



European Values

We are currently at a turning point in the history of the European Union where there is a need for a strong, pro-European youth movement that could unite in a single project all those who believe in the future of the European integration.

Thus the Young Democrats for Europe (YDE) is committed to establish a program that would have as a main result, the creation of a stronger, more united Europe.

Which Europe do you want to create? This is the role of this working document, to identify those core values we believe to be the essence of the Union of tomorrow and starting from them, to substantiate clear political values that would guide us in taking the best choices to move towards our ideal.

We must always keep in mind the words of Pericles, the Ancient Greek Athenian Statesman: "... Our form of does not imitate the laws of neighbouring states. On the contrary, we are rather a model to others. Our form of government is called a democracy because its administration is in the hands, not of a few, but of the whole people¹." For what he said to Athenians has been for so long true for this continent and it must remain the same for the generations to come.

We have put ourselves in the spotlight. At this time of doubt, the eyes of every European citizen are set upon us, upon European institutions and on the men and women working for this ideal as "much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more."(Luke 12:48). Thus we all must rise to the challenge ahead of us, while proving that we have the necessary qualities, the courage, the integrity, the clear judgement and dedication to do everything that must be done for defending these values.

¹ Funeral Speech of Pericles from Athens Democracy <http://www.rjgeib.com/thoughts/athens/athens.html>



A **Europe without democracy is doomed to fail**. We cannot have working institutions or Union without the involvement of citizens and principles of subsidiarity and proportionality should stay at the bases of the European Union. Everyone can fully exercise their responsibilities, locally, regionally and nationally, in the areas of its competence.

We, as young Democrats we believe that a **fundamental issue to be addressed is that of education, as a key to performance and evolution for the EU**. Education is an investment in human capital and it is one of the most important investments Europe can make in its people and in its future. The long-term economic, social and personal gains from education are widely proven for individuals, their families, their society, their country and the EU as a whole. Higher levels of education are correlated with lower unemployment and higher wages, lower inequality, lower crime rates, more positive perceptions of personal health and healthier lifestyle, as well as with higher levels of civic participation.

We need a Europe where **the health sector is seen as a key to a better future**. Better health is central to human happiness and well-being. Yet improved health also makes an important contribution to economic progress, as healthy populations live longer, are more productive, and save more. We need to build support across Europe for higher levels of investment in health and to ensure that health is prioritised within overall economic and development plans.

Nobody left behind. Building a society where anyone can live has been a dream of many generations. If we are to speak in honesty about the idea of European family we must then all realise that in a family no one is left behind or forgotten - **the European Social Model**.

We should keep safe and not forsaking those who are in need.

We are leaving in a globalised world where the economy matters. **So what type of economy do we expect?** We must rebuild Europe's industrial potential and lead a new economic breakthrough that



would put us on the next century economic map. **Innovation is the key for our future economic development.** Otherwise we are doomed to be mere consumers without anything to say.

The Economic and Monetary Union – what is in for the future. We have just begun to realize that the euro zone is the way of the future. While accepting euro we have just put together a part of our sovereignty and we have come along for a common ride. This cannot work if we do not create a true Euro-Union where not only the economy but also the politics are shared for the greater good.

EU as a democratic system – tackling the democratic deficit. We have yet to respond to a key question – what is the role of the citizen in this construct. We need to help EU leaders and institutions to hear every single European citizen voice. The reform of the European political and administrative institutions thus must become a priority.

Europe's place in the world. We must define a new role and priorities for the European Foreign and Security Policy and to start a real debate upon the Borders of Europe – where EU ends and the future of enlargement. Europe has a responsibility towards the world and we have a model to promote for a safer and more peaceful world. This requires a united and coherent diplomacy as well as fair and balanced relationships with our partners. We must decide where Europe ends and how we can interact with our neighbours. Even if we may not be interested in the world outside we must always remember that the world outside is interested in us.

This leads us to our next challenge brought upon us by our **crumbling demography – a long term challenge and our need to deal with the others – what to do with migration.** We are facing a serious demographic crisis that combined with increased migratory fluxes and domestic anti-immigration rhetoric may lead us toward unmitigated disasters. Yet once more we could find strength in our tradition and rethink the European citizenship not as blood based one but as a valued based citizenship.



The European model can be also defined as **Justice for all** - corruption and the lack of ethical rules are undermining the very fabric of society. We need to restore the credibility of the public office as the lack of trust of citizens in the integrity of the leaders would destroy us all. We need to restore a rule based system that would offer equal opportunities for us all.

There must be unity between what European Union verbalises and what it practices. **Integrity and ethics** are about doing what is right rather than what is easy for us all. Finally all these elements would lead to a **true commitment of the European Union to its citizens**. Fair compensation, growth opportunities and equal treatment for instance would show that the EU as a whole is fulfilling the citizens needs making them able to bring out the very best of them.

European identity is something that is not going to vanish. We must learn to deal with this diversity and increase the feeling of belonging to the same community.

Gender Equality is one of European Union's founding principles. In the economy, women's participation in the labour market is still lower than men's. Difference in remuneration for equal position between men and women should be banned. Women continue to be overwhelmingly underrepresented in decision-making positions. It is of course a problem of mentalities, not of competence. The answer will come from the evolution of our societies and from positive actions promoted by the EU. The European Union should also have an **active external policy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide**. Our diplomacy can not only be guided by economic considerations. Candidate countries must fully embrace the fundamental principle of equality between women and men and should show concrete results. The gender equality aspect should also be part of all development projects promoted by the EU.