




EU Youth Camp “A Green Young Deal”

Vision document (Youth Manifesto”)



This document has been drafted by the participants of the European Youth Camp organised by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) back to back to the Conference of the European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) on 11th and 12th October 2020. About 20 youth representatives from all over Europe - named by members of the ESDN and the German Youth Delegates for Sustainable Development - took part (see list at the end).

The manifesto was presented by Dana Patricia Novăcescu, Nicolas Kurek and Pia Jorks as first keynote during the ESDN-Conference on 12th October.

Since this document had been put together under time constraints, it has been double-checked, formatted and edited with the help of the BMU after the conference prior to further use. This version has been approved by all participants of the youth camp.

Dear stakeholders, politicians, representatives, thank you for offering us the space to voice our opinions, our goals, requirements and vision. For the past two days, about 25 youth representatives from all over Europe gathered together to find solutions to our generations defining task: how can we tackle the impacts of climate change. We discussed the deficiencies of the European Green Deal, debated next steps, proposed our requirements and shared our common vision for the future of Europe.

This is our vision:

We have to establish an **European Sustainability Culture**. In this culture, the well-being and health of people and planet should be the starting point and main focus of all governments. In this context, the economy has to be based on the combination of planetary boundaries and social boundaries. This economy model we are talking about must be a tool to assure the wellbeing and health of the people and of the environment, because **Economy should not be a goal in itself but it should be a tool for the prosperity of people and society.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have to be at the heart of policymaking and every political action. In the decision making process, it is essential to involve children and youth, thus creating the space for us to intervene with innovative ideas with our determination and amazing potential. We understand that the mission of the Green Deal is a difficult one to achieve and that we will need all member states on board, but I assure you our commitment to help you make this transition is strong.

The European Green Deal should be the tool to achieve the UN SDGs by 2030, the Paris Agreement and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework. Both in its content as well as in its actual **implementation**, it should respect the following principles:

1. Europe needs to work coherently, using a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach as new standard. This includes breaking the silos of administration and policymaking and ensuring that different policies do not interfere with each other. The principles of accessibility, transparency and accountability must be respected. The language of the European Green Deal must be understandable and information publicly available while the progress in achieving the goals must be tracked and assessed. If it is foreseeable that we are not on the right path to achieve goals, it must include a mechanism to accelerate efforts.
2. **Intergenerational equity** is another key principle to reach the ambitious goals that we have set and that we need to meet for the future of **our planet and our society**. Youth must be given the opportunity to **meaningfully** participate in political processes and to shape global action. **Every** issued policy must be tested as **future proof** in order to ensure that the resources of the world are fairly distributed across generations.
3. **Europe should think globally**. It should recognise its **global and historical responsibility** in the current environmental crisis and take action accordingly. Europe needs to be an **ambitious global actor leading the green transition**.
4. **Europe has to reduce its very high ecological footprint**. This has to be done through ensuring that Europeans conduct sustainable lifestyles, which do not impact negatively other world regions and the possibilities of future generations.

For the past two days, we were working on three focus topics that are most important to us:

- I. Climate protection and its interlinkages with the EU economy,**
- II. a stronger focus on biodiversity and agriculture and finally**
- III. remarks on youth participation, education and democracy.**

I. CLIMATE PROTECTION

In terms of climate policy we agreed that our vision is a climate neutral EU by 2050 and an EU climate policy that is consistent with the 1.5 degree target meaning a reduction of GHG emissions of 65% by 2030. In this regard, it is crucial to align the economic model and activities (internal and external) with this pathway. The EGD and its objective is a step in the right direction, but there are still many deficits and obstacles.

Deficits and Obstacles in the EGD?

The main two gaps that we identified are **firstly, lack of ambition**: In terms of the emission reduction target and the effective emission reduction itself in the territory of the EU, we see a huge gap in the EU still not considering consumption-based emissions and we still see a deficit in terms of the renewable energy targets and the action towards an actual shift to renewable energy.

Secondly, we criticize that the **EGD** still is **very growth-centered and risk focused** in terms of its economic approach: there is a lack of action and determination to implement the social dimension together with the environmental dimension in the sense of a just transition as priorities. Instead, the EGD still sets out economic growth as the main goal, while we believe that the focus should instead be put at society and the environment. In terms of external economic affairs, there is a lack of sustainability and climate consideration in trade deals, and the effectiveness of carbon pricing globally is still not ensured, beyond that there is no effective taxonomy for investments yet and not enough nature based solutions.

Of course we do not only want to point to the deficits and obstacles of the EGP, but we want to propose solutions to enhance the EGP and make it even more effective, since this is the common goal of all people present here today.

Proposals & Solutions – five main vehicles:

1. In terms of the greater focus on consumption-based emissions, it is crucial for us to avoid that the EU externalizes our emission to the Global South, since we stand in strong solidarity with the young generation there who have contributed least but are most vulnerable to climate impacts. To do so, we demand the calculation of the EU's consumption-based emissions by the end of 2021 and building up a strong data basis to deduct respective action. It is also crucial for the EU to lead in this matter and encourage other big emitters to follow.
2. To reach the climate reduction and finally neutrality goal, we see a transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030 as key. We demand that the EU and its Member states enhance collective efforts to reduce regulations and increase financial and other incentives for individuals and communities to power start local and decentralized action on renewable energies. Communities and individuals need to see direct change through their own actions. Furthermore, we need more electrification e.g. in the transport sector, the same incentives are needed.

3. We demand that the EU member states **invest in future generations, climate neutrality and just transition**: Member states need to **mobilize more finance for the just transition mechanism**. And beyond just calling for just transition, countries actually need to act on the idea of just transitioning more concretely through investments in relevant infrastructure , e.g. training and retraining for worker to transition to green jobs, and that these jobs need to be made socially secure, prosperous, especially in the renewable sector which are key for our generation e.g. by supporting the creation of unions in this sector. We demand that a **stimulus package is formulated under the premise of building back better and intergenerational equity** that includes **bold new investments into the future of our generation and pathing a way for a truly "future-proof" climate neutral future**. We further emphasize the **need to implement a taxonomy for financial investments to make transparent how sustainable these are**, including **mandatory review and reporting** by businesses and private sector along science based targets and **mainstream this globally**.
4. **In the external relations of the EU, greenhouse gas emissions reduction and fairness have to be a centre in trade deals!** We propose to have multiple green trade deals with e.g. China, US and other big polluters but also emerging economies. This means that also carbon pricing needs to be translated in trade relations by a **strong carbon adjustment tax**
5. **Nature-base solutions have to be centre in the EGD to make the topics of climate protection and biodiversity coherent.**

II. BIODIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURE

Deficits and Obstacles in the EGD?

There is a missed opportunity to connect biodiversity to economics and other policies, for example, a concrete European agricultural strategy as framework to enhance biodiversity, or to concretely link biodiversity to resilience and adaptation (health, nutrition, risk, ...).

Proposals & Solutions

1. The EU needs to pro-actively work in the Convention on biodiversity and trade agreements to ensure an ambitious and concrete target in relation to sustainable supply chains to achieve a common approach for sustainable agricultural supply chains that do not harm biodiversity and other countries.
2. The EU should aim to have biodiversity-driven economic incentives and subsidies, e.g. to turn farmland into wild life conservation spaces.
3. The EU should use an inclusive approach of scientific findings into the political framing, for example through the creation of a committee of experts (biodiversity, agriculture, nutrition, etc.) advising politicians.

As the great philosopher Johan Comenius said: "The whole world could be a garden". THIS sounds truer now more than ever in the history of mankind, despite a great deal of countries from other continents using up their resources, destroying the environment undermining a generation of great potential. There is a need for somebody to show we can do it the other way, lift the world by renaturing it. That is why we need to focus on biodiversity and agriculture: It is essential to create a set of deeply transformative policies that increase the value given to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in order to do that we need to work on the creation of an

urban development plan for climate and biodiversity and a landscape Strategy with a land use plan with integrated multifunctional nature-based solutions. It is crucial to promote future sustainable development through ecological and technological innovations concerned with the creation of new green or blue natural spaces, the management of existing spaces, and the restoration of ecosystems and their functionality. In order to do that, we need to have strong international cooperation, a network between cities that should share their knowledge on how to organise their public budgets in order to integrate nature-based solutions and eco-urbanism.

III. YOUTH PARTICIPATION, DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

Our goal is to create a true European sustainability culture. For this, we need to have everybody on board. There is now and will always be a need for awareness raising and stimulation of knowledge on sustainability issues and on already available instruments of participation in the decision making process for the youth.

Proposals & Solutions

This can be done by:

1. Questions of sustainability being raised in formal education and information on already available instruments of participation in the democratic process.
2. For a European Sustainability Culture, education on sustainability questions must be coordinated to a certain level among European States.
3. There is always a need for support for informal education, e.g. through social media campaigns.

Informing the youth, understanding their opinion and implementing their vision is crucial. We are the ones who are and will be most affected if our transition to a truly sustainable society is not fast enough.

All of the points given above are not mentioned in the Green Deal, despite being fundamental for its implementation.

And here again, to create a true European Sustainability Culture, we need to have everybody on board. Often, when we do awareness-raising or political activities it is youth that is already interested or politically active, that take part. It is crucial that we reach out to all the people that, on their own, would not take part in educational and political activities by themselves to get involved. It is the only way to create a true long-term European sustainable culture. For this, you have to think outside the box - as governments you have to collaborate with less common partners: sports associations, popular artists and influential people on social media!

Dear ministers, stakeholders, politicians, colleagues and guests please take our ideas, our proposals and solutions and turn the world into a garden and the rest of the world will follow! Only if we achieve that we will succeed in delivering the European Green Deal!

Participants of the first EU Youth Camp “A Green Young Deal”, 11th and 12th October 2020

- **Frederika Andersson** - Fredrika is one of two youth representatives to the Swedish delegation to the UNFCCC
- **Sophia Bachmann** – Sophia is one of the two German Youth Delegate for Sustainable Development
- **Ludwig Bengtsson Sonesson** - Ludwig is one of two youth representatives to the Swedish delegation to the UNFCCC
- **Patrik Bole** - Patrik has been Youth Delegate of the Republic of Slovenia 2019/2020
- **Sofia Brannström** - Sofia is the Swedish Youth Representative to the High-Level Political Forum 2020
- **Swenja Dorn** - Swenja represents the networks of “netzwerk n” and “Wandercoach”. She has been delegated by the office of the Science Platform Sustainability 2030 in Germany as one of the two representatives of a barcamp for young people organised by the science platform sustainability 2030.
- **Thomas Gasselín** – Thomas has been nominated by the Open Diplomacy Institute, a French NGO which has been very active in the Y20s (Youth meetings related to the G20s) and in the SDGs.
- **Nadia Gullestrup Christensen** – Nadia is the Danish youth delegate to the UN for climate and environment
- **Pia Jorks** – Pia is the head of policy of the German Youth NGO climate delegation and a delegate to the UNFCCC Conference. She is representing the Youth Section of the Action Alliance of Climate protection of the German environment ministry.
- **Felix Kaminski** – Felix is one of the two German Youth Delegate for Sustainable Development
- **Nicolas Kurek** - Nicolas is one of the three Youth Representatives for Switzerland to the United Nations.
- **Sebastian Leskien** – Sebastian has been delegated by the office of the Science Platform Sustainability 2030 in Germany. He was one of the two representatives of a barcamp for young people organised by the science platform sustainability 2030.
- **Julian Lo Curlo** – Julian is Denmark's youth delegate to the UN for climate and environment
- **Mihai-Andrei Marica** – Mihai is Intern at the Department for Sustainable Development (Government of Romania) and Coordinator of the League of Romanian Students Abroad-UK
- **Dana Patricia Novăcescu** - Dana is 19 years old and is a member of the Romanian Childrens Board and the Romanian Youth Delegate
- **Axelle Rupert** – Axelle has been nominated by the Open Diplomacy Institute.
- **Reine Spiessens** – Reine is one of the two Belgian Youth Delegates on Sustainable Development
- **Lucija Tacer** – Lucija is UN Youth Delegate of Slovenia
- **Erica Giorgia Trotta** – Eric represented SottoSopra for Save the Children, Italy
- **Norman Vander Putten** – Norman is one of the two Belgian Youth Delegates on Sustainable Development