



'Europe for Citizens' Programme

Project held under the auspices of Mr. Václav Havel

**Bucharest International Meeting
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DECLARATION

We, the people of Europe born in 1989, in order to shape a better European Union, maintain peace, enjoy freedom, live democracy, stand-up for solidarity, ensure stability and contribute to our common prosperity, establish this declaration to promote our vision for a better future.

European cultural identity

Cultural diversity is an important part of our European identity. We should emphasize the importance of knowing our European culture as it has direct implications on our education.

From an outside perspective, one can see only one European culture, but as a European citizen, you see a multicultural continent divided by political and geographical barriers. As Generation '89 sees it, the EU is foremost divided in East and West. The East appreciates the EU identity strongly, given that they fought for freedom and they do not take it for granted, whereas the West grew up free.

We recommend the European institutions become more open to citizens. This aim can be achieved by enhancing their adaptability to regional differences and through the adoption of more citizen oriented policies. Law and policy making should be more transparent and personal accountability increased. Accessibility to EU institutions and cooperation with national governments should be increased.

In order to overcome ignorance and stereotypes we should try to develop more integrated intercultural relationships. We emphasize the importance of knowing our European culture as an educational aspect. We should increase and promote networking programs across Europe, as today we have the necessary means to implement them.

As a young generation, using the media as means of information, we suggest more transparent, accurate and appealing communication concerning member states and the EU in the media. National media should be responsible for transmitting information in a manner that attracts and motivates people to take part in EU issues.

Youth active citizenship

Citizenship is the sum of rights and responsibilities the individual has towards different levels of communities, both national and global. We see a distinction between active and passive citizenship. Passive citizenship is the consumption of rights, without engaging fully in the practice of responsibilities. Active citizenship can be defined as involvement and participation in issues pertaining to society, resulting from a general awareness that affects your rights and responsibilities.

We recognize there is widespread non-participation or political apathy amongst citizens. We focus on youth because they are the generation of the future and they need the tools to make informed decisions at a later stage, when they are afforded the responsibilities alongside their rights.

What is the problem currently with Youth Active Citizenship?

- On an educational level:
 - o Some do not have access to information.
 - o Some have information, but do not know how to use it.
 - o A feeling of not being involved, lacking a connection to the state.
 - o Insufficient FORMAL education about civic issues.
- On a motivational level:
 - o The presentation of information is not interesting.
 - o Perceived stagnation of politics, "nothing is changing", politics has become non-relatable, seen as bureaucratic or unrepresentative and elitist.
- Other practical constraints: time; money.

The interaction of these factors lead to a lack of trust in the system and political apathy.

What solutions are we proposing?

- On current educational infrastructure

We want to complement the current national education system, not substitute it; the EU should act as an enabler.

We propose that a regular class on citizenship be introduced or expanded on all educational levels.

We want the quality and quantity of the 'civic education classes' through innovative teaching techniques and specialized teacher training. We propose that a 'global training' take place, where the teacher is made more aware of global issues and overarching political problems – aiding this, an exchange program, similar to Comenius.

- On informal motivational techniques

By using non-conventional means: interactive activities, discussions, creative teaching, excursions and overarching examples from different aspects of citizenship, students will have a more holistic approach to the issues presented. This method should be student lead and focused.

- Use of Mass Media

By using mass media as an effective channel of communication we will create more awareness on the subject. The EU should provide additional funding to public or private media organizations to stimulate awareness for a global perspective on news, without interfering with freedom of expression.

Emphasis should be placed on social networking and information internet sites, which should be used to educate in an interactive and creative manner.

Social challenges

This topic covers many pressing issues such as social security, immigration, education, equal rights, freedom of speech, but we decided to focus on labor, education and immigration.

When it comes to education, we believe that the educational curriculum should be more homogenous across EU in order to assure a common educational background for the young people which study in Europe. Also, it must be more attractive and it must stimulate creativity and innovation.

Immigration is another important issue with serious implications for the EU and it must have a special place on the European agenda. We find as important problems of our society: segregation, xenophobia, crowdedness and crime. Better immigration policies are needed and such policies should address issues like: "brain drain", social security for immigrants, new measures for social inclusion and poverty reduction among immigrants, more efficient regulations against the black market of immigrations, the integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

Environmental challenges

Generation '89 is aware of the environmental challenges that have a great impact upon the quality of life and we urge people to be more conscious about the environment.

We have identified some concerns and problems that affect all of us, regardless of the region or the country where we live in. Among these we emphasize: the lack of responsibility in using natural resources, overconsumption, pollution, poor waste management, the reliance on fossil fuels and limited use of renewable energy sources, insufficient education on environment and people's low awareness of environmental risks and legislation.

In order to reduce and solve these problems, we have identified some possible solutions. Formal or informal, education must be the main pillar of any policy on environment. We recognize the necessity of a lifelong learning process on environment, with information integrated in different courses or teaching materials.

Legislation, standards and sharing of best practices are also very important for insuring a strong and efficient framework able to protect society against abuses related to environmental issues. We believe that the right to a clean environment is essential for each individual and it must be included in the constitution of every country.

Generation '89 concludes by stating that if we want to make a change we need to open our mind, be more responsible and try to become examples of good planet's citizens.

Born out of the legacy of the events of 1989, we strive to learn from past mistakes in order to build a better future while keeping our moral and spiritual values intact.

We, the people who enacted this declaration, want the voice of our generation to be heard and taken into account.

Signatories:

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