, and (partly for this reason) they ultimately incurred in a similar failure as their social-*  
108 *democrat counterparts in defining an autonomous profile and organising a solid base of social support. As we*  
109 *believe that progressive coalitions can be the way out of the crisis of the left and the driver for building real*  
110 *social change, we also affirm unambiguously that progressive coalitions are to be supported only if clearly*  
111 *pro-European.*

112 ***In such a fragmented framework, YES believes that Progressives across Europe - and beyond – can and have***  
113 ***to embrace a transformative agenda to radically respond to the current hegemony of the liberal-***  
114 ***conservative understanding of the EU functioning and its mission as much as to the illiberalism threatening***  
115 ***more and more democracies all over Europe. In so doing, we also believe that Progressives can become***  
116 ***once again the movement of the future and the movement for the youth.***

117 *In this frame, **the question of sovereignty is one of the keys to approach and solve this puzzle.** To actually*  
118 *get to a possible solution, it is necessary to patiently carve an autonomous way and resist the attraction of*  
119 *the two dominant ideological poles described above. On the one hand, the issue of the opposition between*  
120 *national sovereignty and the exercise of political power at the supranational level cannot be discarded with*  
121 *superficiality, on the basis of a generic indulgence as regards the European integration, from its theoretical*  
122 *framework to its legal foundations, up to the practice of the EU institutions. On the other hand, however, the*  
123 *challenge to find a solution to the dilemma cannot be faced by feverishly looking for some existing shortcut,*  
124 *such as simply relying on the identification between democracy and nation, as this would essentially bring us*  
125 *back to case one.*

126 *Thus, with no indulgence, we must recognise that, with the intensification of the European integration, the*  
127 *Union has undertaken a path that has progressively weakened the capacity of the national States to intervene*  
128 *on the market dynamics, without being able to rebuild such capacity at the supranational level. The result has*  
129 *been to alter the content of the economic constitutions of the Member States, which contained the*  
130 *foundations of the social-democratic compromise built after the end of WWII, allowing the penetration in the*  
131 *national legal orders of the principles of the neoliberal ideology that dominated the past four decades. This,*

132 *in turn, is at the roots of the phenomena that we are confronting now: devaluation of labour, the rise of*  
133 *inequalities, dismantling of the European social model.*

134 *At the same time, facing this momentous historical development, we must refuse to approach slippery*  
135 *shortcuts. In this sense, the answer of those who suggest to simply back down on the allocation of*  
136 *competences, or (as it has been suggested both from the left and from the right) on the primacy of EU law (in*  
137 *the matters conferred to the EU jurisdiction), appears as both weak and dangerous. Weak, because it would*  
138 *fall short of addressing the actual reasons of the imbalances in the power relations among the Member States*  
139 *that jeopardise the functioning of the institutional mechanisms. And dangerous, because it would lead to the*  
140 *worsening of precisely those conditions that we should instead address in the first place: the syphoning of*  
141 *competences from the community to the intergovernmental method, and the weakening of the constitutional*  
142 *elements at the foundations of the EU legal order.*

143 ***It is, instead, precisely from those constitutional foundations that we need to move on if we want to build***  
144 ***our own autonomous way out of the European social and democratic crisis. Shrunken between a conservative***  
145 ***liberalism and a reactionary illiberal nationalism, the socialist family must certainly, on the one hand, embrace***  
146 ***a serious criticism of the current state of liberal democracy. Nevertheless, it also has to embrace again its role***  
147 ***of guardian of social advancement that is enshrined in the foundations of the modern constitutional states.***  
148 ***It is only along this narrow path that the progressive forces can break the deadlock they have been forced***  
149 ***in, and reinterpret their social mission. Against the dissolution of the national political space in a technocratic***  
150 ***supranational sphere dominated by the market forces, and against the reconstruction of such space in an***  
151 ***authoritarian national sphere that causes social exclusion on the inside and international conflicts (at various***  
152 ***degrees) on the outside, the response shall be based on the potential of the fundamental principles of modern***  
153 ***constitutionalism: the rule of law, the guarantee of the fundamental rights as an instrument of limitation and***  
154 ***legitimation of the political power, and the separation of powers, both vertically (between national and EU***  
155 ***institutions), and horizontally (among the institutions situated at the same level).***

156 ***This shall be the centre of gravity of our vision for the future of Europe: protect and enhance the existing***  
157 ***constitutional foundations of the EU legal order, to pull its core values and its principles of functioning back***  
158 ***on the track of modern western constitutionalism. Far from marking the end of the constitutional State, the***  
159 ***EU can and must be the instrument to maintain it alive and on the battlefield face to the ubiquity of the***  
160 ***globalised markets and to safeguard the space of politics as the organised form of intervention on the social***  
161 ***and economic reality. In other words, to safeguard popular sovereignty. The same sovereignty that the***  
162 ***developments of the last four decades have compressed and mutilated, and that is correctly invoked today in***  
163 ***the public debate, although wrongly opposed to the evolution of the European integration.***

164 *We must, therefore, favour the emersion of State-like profiles in the exercise of the shared competences,*  
165 *instead of showing hostility towards the ‘solidification’ of the EU structure. The protection of the substantial*  
166 *and procedural content of the national constitutions cannot be achieved by simply advocating the erection of*  
167 *a (not well defined) ‘firewall’ around the national legal orders, which would only enhance the opacity of the*  
168 *supranational political space, and squeeze the institutional dialectic against the pure power relations. The*  
169 *way to go is, instead, that of the patient (but bold) construction of a social alliance that allows the transfer*  
170 *within the EU primary law of the formal and substantial fundamental principles that we intend to preserve in*  
171 *the national constitutions, in order to ensure their application at both the national and the supranational*  
172 *level. It is, of course, a narrow and steep path, and the current power relations are certainly not favourable,*

173 *but this is even truer for the alternative solutions proposed. And, most of all, the EU legal order does already*  
174 *contain most of the structural pre-requisites to be completed and oriented in order to match, in a renewed*  
175 *sense and in an evolved shape, the fundamental requirement of modern constitutionalism.*

#### 176 ***Democratic European Institutions – the case for a truly European organisation of political participation***

177 *In this sense, the reconstruction of a democratic sovereignty at the EU level requires a courageous*  
178 *rationalisation of the existing architecture, rather than the introduction of some creative institutional*  
179 *engineering. First of all, such rationalisation shall concern **the allocation and the exercise of the***  
180 ***competencies***. *In fact, during the past two decades, and especially in the aftermath of the financial crisis, we*  
181 *have witnessed an increased significance of the intergovernmental method throughout all the most*  
182 *significant areas of policy-making of the EU. This, in turn, has produced a confusion of powers between the*  
183 *EU and its Member States and has ultimately caused serious flaws in the institutional mechanisms devoted*  
184 *to the verification of the democratic legitimacy and of the legal validity of the political decision. This tendency*  
185 *has to be contrasted and reversed, by providing for a clearer separation between national and supranational*  
186 *competences, and by ensuring that the latter is exercised through the community method. This means, in*  
187 *particular: **proposal from the European Commission (in the interest of the Union as a whole); participation***  
188 ***on equal footing of the European Parliament and of the Council; judicial review of the Court of Justice of***  
189 ***the European Union, also as regards the respect of the fundamental rights recognised by Article 6 TEU.***

190 *Second, and in close connection with the above, the rationalisation shall concern the EU's 'variable geometry',*  
191 *and the co-existence of the different sub-structures that make up the 'cloud' of the EU legal order. The current*  
192 *degree of flexibility and differentiation within the legal and the institutional architecture of the EU, in fact,*  
193 *contributes to the above-mentioned confusion hindering the controls on the legality and the legitimacy of the*  
194 *policy-making process. This is epitomised by the solidification of a parallel decision-making structure for the*  
195 *euro-area, which heavily influences the functioning of the EU-28 Treaty-based institutional architecture. In*  
196 *the attempt to 'democratise' the euro-area decision-making, it has been suggested to further deepen the*  
197 *separation between the Eurozone and the EU as a whole, and to define an autonomous set of institutions, to*  
198 *be separated from those governing the Internal Market. However, this is not the solution to our problem. This,*  
199 *in fact, would complicate the relationships between the different spheres currently co-existing under the EU*  
200 *umbrella, and ultimately disempower the EU common institutions, starting from the European Parliament.*  
201 ***The way to proceed is, once again, the one of reorganising the competencies around the community***  
202 ***method, providing, where necessary (and possible), for limited exceptions as regards the geographic***  
203 ***application of certain rules.***

204 ***As regards the concrete forms of democratic participation, instead, no institutional reform can replace the***  
205 ***role of politics.*** *The 'leading candidates' or Spitzenkandidaten process, or the creation of a pan-European*  
206 *constituency, that we support, can produce positive effects only in the presence of strong and organised*  
207 *political parties that manage to serve as a chain of transmission not only between citizens and institutions,*  
208 *but also between the national and the supranational level, organising broad and transnational coalitions of*  
209 *interests, and simultaneously coordinating the exercise of power and the development of social dialectic in*  
210 *each different sphere. Lacking that, the mentioned institutional devices risk to be more dangerous than*  
211 *beneficial, with the 'leading candidates' in particular potentially hindering the transparent creation of*  
212 *parliamentary coalitions.*

213 **Beyond 2019**

214 *Young European Socialists believe that we should look beyond the existing structures and base upon political*  
215 *negotiations rather than consequential institutional mechanisms adopted upon no real democratic basis –*  
216 *besides the essential role played by the European Parliament – the decisions to be taken over any reform of*  
217 *the EU. The historical challenges that lie ahead demand the current organisation of political discussion at the*  
218 *European level to change dramatically. Indeed, the obscurity in decision-making processes and operation of*  
219 *the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the Eurogroup are unacceptably exercising an*  
220 *unprecedented role in syphoning the future of the EU off the willingness of the people. It is that European*  
221 *parliament that solely upholds the will of the people and represents its various constituents on the political*  
222 *level, in so doing ensuring also accountable and transparent governance.*

223 *We bear in mind the complexity of the legislative process in the EU and of the distance that some EU citizens*  
224 *feel toward their direct representatives and thus we stress the need for a reform of the EU's political*  
225 *institutions, in particular, the EU's legislative bodies, the European Parliament and the Council of the*  
226 *European Union, that too often showcased their inability to act in moments of disagreement between*  
227 *national governments.*

228 *We reiterate our conviction that a socialist perspective on enhanced supranational engagement can*  
229 *reinvigorate the European project for peace based upon political integration thanks to its potential to draw*  
230 *together a mass-wide debate in an organised manner. Therefore, **we call for the establishment of a***  
231 ***democratic constitutional process to completely redefine the role of European institutions and the meaning***  
232 ***of European democracy.** YES' proposal is for the Progressives, in an alliance open to the pro-European left, to*  
233 *drive this process by calling for convening a Constituent Assembly in which the whole of European society has*  
234 *a voice, and which should be directly elected by the people. A Constituent Assembly whose mandate would*  
235 *be to draft, propose and enact a Democratic Constitution of Europe.*

236 *We are certainly at a major turning point, but this is nor the beginning, nor the end of the history of the Left.*  
237 *There is a past behind the present that we are so eagerly focused on. And there is a future beyond it. In this*  
238 *troubled phase, we find ourselves caught between the need of producing, once again, a convincing critic of*  
239 *the reality, and the historical responsibility to protect the advancements that are guaranteed in the existing*  
240 *system. A contradiction that should only be apparent, in theory, but that is, instead, wrenching in the everyday*  
241 *practice. **And yet, this is our challenge: to break out of the binary scheme along which the socialist forces***  
242 ***have been, first, channelled, and then expelled, not only in the debate about the future of Europe but across***  
243 ***all the political battlefield. Any attempt to find, instead, just a comfortable position in this scheme, without***  
244 ***putting it into the discussion, will be severely punished by history, and will ultimately put in danger our***  
245 ***very existence.***

246 **After Brexit**

247  
248 *Now that the UK has voted to leave the European Union, it is vital that any Brexit deal must not be at the*  
249 *expense of workers and young people, whether they are British or EU-27 nationals. Furthermore, Brexit must*  
250 *not be allowed to damage the Northern Irish peace process and must comply with the 1998 Good Friday*  
251 *Agreement. Finally, Brexit cannot undermine the progress that the United Kingdom and the European Union*  
252 *have made on matters such as environmental protection, scientific research and more.*

253

254 *We believe that the UK's best choice is to remain a member of the Single Market and Customs Union, retaining*  
255 *all four of the "Four Freedoms". Most important of these is the freedom of movement of labour. This must*  
256 *remain in order to protect the rights of the 3.7 million EU-27 citizens living and working in the UK and the*  
257 *900,000 UK citizens in the EU-27 countries. Not only must their rights to live and work be protected, but their*  
258 *right to healthcare, pensions and other social security must not be adversely affected. Furthermore, no*  
259 *barriers to study should be put up by Brexit. The UK must continue to take part in the Erasmus+ programme.*

260  
261 *Leaving the Single Market would undoubtedly jeopardise the UK's commitment to the Good Friday Agreement*  
262 *and continued peace in Northern Ireland. A hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*  
263 *is simply unacceptable. Just as unacceptable is any suggestion of the Republic of Ireland leaving the customs*  
264 *area of the EU. **The British government cannot take the UK out of the Single Market and thus impose a hard***  
265 ***border on the people of Ireland without re-igniting a bloody conflict.***

266  
267 *Finally, UK-EU cooperation on a wide range of matters should not be undermined by Brexit. The UK must*  
268 *continue to take part in EU policies such as the Emissions Trading Schemes and diplomatic cooperation like*  
269 *joint sanctions against the Russian Federation for the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula.*

270

### 271 **EU citizenship: let's move forward**

272

273 It is more necessary than ever that the EU citizenship becomes something to which the citizens are able to  
274 relate to. Something tangible: rights. Making the EU citizenship true doesn't mean getting rid of any national  
275 citizenship, yet **to upgrade our lives as citizens to a sphere – the European citizenship – where rights are**  
276 **better protected: a multi-level framework where one can only find its rights enhanced and never**  
277 **diminished.**

278

279 The social pact should, therefore, be re-written to close the gap between the citizens and the institutions.  
280 The EU already carries out projects that could become the forerunners of a structural system that helps to  
281 root the EU citizenship. The EU is standing at a crossroads, ready to improve the social dimension of the  
282 Union as shown in the efforts of putting forward the European Pillar of Social Rights, and education should  
283 have a primary role in this. The commitment of national and regional governments is essential in this regard.

284

285 Erasmus + is the champion among these EU programmes and while it remains a paramount programme for  
286 the European youth, it can be widespread beyond the scope of education. Nonetheless, while it still remains  
287 focused on students, it must be strengthened into also include the not-so-qualified-workers from the EU  
288 sphere of rights and opportunities, not limiting their possibilities to move and work in different EU countries.  
289 In this regard, we believe that Erasmus + should be reformed as to also include the working force, through  
290 an intense involvement of the European Trade Unions and the European networks of the national business  
291 federations as to create exchanges of professionals just as it happens for the students. Therefore, **we propose**  
292 **that the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework entails a specific programme for workers in the**  
293 **Erasmus+ budget.** Meanwhile, the pilot projects that encourage the inclusion of more people, especially the  
294 young ones who can't access the programmes today for economic and/or social reasons, in the mobility  
295 programmes shall be prioritised. This means that we must focus on creating the fundamental conditions for  
296 everyone to participate in Erasmus+ programmes, regardless of their economic background.

297

298 If on the one hand we support those programmes and projects that facilitate a better understanding of the  
299 EU institutions and actively promote European citizenship and identity, on the other hand, we cannot but  
300 claim that more people have the actual possibility to be vocal and communicate with the institutions.

301

302 **The Future of Europe should be funded on a better, steady dialogue between the citizens and the EU**  
303 **institutions.** In this regard, YES supports the role that the EP has been playing to democratize the decision-  
304 making process and overcome national disagreements for the benefit of the European interests. On the  
305 contrary, the Council keeps halting policies and debates, forgetting that we chose to be a Union exactly to  
306 overcome together major issues, and not only to formalise an arena where to argue. Above all, while the EP  
307 is supported by a clear democratic process, as the only EU institution whose members are directly elected by  
308 the people, the Council keeps trying to preserve national prerogatives even when the Lisbon Treaty clearly  
309 paves the way for a more integrated approach.

310 In order to give the further legitimacy to the EP we have to ensure that EU elections are not third order  
311 elections with turnout constantly falling since 1979. Again, there is a series of centralised action taken by the  
312 EP, but as youth organisation, we recognise our role in the process and will work actively on better promotion  
313 of the EU on the national and regional level.

314  
315 The economic institutions cannot be exonerated by this reasoning. The YES-IUSY joint Political Economy  
316 working group has been developing important proposals to democratize the EU economic institutions. The  
317 European Central Bank should be reformed, first of all, to include “full employment” among its targets. The  
318 European Union, and particularly the Eurozone, is about creating more opportunity and expanding the sphere  
319 of freedom, rather than restricting it. Instead, the budget rules established by the Stability and Growth Pact  
320 have restricted the ability of governments to have strongly expansionist fiscal stances, and in so doing have  
321 prolonged the misery brought about by economic slumps.

322

### 323 **The Social Pillar as just the first milestone for a real change**

324  
325 We believe in a fair, equal, free and democratic European Union. The glimmer of hope for moving forward  
326 with the European project exists in the form of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Twenty years were needed  
327 to trigger again the discussion over the social dimension of Europe. The proclamation of the Social Pillar in  
328 Gothenburg Social Summit 2017 was a historical moment that must mark the beginning of a change in the  
329 social and economic direction of the European project.

330  
331 However, the Social Pillar is just the first stone that must be followed by the adoption of concrete measures  
332 and financial means. For our generation the set of principles is not enough, the commitment of governments  
333 is necessary and therefore we will call on PES, its members, prime ministers and leaders and Vice presidents  
334 of the European Commission not only to proclaim the pillar but also to propose a concrete roadmap on how  
335 to achieve the European Social dimension outlined in the Pillar of Social Rights. Otherwise, it might be too  
336 little too late. Too little because enlarging and improving EU social policies has to go hand in hand with other  
337 reforms and the EU decision-making process has to become more democratic, inclusive, and understandable  
338 for each citizen. Too late because the current state of affairs already caused the secession of one member,  
339 without really preventing growing nationalistic and anti-EU feelings in other member states. The differences  
340 between countries are more and more obvious, yet through a transparent dialogue, realistic targets for our  
341 political family can be set. As a youth organisation, we call for such a dialogue to take place and results to be  
342 transmitted into the basis of our manifesto for 2019 EU elections.

343

### 344 **Better policies for a better society**

345  
346 The EU is not an island: the Social Pillar can't be the only answer to the changing landscape in which the EU  
347 has to move. In a changing world, confusion can be tackled by making sure that the digital society we're going  
348 to live in is open, democratic and inclusive, by ensuring that proper investments are made to finally make the  
349 so-called “knowledge society” a reality. A reality where everybody has the possibility to grow, emancipate  
350 themselves and pursue their own personal fulfilment. Where nobody is left behind and well-being is never  
351 conceived just for some happy few, but for the many.

352  
353 **The digital economy as an opportunity to improve the working conditions**

354  
355 The fear of the **digitalization of the labour market** can be tackled if we are brave enough to make it an  
356 opportunity to improve the working conditions and work-life balance of workers. We need to be able to  
357 follow these transformations and monitor them, with every risk of digital divide being torn down promptly  
358 and effectively. We demand the EU to govern the digital economy as to ensure that with the new jobs come  
359 new rights, as to secure a welfare state for the workers of the digital economy, with no possibility left to  
360 exploit vacuums and undermine the labour rights that were achieved through centuries of fights of the labour  
361 movement.

362  
363 **Mainstreaming Sustainability**

364  
365 *We believe that the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations and its implementation entail the right solutions for*  
366 *a sustainable EU for all. Therefore, the EU should fully embrace it and immediately design its strategy*  
367 *implementation. In the run-up to the EP elections in 2019, we believe that the future EU Commission should*  
368 *make the Sustainable Development Goals the core of its work plan for the years to come.*

369  
370 *To do so, institutional changes are required as well. As it's the economic system that needs to be changed as*  
371 *not to irreversibly alter the climate and set the earth onto a destruction course, we need institutions to act*  
372 *accordingly to the change they need to drive. To start with, the next EU Commission should reorganise itself*  
373 *as to consistently implement a sustainable agenda. To reorganise it entirely means also to reorganise its top*  
374 *decision-making level. Hence, our proposal for the next EU Commission is to be formed by as many*  
375 *Commissioners as the Sustainable Development Goals are – 18 - and to assign to each Commissioner the*  
376 *implementation of one of the Sustainable Goals. The Committees in the European Parliament should vary*  
377 *accordingly.*

378  
379 *This is a matter of social justice and, as such, an international justice matter, as it is a climate justice issue,*  
380 *and not least an intergenerational justice issue. If generations before us sponsored and implemented an*  
381 *extractive culture, mainstreaming it at all the levels, we now demand this course to change immediately. And*  
382 *we set our generation to be the leader for change and to make the EU at the forefront of this radical*  
383 *transformation.*

384  
385 *All policies and reforms have to be linked to the **green economic model** in order for social innovation to thrive*  
386 *in building a sustainable and fair economic development model, where new and fair jobs can be created, for*  
387 *both young Europeans and young generation of newcomers.*

388  
389 *We demand to change the system. Therefore, we call not only for a **sustainable production and fair trade***  
390 *model, but also for each policy to take into account the reality of climate change and be green-friendly, as to*  
391 *make sure that **a just transition to a sustainable economic model takes place consistently.***

392  
393 **Equal opportunities for European-minded generations**

394  
395 The financial investments in infrastructures that are core to the transition to a more digital and sustainable  
396 development model must be supported by investments in education and lifelong learning. President Juncker  
397 delivered his State of the European Union speech on the 13th of September: we listened to many promising  
398 ideas, yet education and lifelong learning were never mentioned.

399  
400 **We firmly believe that accessible education and lifelong learning are precisely what will protect our unity.**

401 For this reason, we are convinced that more investments and efforts have to be made to build more

402 integrated school curricula among the EU countries: for as to have EU citizens it is essential to introduce **EU**  
403 **civil education** - and proper training for teachers who deliver it - and **EU scholarships** from the primary school  
404 on. And as to reform the current social model into a sustainable one, workers whose skills will soon be  
405 outdated have to be helped adapting their experience to the newly required skills thanks to robust **active**  
406 **labour policies**. Furthermore, European workers should be entitled to a **common unemployment insurance**,  
407 to ease their transition from one job to another being able to pursue their personal fulfilment. The common  
408 unemployment insurance should aim at enlarging the sphere of rights of the EU workers, thus generating an  
409 up-warding agreement among the member states and carefully preventing any possibility of social dumping.

410  
411 The European Union after Brexit can exist only if it becomes the democratic and open house that works for  
412 all. The place where disadvantaged people – the poor as well as the refugee and the many communities still  
413 discriminated against in our society – are welcomed and matched by proper public policies that enable them  
414 to build their walk of life, step by step.

415  
416 **It is harmful and malaise to shrink the aspirations of European citizens into the nationalistic and regressive**  
417 **narrative. Driving people in a brighter future means to believe in the basic principle that diversity makes**  
418 **us stronger if we stick together.** Even when it may look obvious why staying united is better than falling  
419 apart, it becomes more and more difficult to convince the citizens of it, especially the young ones. It is  
420 becoming rare to state with no angry retort that in a globalised world a single state of Europe could never  
421 represent more than a distant echo in an aggressive international arena, while the EU as a whole can better  
422 represent the values and interests of our region. The region itself became an abstract concept - where the  
423 founding values of our community are not uniting the population in the face of terrorist attacks or  
424 protectionism, but rather are being questioned to their very core.

425  
426 **YES has always fought against this tendency. We do so by our educational activities, our summer camps**  
427 **and discussions in our democratically elected bodies. Today, we decide to go wider and to involve as many**  
428 **voices as possible in our call: it's the call for the future of Europe.**

429  
430 **Therefore, the Future of Europe must entail the following principles and proposals:**

- 431
- 432  **Increase the transparency of decision-making in the EU:** the opaque decisions that are made by non-  
433 elected officials in the Commission and that have no accountability to the citizens must change. For  
434 that to change, the Commission must be permanently accountable to the European Parliament,  
435 including at its directorate levels.
  - 436  The decisions at the Council must contribute to improve the functioning of the EU, the life of its  
437 people and serve the best interests of the Union. Therefore, **the member states must reinforce the**  
438 **use of the mechanisms for cooperation** that the Lisbon Treaty already, including the Enhanced  
439 Cooperation Mechanism.
  - 440  **The Economic and Monetary Union must be at the service of people and not the other way around.**  
441 This means that it should be reformed into having a clear Social Pillar, that guarantees social  
442 protection to European citizens. Priority should be put into full employment, equal pay for equal  
443 work, assuring a working contract and a paid salary for all kinds of work, including internships and  
444 traineeships, as well as social protection and social rights such as unemployment, medical and  
445 parental leaves among other situations.
  - 446  The Growth and Stability Pact must be adjusted to allow member states to implement expansionary  
447 economic policies to counter stagnated or recessive economies. **Austerity measures have proven to**  
448 **fail everywhere** they have been implemented and should be put to a halt, as it has often introduced  
449 more precariousness in the labour market, while making the economy work only for the benefit of a  
450 few.

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- ❑ We must put an end to Fiscal competitiveness and lead the way to an ever **more progressive harmonization in the fiscal systems of the EU countries.**
  - ❑ Together with bigger harmonization, **we defend an intensive and effective campaign on Tax Evasion**, making sure that big multinationals as well as individuals pay their fair share. The fight on Tax Evasion has to be a top priority for the future of Europe as it ensures not only more social justice but also the necessary funding and resources to improve social rights in the EU.
  - ❑ **Erasmus+ programmes must be strengthened and be the object of robust financial investment.** These programmes have to become more inclusive, allowing for students, trainees or workers to benefit from them regardless of their economic situation and background.
  - ❑ **Sustainable development and the respect for the environment must be at the core of every economic policy.** Climate change has a deep impact already today in our societies and it is mandatory that we actively fight its effects by investing in clean energy sources and a better balance with our environment.