

I. Domokos Kovács :

Dear stakeholders, politicians, representatives, distinguished experts and especially, all young people - it is hard to achieve the SDGs, but it's even harder to hold a presentation right before lunch. Thank you for offering us the space to voice our opinions, our goals and vision.

My name is Domokos Kovács from Hungary and together with my colleagues Marvin Huber from Austria and Dana Novacescu from Romania we were selected today to represent the voice of the Youth Network of ESDN.

We only represent a small *part* of our diverse and enthusiastic ESDN Youth Group. In the next 15 minutes we would like to take you through our vision of how ESDN Youth will work hand in hand within the provided ESDN structures. In line with the topic of the conference we want to outline how we view Europe in 2023 and what concrete measures we are taking to achieve our goals by 2030. Therefore, I will give you a short overview of the past, Marvin will then speak to you about the present, and Dana will give some remarks about the future.

Since 2020, ESDN has provided a sustainable platform for young people through Youth Workshops. Those events allowed us to network and create new projects. These became the birthplace of multiple Youth Manifestos at the workshops 2020 and 2021 online and in 2022 in Berlin, which were presented during the ESDN Conferences. The result of our work covered topics like green policy, climate justice, youth participation and migration. We firmly believe that putting special emphasis on these was crucial to bring a youth narrative into important issues.

Thus, the ESDN is offering a sustainable and structured platform for Youth Representatives in Europe which helps us to realise our mandates. The prior organisation of events and workshops ensured a better quality of our work, and our regular involvement in ESDN events, like today, enriched discussions on sustainable development.

With this in mind we travel to the present.

II. Marvin Huber [PRESENT]

In 2023 we need to understand three things. Firstly, how do young people see the world we live in? Secondly, what are the things the young generation want you to do? And thirdly, how can we concretely collaborate in ESDN to achieve our common aims?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Young people see what is happening in the world, and we don't like what we see. If you open your eyes you see a world in which war is raging against Ukraine, where existing inequalities are worsening and where

climate change is not regarded as the threat it is. How would anyone be expected to navigate the future if no one can handle the present.

As half of the time has already elapsed we have to seriously ask ourselves how many of the targets outlined in the 2030 Agenda can be achieved in Europe. The hard reality is that we are only on track for 26 out of 169 indicators¹. And with neither the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic nor the war in Ukraine fully accounted for, the risk that we will fail to achieve the 2030 Agenda has never been so high.

But to be young also means to be hopeful. I am not talking about blind optimism that underestimates danger or makes you run into a fight. But optimism founded in the sweat and tears of youth chaining themselves to trees, demanding equity or daring to dream about peace in times of war. These Young people give everything to reach their goals And This is the ambition we Need.

We all know that Europe needs to champion these goals and help globally in their fulfillment. We have to accelerate our progress to reach our ambitious goals for a green, equal and just society for all.

SO WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE WANT?

To give you an insight on what Youth Representatives from different European countries are envisioning for the next steps we have brought a video with us today. This video is our call to action. The goals are clear and whilst required actions may be complicated they need to be even clearer.

VIDEO ABOUT THE SDGs (4,10 min):

We understand limitations but we need to move further and take larger steps than ever to achieve our common goals.

SO WHAT CAN BE DONE

As you know, young people nowadays build on rich experiences, given their unique reality, their incredible involvement in navigating global challenges such as climate change, and/or security threats and their availability to connect and collaborate. Therefore we as experts of our living reality want to cooperate with you.

ESDN Youth seeks to multiply the efforts, outputs and aspirations layed out in the work of ESDN both nationally and internationally. We are thankful for your mentorship and guidance in reaching our common goals and we want to offer our young trained eyes to any form of support you may wish from reviewing concrete legislation proposals to discussing organizational efforts. As outlined, we highly appreciate the opportunity for collaboration and the use of mechanisms such as youth manifestors to give insights into the hopes and visions of young people. We also hope that we can intensive this collaboration support each other, and the continuous collaboration. We must not forget, together we remain strong and can achieve the SDGs.

¹ UNECE 2022 SDG progress report

III. **Dana Novacescu [FUTURE]**

I had a long journey coming from Romania, through Poland, to finally arrive here to ask you to bridge the gap, the gap between us and you, between the present and the future, to ask you to include us in your decisions and actions. I did not come here to tell you the things you already know very well from the many documents, but how you can, in our view, bridge this gap, simply, by stop deciding our common future alone, which is and will be our present, that's why I ask you to include us, the young people of Europe, in the strategic decisions you take related to the topics that affect our lives directly.

Talking about Europe in 2030, my vision, my belief, which I have conceived in my heart, is that Europe will be a beautiful garden, full of multi-coloured flowers, some are rooted deep in the earth, and others are barely laughing in the sun.

My dear colleagues and honourable seniors of European politics, let us work together to turn our Europe into the beautiful garden of the world, you coming with your wisdom, experience and remarkable skills and we with our youthful energy, and our belief that we can move mountains and turn stone into fertile soil. Calling on you to listen to our ideas and proposals and include them in Europe's public strategies and policies so that Europe can be for us a beautiful garden, like mine from home, where in a short time tulips will bloom and the May cherry tree will blossom soon.

When I close my eyes I see a Europe 2030 full of life, diversity and inclusion.

A Europe where no one and no state is left behind due to lack of infrastructure, technologies, social inequalities or public funds. (Where there is opportunity for meaningful participation in the decision & policy making processes related to the topics that affect our lives directly.) Where the well-being and health of citizens and future generations is firstly taken into consideration before taking any political action or planning the future development of any community. Where we realize the potential of nature to contribute to economic, social and cultural benefits, reconnecting with it, helping us to forget about the hustle and bustle of the overpopulated cities we live in.

My philosophy is that "The whole world could be a garden" and my dream is a world where every generation, including those not yet born, can fulfill their potential and blossom in their own community, as beautifully as the May cherry-tree blossoms each spring (in my garden.)

With this occasion we want to wholeheartedly thank the German ESDN Member for their intensive support and encouragement (over the past years) and for making our participation in this conference possible. We hope that the ESDN will offer this opportunity further for many more years.

Dear colleagues & distinguished guests, let us work together, bringing our determination, expertise, and potential together to realize our innovative ideas. Together we can use our solutions to turn the world into a garden *OR* please listen and engage with our ideas, proposals and solutions and let's turn the world into a garden, together, empowering the rest of the world to follow.

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