

**MY REVOLUTION**

**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 built a bridge from important milestones in the past – like the first EP elections in 1979 and the Fundamental Rights Charter in 2000 – to the present. We looked at the fundamental changes in the political landscape that brought down the Iron Curtain in 1989, which has been dividing Europe for several decades. We connected these moments of change in Europe’s recent history with present youth movements, like Fridays For Future. For us, participation not only means electing our representatives, but also formulating our political ideas and communicating them to the people in a position to implement changes.

More than 300 young people from Austria, Italy, Poland and Slovenia met at several online conferences throughout 2020. At the Transnational Youth Conference from 24 to 27 September 2020 in Vienna, around 80 people had the chance to exchange their ideas and prepare the basis for this Manifesto face-to-face.

**The CENTRAL EUROPEAN YOUTH MANIFESTO is the outcome of this cooperation. Here we express our common demands. We address them to political decision-makers in the European Union, as well as in our respective states. We highlight the importance of maintaining humanitarian and democratic principles and we emphasise 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 1989 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-GVC (Italy), Buy Responsible Foundation (Poland) and Focus (Slovenia).

# I. Youth thoughts on the System: Staying within the limits of the planet

The first chapter of this manifesto focuses on the critique of our current socio-economic system – capitalism. Just as a doctor has to understand the disease before treating it, so we have to understand the system and why it's obviously failing more and more every day. Only through this critique can we start to understand how to replace it with a better system that will provide for a decent life on a liveable planet.

## 1. Infinite growth is not possible on a limited planet

Today, production is centred on profit. To stay competitive in the market, companies are forced to focus solely on maximizing profits. What is often branded as a competition for the best and cheapest products and to improve the services provided to people rarely lives up to the goals it should. It mostly forces corporations to focus on outgrowing their competition and making their production cheaper than others. This kind of competition makes INFINITE GROWTH of profits a necessity. These profits then get invested in new machines or new factories, with the only goal being GROWTH. While we focus our economies, politics and ideology around growth, we keep forgetting about a simple fact: infinite growth is not possible on a finite planet. With the focus of production on profit instead of taking care of human needs, the goods and resources are not distributed in a good way. Often, products are taken from the local environment to be sold on the other side of the world, which can lead to hunger at the source location. What is more, we produce useless products and use advertisements to make people want them. Because of the need for more growth, the system forces corporations to look for new fields to expand into, and will continue doing so until we have eaten up the entire planet.

In short, this system at its core is not capable of ensuring a bright future, because many problems we have today stem from the system itself. Infinite growth is not possible on a finite planet, even if cosmetically fixed to “green growth”.

## 2. Exploitation

Work and nature are the sources of all wealth. Corporations exploit them to make profits. To maximize them, corporations try to exploit workers and nature as much as possible. This often leads to hazardous work conditions for workers, shorter breaks, longer working days, fewer benefits and destruction of their health. The same is true for nature. Cheaper resources are the ones that are made in an environmentally damaging way, with no regard to health and safety of the workers producing them. Ironically, the system destroys workers and health, which are the source of all its profits, through exploitation.

## 3. Democracy does not work

Our current understanding of democracy has led to undemocratic societies. Most of our elected officials in these times are old rich white men who push forward the interests of corporations. They are not the ones who rule us. We are being ruled by the same corporations that exploit workers and nature in the name of infinite growth. Today, few women, minorities, young or working/poor people are included in decisionmaking, which often leads to onesided decisions in the interest of corporations instead of the general public. But even though our states are nominally democratic, our economy is not. We should work on expanding democracy and creating new democratic bodies for local governance and economic decisions.

## 4. A divided world

With the rise of populist nationalism, the international community is more divided than it has been for a very long time. This leads to countries waging economic wars or making laws that benefit only one country. With global problems such as the environmental crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, migrations, regulation of technology and others, it would be very difficult to solve these problems on a national level.

## 5. A failed education system

Our educational system is not based on creating educated, wise and critical individuals, but rather on teaching people how to be productive. Likewise, it doesn't focus on important topics of today, such as climate change, or on practical yet useful skills. The amount of political or religious propaganda in education should be minimized. Private schools should not be funded by public money. Like politicians, education is subordinated to economic growth and not to its higher calling. This is exacerbated by poor accessibility of higher education or private, elitist schools, which can lead to the creation of an exclusive elite ruling class that works against the principles of democracy (and this arguably already exists – for example, the president of the “world's greatest democracy”, USA, has never been a worker).

## 6. A failed tax system

Today, many of the richest people in the world and many of the largest companies avoid paying taxes, either by putting their wealth in tax havens or by different tax breaks. But at the same time, they received massive bailouts both during the current corona crisis and after the 2008 economic crisis. Private gains should not be financed by public money. We should instead strive towards progressive taxation, which would enable better public services, capable of dealing seriously with the world's problems.

# II. Youth demands on Environmental Protection, Animal Rights & Climate Crisis

The environmental crisis is in fact 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 environmental, economic and social stability of our future, 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. It really is time for a change. That is why we, young Europeans, demand immediate changes listed in our postulates:

## 1. Agriculture development and responsible consumer choices

- Prices of highemission products should be more realistic and should take into account their environmental impact;
- lower taxes on local products to promote less polluting products;
- stop industrial livestock farming, as it has negative impacts on the environment, the climate and the living conditions of the animals. It is one of the main causes of environmental degradation;

- a ban on neonicotinoids (especially those dangerous for bees) and other toxic pesticides which negatively affect biodiversity and the ecosystem. Agricultural chemicals are also harmful to farmers and consumers;
- transparent supply chain on the product label. This is important information for consumers. It can trace the route of a given product and those involved in the production. This facilitates greener and more ethical consumer choices;
- information on the product labels about ecological footprint (carbon and water footprint) to make it easier for consumers to choose environmentally friendly products.

## 2. Animal rights

- A total ban on breeding animals for fur: it is completely immoral to continue hunting and killing animals for their fur while numerous alternatives exist;
- no hobby hunting: killing animals for a hobby is immoral;
- tightening the ban on the sale and smuggling of exotic animals: tightening legislation and sanctions to protect ecosystems on the brink of extinction and endangered animals;
- ban animals in circuses: respect for animal rights is non-negotiable and should not be undermined for any personal pleasure or financial gain.

## 3. Green energy

- Decentralization of energy sources by maximizing solar energy and heat pumps for heating buildings. Such solutions stimulate local social activity and allow energy saving during transmission;
- biogas plants in villages. Using the potential of the countryside. The remains from the biogas plants are returned to the fields to enrich the soil with microelements;
- possibility of reselling green energy to the local electricity network. Easy distribution of energy from renewable energy sources and efficient electricity prices enable faster development of local energy producers in Europe;
- energy should not be wasted in transmission and in uninsulated buildings. One of the most important steps towards climate neutrality is efficiency. Increasing efficiency and reducing losses also means economic savings;
- set ambitious goals and stop burning coal by 2030.

## 4. Sustainable and efficient transport

- Public mobility as a right: Taking into consideration the importance of public transport for every citizen, we believe that it should be free for youth up to 18 years. All public transport should be ecologically friendly and based on renewable energy. Carbon intensive companies should be charged with a fee;
- establishment of a European high-speed rail network: it could be a greener and safer way of transport in Europe;
- affordable prices and easily accessible public transport. Public transport should be as attractive as possible for city dwellers, so they would switch to public transport;

- sharing electric cars in cities charged with renewable energy. Fewer cars and car sharing are two factors that make the difference in overcrowded cities. A regular car spends 90% of the time in the parking lot;
- carpooling is an immediate response to city traffic jams, since single driving may result in ineffectiveness.
- promotion and development of infrastructure for bicycles. Bicycle is one of the best inventions of mankind. Inexpensive to use, maximally ecological, takes care of your physical condition and takes up little space.

## 5. Climate justice

- Measures taken to fight the climate crisis always have to consider social justice, both locally and globally. The effects on different social groups have to be taken into consideration and fair measures taken (e.g. when stopping coal production, social measures for workers in the coal industry are needed).

# III.

## Youth demands on Human Rights, Political Participation, Media & Democracy

Democracy is one of the most important human achievements. From time to time, the main pillar of our societies shows cracks. For this reason, it needs to be constantly protected and supported. The idea of democracy is represented in a few key words such as individual autonomy, equality, respect, human rights, freedom of speech, expression, and choice. In defence of all this, the citizens are called to be an active part of the state and make conscious decisions.

We, the European young generation, demand a Europe which respects and defends the principles of democracy in every single aspect. We demand equality of human rights by removing all forms of discrimination, a redefinition of the state-citizen relationship, the empowerment of youth political participation, objective and free media, and last but not least, the laying of foundations for the separation of state and church.

### 1. Equality of rights

Based on Article 2 of the Declaration of Human Rights, which states that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status”, we ask for:

- the recognition of the rights of the LGBTQ+ community regarding the legalization of partnership, same-sex marriage and adoption;
- criminal acts against the LGBTQ+ community to be defined as hate/race crimes;
- the right to education for refugees, especially those housed in temporary structures in the various entry countries, as many of them live for months or even years in these structures due to lengthy bureaucratic procedures;



- decent living condition for refugees (no more Moria, Lesbos, Greece);
- equal treatment of people with disabilities and the guarantee of their rights. For example, ensuring the right to free access to information through visible interpreters to sign language on screen/interpreter should be standing by the speaker.

## 2. Re-establish trust between state and citizens

In recent years, there has been a sharp decline in **political participation**, which is reflected, for example, in the voter turnout in national and European elections. We believe that a major point for strengthening political participation and citizens' interest in public issues is the **redefinition of the relationship between state-citizen** and the cultivation of trust and credibility. How can we achieve that?

Through:

- transparent function of authorities. All authorities' decisions should be transparent and accessible to the public to avoid any power abuse and corruption;
- inclusion of community in decision making. If local communities get more power in decisionmaking, they could be more critical about the decisions of local authorities and prevent projects that may not be profitable or may be harmful in the end.

## 3. Empowerment of Youth Political Participation

Today's youth need real opportunities to participate in political processes and contribute to practical solutions that advance development and progress. In order to achieve this goal, we must first **guarantee equal opportunities for political participation** to all residents of a country. Being an active citizen implies, among other, awareness and critical thinking that is systematically cultivated in school, society and family. In terms of the role of the educational system in the empowerment of youth political participation, it is necessary to introduce:

- a **civil education course** in school curriculums. A course designed to strengthen the skills and knowledge that are essential for mindful, democratic citizenship, while fostering democratic attitudes and values. A course focused on democratic principles, political history, good governance, civil society, civic participation and human rights;
- **empowerment and support of student councils**. The introduction of the mentioned course could enhance and multiply the action, the motivation, and the effectiveness of student councils.

## 4. Objective and free press

A free press is lifeblood of democracy. Journalists must not be silenced. Freedom of press or freedom of media including printed and electronic media should be considered a right to be exercised freely. Such freedom implies the absence of interference from an over-reaching state. Take advantage of the immediacy and power of media to:

- promote and reproduce journalistic research, good practices, innovative ideas and enterprises, social, cultural and educational initiatives, and democratic values;
- support objective journalism that does not aim at influencing and shaping social opinion of specific social groups (targeting immigrants, the socially marginalized);
- enable more TV channels or sources of information with the aim of enhancing media pluralism and democracy.

## 5. Separation of church-state (church-society)

The separation of state and church is not a minor issue and is certainly one of the historical issues in many countries, as it concerns the harmonization of the existing institutional framework with the modern social and cultural reality. In addition to the institutional and constitutional separation of state-church, it is considered necessary to review the relationship between church and society in terms of impact and intervention of the church in people's everyday life. Some of the fields in which there is a strong intervention of the church and where we call for immediate change are:

- strong and decisive political governance that will not be influenced or determined by ecclesiastical power, regardless of the political cost;
- legalization of abortion: guarantee the right of women to decide for themselves and about their lives. Put women's health and bodily autonomy at the top of human rights conversations by requiring states to provide safe, legal, and effective access to abortion. Remove existing policy and structural barriers that prevent women from having direct and safe access to hospital facilities, including the religious barriers. Always remember that democracy means the right to choose;
- prescription of birth control pills that will not be subject to religious or ideological beliefs;
- a contemporary approach to religion is recommended in the education system. Presenting religion from philosophical and historical perspectives permits students to gain a holistic perspective of it. Moreover, we find it crucial to get in touch with religions worldwide instead of being focused exclusively on the dominant religion of each country.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that all the above only have value as part of the effort for worldwide peace. Worldwide peace is one of the most difficult bets in world history and politics that should never be taken for granted. Every country has a duty not only to protect its own citizens, but also to contribute to world peace by preventing armed and military conflicts.

# IV.

## Youth demands on Education

Education is intrinsically valuable as humankind'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 principles and educational system should follow the current needs of contemporary societies. Modernization of educational systems is considered necessary as it will contribute drastically to better development of the students and the overall structure and operation of the educational mechanism. Knowledge, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, holistic approach are some of the important turning points.

### 1. Focus on critical thinking

The educational system should emphasize **critical thinking**. It should cultivate students' minds and awareness, and inspire and support students to be able to change the system through active citizenship rather than adapt to it. The goal of the educational process should not only be transmission and memorization of knowledge, but also the acquisition of skills and motivation, curiosity and love of knowledge. In the core of educational reform should be **conflict management**. Empathy circles should be introduced to teach group dynamics and build community. That includes non-violent communication, communication of thought and feelings, building personal growth and understanding the world from different perspectives rather than indoctrination.

### 2. School curriculum reform

Regarding the **school curriculum**, it is considered necessary to reform it to harmonize it with important contemporary issues, needs and requirements of today's society. Introduction of courses or reform the already existing ones:

- climate education,
- sex education,
- objective teaching of global history and politics,
- media literacy,
- social studies (psychology, sociology, philosophy),
- economy courses.

Schools should find **balance** between theory and practice (**minds-on & hands-on educational practices**). We suggest introducing more hands-on activities, such as gardening, herbalism, handcrafts, sewing, repairing. We suggest the “less is more” approach demanding a reduction in the curriculum that is accompanied by a more in-depth study and understanding.

### 3. The importance of language courses

Free quality **language courses** have to become a part of the standard curriculum. Language courses should be available not only to “national” but also to immigrant students and could be offered free of charge through EU programs. Free courses of community language aimed at immigrants are considered necessary. **Sign language** has to become a mandatory subject in EU schools. English should be an compulsory subject in every EU school from an early age (5–7 years).

### 4. Increase public wages

Switching from funding private to funding community schools. **Increase wages** for teachers and provide them with bonuses for extra-curricular work and **reduce the number of students per class**. This combination will ensure greater popularity of the teaching profession which will lead to an increase in the number of teaching staff. Consequently, the educational process will be greatly improved with the possible application of personalized learning. That creates a predisposition for expanding the **grading system** from only numerical to descriptive. Schools should be provided with **updated equipment** funded by the state or the EU. Programs taking care of equipping students for receiving their education have to be reinforced.

### 5. Knowledge and holistic approach

The standard **education** should not be influenced by ideological beliefs but rather by **scientifically proven facts**, which requires a body of experts in the field of education (researchers, psychologists, sociologists, pedagogues, subject experts ...) that overlooks teaching programs and ensures **objectivity**. The **educational approach** should be **holistic**.

# V. Youth demands on Health Care and Social Issues

In recent years, we have been facing a reduction in social services that in turn influences the life quality of the middle and lower classes in our society. The gap between the poor and the rich in Europe has also increased, which causes a degradation in the majority of the population, both in Europe and worldwide. The degradation and cuts at both the financial and staffing levels of national health-care systems result in unsatisfactory healthcare conditions for citizens, which is contrary to their rights. We need a new approach to priorities that will put an end to existing political and economic dynamics in our society to demand a fairer and more social behaviour. In 2020, the whole world has been suffering from a pandemic that has, in many countries, paralyzed the public health system and destabilized citizens' lives, causing great health, economic and social damage.

We call on politicians from the European Union to be more aware of people's needs and problems and to guarantee the highest quality public services and social services to consequently improve people's lives. Therefore, we call for:

## 1. Improved public housing

- With the housing crisis looming over many people, there should be a guarantee that every person and family has access to fair housing;
- promotion of a better public housing system;
- the price of the housing should be lower in general and should take into account the salaries and the incomes of the country.

## 2. Support for low-income families

- People and families who are more vulnerable should be helped by law that guarantees a decent life for everybody.
- All low-income families should be supported to be able to cover all basic needs such as food, housing, education and health insurance.

## 3. A free and universal public health care system

- In all countries of the European Union, public health care system has to be guaranteed as a human right. It should be freely available to all people living in the EU, including immigrants.
- Health system should be improved and should include: a free family doctor, cheapest specialists and a free general yearly visit to the dentist for free. Other treatments related to dental care should also be cheaper.

## 4. Mental health issues

- Mental health issues must be taken seriously and normalized. Many people in our society suffer from mental disorders, and it is very important for politicians to be aware of it.
- A good education on mental disorders will create more awareness and a healthier society.

## 5. End of menstruation poverty

- Female hygiene products (pads, tampons, etc.) should be available for free in public places, such as schools, workplaces, etc. and must be funded by an institution that can make it happen.

## 6. Tap water in public spaces

- The availability of drinking tap water should be guaranteed for free in public spaces and at public events in all countries of the EU.
- Tap water systems should be improved to allow access to good quality water.

## 7. Training for parents on healthy nutrition

- We need training for parents on nutrition and sports activities to prevent health problems such as obesity in childhood and youth. Parents could learn more cooking skills and a healthier diet, reducing meat and adding more vegetarian and vegan options. Additionally, sports and outdoor activities should be promoted.
- There should be more vegan and vegetarian options in school canteens.

## 8. Introduction of food sharing

- Legislation should be introduced that encourages supermarkets, restaurants and corporations to donate the leftovers to places where people with fewer resources could take them. This could eliminate or reduce hunger in the EU countries and avoid the massive food waste within our society. It could be regulated through a “wasting tax” that would sanction those not contributing to the food sharing.

## 9. Increase of salary for nurses, paramedics and midwives

- The health staff, specifically nurses, paramedics and midwives, should get an increase in their salary according to their responsibilities and skills to guarantee the motivation and improvement of the health services.

## 10. Better prevention, regulation and measurement in case of a new pandemic

- In case of a new virus/pandemic wave, quicker reaction is necessary to prevent stricter measures such as the lockdown that happened because of COVID.
- All tests must be available free of charge in schools, workplaces or other places in need.
- To protect people and the economy, basic income should be guaranteed to all citizens in the EU in case of a social crisis, where the jobs and incomes of the population are in danger.

# VI.

# Youth demands on Spare Time and Consumption

During the last decades, European government policies have been dominated by GDP, which unfortunately has nothing to say about our quality of life. Let us start with a new unit of measurement 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 to be active in our local communities. And the challenging question is how to invest our free time considering the consumer habits of modern citizens. A common denominator of these two issues, spare time and consumption, is the quality of the choices that ultimately determines who we are and shapes the future generations.

We, European youth, 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 discriminations. Therefore, we demand changes in the following fields:

## 1. Localisation and local initiatives

To provide ethical and local production and strengthen local communities, we should:

- unify certificates and labels of products to make a trustworthy information base,
- enable top-down support to start food cooperatives,
- increase the offer of swap parties and repair cafés.



## 2. Low-carbon activities

To fight the effects of climate change, we need to adapt cities to new, unfavourable conditions and take care of the well-being of our bodies:

- more outdoor gyms and sport venues,
- access to sports facilities located near schools for students,
- free city bikes and more cycle paths,
- free public transport (to avoid generating pollution by excessive usage of cars).

## 3. Responsible shopping

To promote good habits among youth and prevent thoughtless consumerism, we should:

- promote food sharing (freegan buckets next to shops, social fridges),
- ban plastic, packaging waste and single-use products,
- introduce recycling and deposit return scheme,
- introduce “the real price of a product” (carbon and water footprint, true price has to include environmental cost),
- purchase ethical clothing,
- encourage the redistribution of goods.

## 4. Fair Supply Chains

Make big companies responsible for the actual damage they cause in terms of social justice:

- strict eco-social controls along the entire supply chain, especially for the imported goods,
- placing more responsibility on employers for working conditions in outsourcing companies.

## 5. Sustainable production

- Promotion of local production and consumption of local products,
- subsidies for local producers,
- subsidies for producers following permaculture principles (instead of intensive production).

## 6. Responsible advertising and sexism

To prevent any kind of discrimination and manipulation, we need to:

- increase awareness of sexism and the so-called “sex sells” on products and in advertisements.

# VII.

# Youth demands on Migration and Mobility

Migration and mobility are among the most pressing issues 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. We need an organized and humancentred effort to manage the migration phenomenon, equal for all member states of the European family. Following points are worthy of attention and prompt response:

## 1. Universal citizenship

We believe that there should be **no discrimination between citizens**. Citizens' rights (human rights) ensure respect for human existence. A common concept of **universal citizenship** seems necessary in modern societies. Therefore, we demand the introduction of the **human rights course** in the school curriculum (from primary to secondary school), aimed at learning about, raising awareness of, claiming and defending human rights. This addition to the educational system could help reduce racist episodes and behaviours, which have been on the rise in recent years.

## 2. Collective European effort and equal responsibilities

Numerous **refugee flows** are a global phenomenon. The causes of these movements vary. One of the destinations is Europe. For a fairer and more efficient management of refugee flows, we believe that is necessary and inevitable to guarantee that **each European country receives a quota of refugees** depending on the population and the economic situation of the country. Thus, the already burdened countries that are gateways to the European Union will be decongested; secondly, the responsibility and management of population movements will be the result of collective effort; and thirdly, **human dignity will be ensured**.

### 3. Fight against bureaucracy

We consider it necessary to reduce the time and **simplify** the **bureaucratic procedures** regarding **asylum seekers** and those who have spent many years waiting for asylum decisions, who are well integrated and should not be deported.

### 4. Fight against human trafficking

The **Mediterranean Sea** has been turned into a cemetery for human souls. State and European intervention is not enough to stop the deaths at sea. We consider the mooring of an endangered refugee boat in safe ports unquestionable. One of the most important issues in dealing with this situation is **human trafficking**. Immediate response to human trafficking is urgent. We demand transnational collaborations for the arrest and conviction of traffickers.

### 5. Action plan for gradual social inclusion

The **population's mobility** is a fact. The goal of each European Union member state and of Europe as a whole should be a **gradual** social inclusion of immigrants/refugees to their new places of residence, their acceptance by the inhabitants of the country, and appropriate conditions that will aim at **peaceful coexistence** of all. We need an organized action plan that will cover the following areas and will provide the following services:

- **Language courses:** Language is essential as a means of expressing, communicating, claiming and defending oneself and others.
- **Decent living conditions:** Provision of accommodation.

### 6. Geopolitical responsibility

Europe is involved in humanitarian aid and development cooperation. But at the same time, we are exploiting natural resources in the Global South. We profit from the arms business, from one-sided economic partnerships and from cheap export markets for European products. This is not coherent with European policies. Europe should take an active role in promoting peace and supporting sustainable economic development, and should stop exploiting natural resources. This would reduce the causes of involuntary migration.

# VIII.

# 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 the acquired workers' rights such as reduced working time to eight hours per day. Throughout history, workers have been fighting for their rights, which we still enjoy today. Therefore, protecting these rights and trade unions should be a priority when taking any kind of measures that influence the working class.

## 1. Protection of workers' rights

- It is necessary to pay particular attention to **gender equality**, which could, for example, prevent violence at the workplace. No dismissal of pregnant women at any stage (job interviews, etc.), even hidden under other dismissal procedures.
- **Adaptation** of working conditions for workers with physical and/or mental disabilities and/or disorders should be guaranteed as a necessity rather than a luxury or an exception.
- **Reduction of working hours:** As proven by researchers, to lessen our impact on the environment and to ensure better overall productivity, as well as the well-being of the working class, we should implement shorter work time. The most appropriate reduction of working hours is estimated to be somewhere around 25 to 30 work hours per week, whilst maintaining a full salary.
- **Minimum and maximum wages:** To lessen social inequality, the highest possible wage should be implemented. The ratio of the top salaries to the bottom salaries in a particular group (company, city, country, etc.) should be no more than 1:10. The minimum salary ought to be set in a way to guarantee the necessities of life and a stable, decent standard of living for everyone.
- **Maternity and paternity leave:** Paternity leave should be equal to maternity leave in terms of duration and compensation, with a maximum possible reimbursement of income from the state (e.g., at least 70% of regular income), and paternity leave should be extended to a minimum of 6 months throughout the EU, with equal reimbursement of income to the maternity leave. The duration of maternity leave should be aligned with findings supported by psychologists, pedagogues and other professions.
- **Pensions:** Guaranteeing pensions for everyone and not increasing the retirement age. Pensions should not be lower than a minimum wage.

## 2. Local and global dimension of taxes and transparency

Since we live in an interconnected world where our lives are interdependent also through products we buy and use, the EU should be held accountable when it comes to providing working conditions for producing goods that are made and imported from outside of the EU and throughout. The EU must support the goal of higher working standards in the countries of the Global South.

- The **product supply chain** should be transparent and take into consideration the origin of all parts of a product. Working conditions should be strictly controlled and the responsibility for the violations should be put on all parties responsible for misconduct. Raw materials from Global South countries should remain in the respective mining land or should only be exported under fair conditions.
- The exploitation of the countries of the Global South must be prohibited. There should be stricter regulations for the relocation of industrial complexes outside Europe due to lower working and environmental standards and regulations usually in place in the exploited countries.

## 3. Ownership of means of production

- Workers and communities should own the means of production, the production should serve the worker and not the other way around, and any kind of exploitation should be abolished and strictly punished.
- Local, ethical, transparent, sustainable production should be encouraged beyond the already established industry: with workers and communities owning the means of production, they could and should focus on satisfying and meeting local needs in an ethical, transparent and environmentally friendly way.

## 4. Creating ethical and green jobs

We demand that measures be taken to create and promote high-quality and decent green jobs. This means job stability; precarious and temporary positions must be reduced in favour of more stable opportunities. In general, the duration of employment contracts should be extended or made long-term. The focus should be on increasing job opportunities for young people and all deprived groups.



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Central European Youth Manifesto

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