

Motion

Empowering Youth Voices: Defending Democracy and European Values

The European Youth Forum, the democratic platform of over 100 youth organisations, representing over 40 million young people across Europe, is strongly rooted in the values of democracy, human rights, intercultural understanding, peace, diversity, active citizenship, and solidarity.

The European Youth Forum positions itself as a pro-European platform, standing for stronger European cooperation and progressive integration of more countries into political Europe, as stated in our [Strategic Plan 2024-2028](#).

We should remember that the European Union is a peace project, founded on the values of human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, and human rights, which young people have a fundamental role in shaping and promoting.

Being pro-European guides the way in which we organise our work and is our first compass when it comes to our engagement with the European Parliament.

The European Parliament elections are taking place on 6-9 June 2024. It is an opportunity for us young people to mobilise and shape the Europe we want to live in.

The youth has more than once proven to favour democratic and pluralistic ideals with practical and meaningful action, yet young people are not a monolithic group. When it comes to the European Parliament elections, we know that it was the youth vote mobilised during the climate protests that created a turning point for the European Parliament elections in 2019.

However, we cannot deny the European Union and its values are facing threats from both inside and outside. We are witnessing a rise of extreme parties throughout Europe. Recent polls and election results also show growing support for extreme right-wing parties amongst young people. The European Youth Forum is committed to actively speaking out against these threats and protecting the values of intercultural understanding, democracy, respect, diversity, human rights, active citizenship, and solidarity.

It is a fact that young people are underrepresented in decision making and we cannot fully enjoy our rights. We live under economic pressure. We have student

debts, we are still being offered unpaid internships, zero hour contracts, less than living wages, precarious contracts. We cannot afford to leave our parents' homes. We are worried about the climate crisis and its consequences. We are in the middle of a mental health crisis and we are not receiving support to address it.

The European Union and all countries across continental Europe need to actively fight democratic backsliding. Young people are and will be central in countering this tendency. However, the lack of stable funding for youth organisations, shrinking civic spaces, misinformation, as well as reductions in freedom of speech, mean that young people are left to face unprecedented challenges.

The anti-democratic forces across the political spectrum threaten the advancement of human rights, such as LGBTQI+ rights and women's rights - particularly for young people who are marginalised and underprivileged. The anti-democratic forces question the importance of finding common solutions to today's biggest challenges, such as climate change, human rights, and the shrinking of youth rights.

It is the pro-European, democratic forces that work for improving access to human rights, while the anti-democratic forces prey on feelings of dissatisfaction and undermine democracy.

Therefore,

- We call for the democratic and pro-European political groups in the European Parliament to **block the anti-democratic forces across the political spectrum from holding influential positions** in the European Parliament and from being part of the European Commission in the next mandate.
- We commit to continue and reinforce the work with the political forces that subscribe to our values.
- We call for the pro-European and democratic political parties and stakeholders to focus on the challenges and concerns of young people, and improve their engagement with young people and youth organisations at all levels throughout their mandates.

As the European Youth Forum, we believe that young people deserve representatives who genuinely care about our lives, our concerns, and our ideas. We commit to continue our work to improve the lives of all young people.



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