



YOUNG
EUROPEAN
FEDERALISTS

EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2019 FEDERALIST MANIFESTO



INTRODUCTION

European integration has proven to be a success story of the 20th century. Starting as an economic block of six on the ruins of Europe after WWII, it evolved into a Union, representing 500 million European citizens and residents, ensuring the realisation of their economic, social and civil rights. The European Union, as it exists now, is neither perfect nor complete, with the different crises facing the European Union proving it is in dire need of reform.

In times of chaotic globalisation and crisis of the multilateral order, citizens are uncertain about their future. When politicians are not able to provide solutions, people lose trust - in national governments, and in the European Union. As Europe fails to change and deliver, citizens turn to Eurosceptic populist, illiberal and neo-nationalist forces. Filling the political and cultural void left by pro-European and federalist forces in the European Parliament and the Member States, these forces gain ground and come to power in more and more countries.

Make no mistake, however: those who want to destroy the EU are but a symptom. The biggest threat to the future of Europe and open societies are, in fact, those political forces, which believe that nothing needs to change or that look to the past rather than to the future. It is by standing still and maintaining the status quo that we forgo the ideals and values of our Founding Fathers.

We are convinced that trust can only be restored by creating a sustainable, inclusive, democratic society that effectively responds to the challenges of European citizens.

In order to achieve that, Members of the European Parliament, national leaders, and politicians at large need to act on the most pressing issues of our time, including democratic participation, migration, climate change, a thriving and inclusive economy, security, and welfare. They need to pursue an ambitious reform of the Eurozone, ensure economic prosperity, improve social policies at EU level, and, essentially, create a supranational democratic space that allows citizens to decide over their collective European future, together. This will in turn defuse the tensions – artificially created by Eurosceptic populist, illiberal and neo-nationalist movements and parties – between the EU and its citizens and amongst the people themselves.

We, the Young European Federalists, believe in a better future for Europe, based on a federal institutional structure, solidarity, and stronger citizens' participation in the decision-making. The European Parliament elections have the potential to achieve all this and to shape Europe for citizens, with citizens, by citizens. The failure of pro-European political parties to present an inspiring, common vision for the future of the Union risks letting others decide on Europe and our future. In this manifesto, we map out key changes and policies that political parties should advocate for in the context of the upcoming European elections.

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

The concern that the European Union in its current state does not represent the interest of its citizens leads to the worrying turn to populist and nationalist movements. **The EU urgently needs democratic renewal to strengthen its abilities to meet current and future challenges.**

We believe that the existing intergovernmental structure based on consensus is unable to react swiftly to urgent challenges and act in moments of disagreement between national governments. At the same time, the Treaty of Lisbon provides too little margin to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the Union. This is why **we call for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly, tasked to elaborate a federal Constitution and to put it to a vote in a pan-European referendum.**

Wide public debate on the European issues is essential for the legitimacy of the European Union, be it during the Treaty revision process or the upcoming elections to the European Parliament. We stand firmly in favour of **maintaining the system of the Lead Candidate for the nomination of the Commission President**, under the condition they are campaigning based on a European agenda and engaging in the wider political debate. Genuine representation of European citizens would be massively improved if it were coupled with a true European vote of citizens for candidates **on transnational lists.**

We also support the willingness to put citizens back at the heart of the European Union by promoting instruments for continued democratic participation, such as **citizens' conventions** across the Union. We also believe, however, that these can foster a truly European debate only by being of transnational nature. In order to achieve this, it is important to invest in meaningful European mobility, alongside cultural and linguistic courses, for all Europeans, which would enhance mutual understanding and reduce prejudices.

The democratic deficit stems from the complexity of the legislative process in the EU. Obscurity in the operations of the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the Eurogroup that lack transparency and accountability, create a distance between EU citizens and their representatives. European political integration needs to be relaunched to ensure better representation of European citizens. The two legislative bodies of the European Union, the directly elected European Parliament and the Council of the European Union representing the Member States, should have equal powers and have the right to initiate legislation as in a two-chamber **Federal European Parliament.**

The Commission should be an Executive accountable to this two-chamber Parliament. A federal structure is the only way to face Europe's

challenges and resolve the democratic deficit that the EU currently suffers from.

More transparency is also needed in the **Eurogroup**, as a body with quasi-legislative function that is currently not directly accountable to the European citizens.

The **rule of law** is one of the core principles the Union is based on: it allows European citizens to freely exercise their civic rights. We are, however, witnessing the increase in violations of the rule of law in various

Member States, especially in the area of fundamental freedoms and political rights. The current EU framework is ill-equipped to successfully deal with such violations, leaving the abuse of citizens' rights unaddressed. This is why we call for the introduction of the **European Review Mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights (DRF)**, as proposed by the European Parliament, and for the increased capacity of the European Court of Justice to deal with breaches of the rule of law in EU Member States, as these endanger the rights of Europeans.

EUROPE FOR ALL

The feeling of European citizens that the EU does not protect them enough largely stems from the economic crisis in 2008. The European institutions and the current structure of the Eurozone were not ready for the shocks of the last decade. This is why we support the **reform** of the European economic and political core - **the Eurozone**, which is to become more resilient, inclusive, and democratic.

In order to sustain potential future crises we need to complete the **European Monetary Union** with a fully fledged Banking Union, including a common **European Deposit Insurance Scheme**.

The Eurozone must have its **own fiscal/budgetary capacity** capable of contributing to macroeconomic stabilisation. To ensure that there is sufficient funding for sustainable economic policies, the EU budget should be financed by **genuine own**

resources - such as a carbon tax, a financial transactions tax, and a common minimum levy on companies' profits realised in the EU - that will allow to move away from an excessive reliance on national contributions.

Economic growth is a prerequisite for **social convergence**. EU institutions should support national governments in their efforts to provide social protection, and ensure that minimum social standards are set on the European level to avoid social dumping and a race to the bottom.

We recognise, however, that a common European social policy and a stronger European Monetary Union can only be financed through a **larger European budget**. A limit of 1.1% of GDP is simply not enough to address the challenges of the Union and to cater for the needs of its citizens.

MIGRATION

The European Union has for decades benefited from migration, its contribution to the European economy and to European cultural richness. Although the number of refugees entering the EU has decreased in the last two years, and is equal to the numbers before the highest influx in 2015, the so called migration crisis is still on the top of the EU agenda.

The inability of European leaders to agree on a common approach to asylum and migration policy has enabled populist forces to portray the situation as out of control, even at times when the actual numbers of newly arriving migrants have decreased dramatically. It is the responsibility of political parties to reassure citizens that a supranational approach can provide an added-value to societies and enables the European countries to act at the same time in a humanitarian and orderly manner.

For this, we strongly advocate for establishing common **European standards for assistance and integration services for migrants across the Union**, financed on the European level, as only European solutions will contribute to an orderly and humane management of migration that can benefit all, therefore

overcoming any current European regulation on the matter. This includes equal and high standards for rapid processing of asylum requests, housing, welfare provisions and integration support such as language classes, psychological support, recognition of professional and academic degrees and measures aimed at including migrants in the formal economic sector.

As a result of devastating civil wars and prolonged conflict, increased migration to the EU has its cause rooted in the Mediterranean region. In addition to European internal solution to migrants' integration, the EU has the responsibility to **establish safe and legal channels for refugees and migrants**, and to set common rules for a balanced return policy, for issuing humanitarian visas to refugees and for the establishment of common asylum offices in third countries, using, for example, the capacity of EU delegations.

To mitigate the reason for forced departure, EU as a whole should contribute to the development of its neighbouring continent, and implement a united European policy for Africa with concrete action plans to ensure sustainable development of the continent.

EUROPE IN THE WORLD

The European Union should be a crucial actor in the multilateral world order, but to realise its potential it needs to speak with one voice. The EU needs to step up as a **true global actor with one strong voice on the main global challenges**. We call for a coherent approach to foreign policy, the creation of a fully fledged European Security and Defense Union, giving the EU a stronger and more united stance in the world political arena, for example, but not limited to through a **single European seat at the United Nations Security Council**. Without weakening continued cooperation within NATO, the EU shall aspire to be able to defend itself and act autonomously if necessary.

EU trade policy is an important tool benefiting peace, while at the same time peace is a prerequisite for successful trade. In that light, we support the development of a united and fair European policy for Africa, with concrete action plans and **integration projects to support the sustainable development of the wider European neighbourhood, and in particular Africa** and its countries, into prosperous, stable and competitive neighbours.

We believe that change is possible. But this change can only happen if it is by and with citizens. This is why in May 2019, we call on all pro-European forces to propose an ambitious vision for Europe. This is why we, the Young European Federalists [JEF], call on citizens to vote for a free, united and democratic Europe. #thistimeimvoting #toFedEU

Europe needs to become the role model for the protection of the environment on a global level, by promoting clean energies, leading to a low-carbon market/economy and a reduction in greenhouse gases. Climate change is already visible with the naked eye. Thus, we encourage the EU to adopt a sort of **"green economy thinking"** into all policies and measures both internal - urban planning, green infrastructure, transport and energy infrastructure - and external: the EU should speak with a single voice in international negotiations and promote a united approach towards climate change, overcoming individual national interests to act for the good of the whole planet.

Moreover, the European Union should remain **the global forerunner in developing citizen's digital rights**. Developments of artificial intelligence and automation are bringing up dramatic changes, ethical questions and challenges in the job market, that can be addressed only by strong democratic institutions.



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