

Three E's for the EU

Seventy years ago, a revolutionary vision for the future of the continent was presented by Robert Schumann to the leaders of free Europe - a vision of a continent free of war and fear. The establishment of the European Steel and Coal Community was a small step for the recovering states of post-war Europe, but an enormous step into a future of an unprecedented union of sovereign nations that we know today as the European Union. Seventy years later, we stand on the edge of a precipice of a new multipolar world, facing challenges that the founding fathers of the European project could not have even imagined: global climate change, post-industrial economy and a sudden and irreversible dawn of the Digital Age. It thus falls to the new European generation to look into the future and determine the challenges and goals that Europe will face in this brave new century. Just as in any age, basic needs need to be catered for; even if circumstances change a bit. Therefore, we have identified the Three E's: Education and Knowledge, Economy and Environment - all assembled in a circle since educated, tolerant people ensure a democratic, market-based economy that allows for environmental protection at the same time.

Education and Knowledge

We live in a world impacted by the many facets of the digital age, and the best way to be prepared for its challenges and opportunities is through promoting knowledge and education as the new core values for Europe.

The importance that coal and steel once played is no longer the same, and the tools needed today to protect our stability and ensure our wellbeing are different. For this reason, Europe should turn to its greatest asset - its people - and design policies that enhance the opportunities for them to have fulfilling meaningful lives. We recognize the urgent need to accelerate the promotion of initiatives that level out the educational field and its outcomes across regions and territories; supporting research, innovation, and technologies, especially those which tackle common challenges we face as a region. If we develop an agenda of modernizing our educational systems - from pre-school to higher education - we will be able to embolden our future productivity, economic growth, and general wellbeing.

In order to be this century's defining global force in education, we must commit ourselves to spend a significantly higher percentage of the European Union's budget to this goal, including vocational programs for teaching new skills to educators, improve learning conditions and materials available for our students, and provide funds to promote collaborative learning. We need to initiate a renewed Bologna process, which would promote the synchronization of our academic systems. Finally, we need to promote the free movement of our educators and researchers in the same way as we allow our students.

Environment

The legacy of rapid industrialization in the 20th century was two-sided: while it resulted in an unprecedented rise in living standards around in Europe, it has also brought with it irreversible environmental and climatic changes. It should be Europe's common goal to lead the global transition towards a sustainable economic model: transforming the energy industry by a wide-reaching conversion to renewable energy sources, and ensuring the emergence of a cyclic economic system to make the best possible use of our shared world's limited resources.

The importance of conversion to green energy is not only necessary for ensuring a sustainable future, but also to ensure the European Union's energy independence, through creating a diversified energy industry that does not rely on external carbohydrate production, therefore limiting foreign influence on the nations of Europe.

With Europe rapidly preparing for reaching climate neutrality by the year 2050, the economy of member states will inevitably change as well. It should be our task to ensure that no one should fear that the workers in heavy industry and fossil fuel-related sectors will be forgotten - no one will be left behind. It shall be our duty to promote and contribute to providing new jobs and equal opportunities for everyone in the green sector, as well as investing in research and development for the future of the entire European region.

As Europeans, we have to remember that the greatest victims of climate change are not the people of Europe, but citizens of the Global South, who will be inevitably uprooted by global climate pattern disruptions, causing instability in the European neighborhood. It falls to us to lead the global community by example, by fostering a New Green Approach towards the economy, industry, and consumption, in order to ensure a fair and prosperous future for all.

Economy

Europe was united on the foundation of common production, which served us well through the first decades of our integration. Having reached the Digital Age, we know that our four freedoms and shared market are not enough to provide and maintain welfare for us all. Regions still face great gaps in incomes and welfare, and any economic plan shall have to account for this to reach a solution.

On the grounds of our core values, the European Union will continue to improve the lives of our citizens that suffer the most, having a special commitment with solving long-lasting problems such as youth unemployment, a deficit of infrastructure -physical and digital- and lack of funds to underpin the work of our SME.

One of the policies that we want to advance in this new century is to increase the cooperation between the public and private sectors. We cannot longer consider them as opposites, as a creative and blossoming ecosystem for business relies on positive and fruitful relations between state and industry. A healthy and vibrant relation between them can be backed by our efforts to create commonalities and spaces of encounter for actors that should interact and work together to achieve better degrees of efficiency in the pursuit of their goals.

The economy should never forget its purpose to contribute to achieving a better life for everyone. Satisfactory life standards and equal opportunities will always be part of the idea of creating a Single Market, therefore we still have to consider ways to promote them in every European territory.

The European Union might seem like a complicated structure that lives on its own but in the end, it is we - the People - that matter. It was people of Europe who united and strived for peace, it was them who took a step towards the great unknown, embarking on the ship named Europe, in spite of fears and naysayers.

Every voice matters. And it is our chance to be heard. This is the voice of the European people, demanding a future worth fighting for.

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