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YOUTH MUST BE A PRIORITY, NOT AN AGENDA ITEM

Unleash the potential of Europe's youth

For the future of Europe, the only direction to take is one where young people are included in its decisions and are at the centre of its policies.

In the wake of the vote by the British people to leave the European Union against the will of many of its young citizens, EU leaders have initiated a vital reflection process in order to put Europe on the right track for the future.

In one way, we share the conclusions reached in Bratislava: citizens lack control over their common future. This could not be truer when it comes to young people. It is therefore high time to *“create a promising future for all, safeguard our way of life and provide better opportunities for youth”*.

In Bratislava, EU leaders committed to take, at the upcoming European Council meeting this Thursday 15th December, *“decisions on EU support for Member States in fighting youth unemployment and on enhancing EU programmes dedicated to youth”*.

We call on the European Union and its Member States to **unleash the potential of Europe's youth**.

To fight youth unemployment:

- **Invest in the creation of quality jobs and quality education** in all its forms, including non-formal education;
- **Support young entrepreneurs** through reducing administrative, financial and social barriers to setting up a business;
- **Ensure coordinated and sustainable funding for the Youth Employment Initiative**, making it a long term, sustainable and preventative measure for youth employment.

To support EU enhanced programmes for youth:

- **Ensure sustainable and increased investment** in education, training and youth programmes, most specifically the **Erasmus+ programme**;
- **Give the appropriate legal basis and funding to the European Solidarity Corps**, ensuring its proper implementation while **not undermining other initiatives for young people** by taking funding away from them;



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- **Involve youth organisations in the development and implementation** of education, training and youth programmes, such as the Erasmus+ programme.

These demands are the bottom-line for how Europe should move forward if it wants to get young people on its side.

Youth must be a priority, not an agenda item.

Young people are not a problem. The only way to regain our trust is by involving us in all the discussions and decisions that affect us - we say nothing about us without us! Therefore, we call on the European Union and its Member States to make policy-making more inclusive and participatory at all levels. By creating policies with citizens, we can work together for real societal changes.

Only by empowering youth and working together can we build a united Europe that will benefit all its citizens.

For the **Future of Europe**, it is time to **unleash the potential of young people.**

Read more about the vision of the European Youth Forum: [“The Future of Europe: unleashing the potential of young people”](#).

The **European Youth Forum** is the platform of youth organisations in Europe. Independent, democratic, youth-led, it represents over 100 National Youth Councils and international youth organisations from across the continent. The Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives, by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations towards the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations. For more information, visit www.youthforum.org