

LYMEC'S VISION ON POLITICAL PRIORITIES: CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE



TRADE AND THE SINGLE MARKET

- Free trade benefits societies and individuals, by providing choice, promoting competition and stimulating economic growth. The European Union has a responsibility to promote economic cooperation and growth, both within and outside the EU.
- It is imperative that we tackle disinformation on topics like genetic engineering or other new technologies in international trade agreements, and instead promote information campaigns on the benefits for European citizens and businesses.
- A free market is based on competition that can guarantee long-term economic growth and which promotes innovation, and the guarantee of high standards, while recognising that high standards are being used in certain cases as a protectionist measure and that this should not be the case
- We support the unilateral reduction of European trade barriers on goods and services.
- The internal market must not be used as a protectionist tool in trade with third countries. Instead, Europe needs to focus on setting appropriate standards, taking care to do so in a non-biased and non-protectionist manner, pertaining to human rights and production methods.
- The EU and its international trade partners make a serious commitment in order to achieve a new WTO agreement within the framework of the Doha round.

ASYLUM AND MIGRATION



- We need a truly common, European approach to migration and asylum, including a harmonization of the criteria, acceptance rates and conditions for asylum seekers.
- We call for a fair and centralised EU distribution system based on solidarity, that would allocate refugees between member states and would be coordinated by an enhanced agency in the place of the European Asylum Support office. For countries which are neglecting this distribution system, there should be a graduated sanction system.
- Financial support should be made available for refugee reception facilities within the European Union.
- European Union institutions should consider opening up the possibility of establishing centers to process asylum applications in the regions of origin, providing asylum seekers for alternatives to apply for asylum in the EU without the need to risk their lives physically traveling to the EU and thus reducing their risk of falling prey to human traffickers.
- There needs to be a proposal under EU law to better coordinate search and rescue (SAR) efforts in the Mediterranean, since Member states have to share their responsibility to support those efforts and host the people that have been rescued at sea.

FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES



- The EU's leaders must come up with a consensus and contingency plan on how to act on the consequences of climate change. These consequences include natural disasters, such as floods, droughts and wildfires, and increased socio-economic and humanitarian pressures as a result of climate migration. Acknowledging that climate change has serious consequences on intensifying humanitarian conflicts is crucial and the the EU must acknowledge that the climate crisis is no longer hypothetical, but is already having direct and irreversible consequences for the lives of millions around the world.
- There needs to be an increased awareness of sustainable development and climate issues, not just among young people but across all generations.
- Instead of increasing taxation, we should make the ETS more effective by increasing the price of emission rights. The ETS should further be expanded to all carbon-emitting sectors and implemented on an international level.
- We need realistic, yet high environmental standards as an engine for new technology and innovations. Member States need to increase the public and private investment for research and development in support of sustainable development and environmentally-friendly technologies.



EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

- To tackle youth unemployment, barriers have to be removed. Important steps include the mutual recognition of vocational and academic degrees, removal of protectionist policies and support for a single European Job Market. European institutions need to designate more high risk funding to young entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial networks in connection to academic institutions. The status of "student entrepreneur" needs to be created and promoted in all European countries.
- Following the UK's departure from the EU and from the Erasmus+ programme, the EU should continue to promote bilateral cooperation and exchange programmes between UK and EU higher education institutions.
- The voting age for European Parliament elections should be lowered to 16 across all Member States.
- The European institutions must involve young people in various working structures and decision-making bodies, especially those issues that are directly relevant to young people.
- The EU needs to promote programmes aimed at the strengthening of an EU common identity and training programmes that spread knowledge among EU youth about the relevance and day-to-day functioning of the EU.

EUROPE'S DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



- The EU needs to target investment to support research and innovative start-ups alongside programs for upskilling the European workforce, equipping citizens with improved digital skills and other skills relevant to the 21st century.
- The EU must ensure the protection of citizens' privacy in the Information Age.
- We must work towards a digital-friendly regulatory framework, which would encourage innovation and global competitiveness. Innovation has to be encouraged and not curbed. We therefore approve incentives for European companies investing in innovative products and solutions to support innovation in Europe. We oppose any taxes on innovation or scientific research.
- The EU should introduce measures supporting schools to educate pupils in ICT skills, including a particular focus on increasing pupils' knowledge of programming and of the threats to privacy a digital society may create, and targeted retraining efforts for those members of the workforce negatively affected by the shift.



PROMOTING OUR EUROPEAN VALUES

- The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.
- The European Union should take steps in order to prevent all forms of discrimination and consolidate an area of diversity, freedom, security and justice.
- The powers of the European Union in the field of human rights need to be increased, and its ability to enforce them to be bolstered. We call for the human rights perspective to be an imperative part of future free-trade agreements.
- Any European country applying to become a full member of the European Union needs to respect the principles of liberty, democracy and rule of law, as well as protect and preserve human rights and fundamental freedoms. Negotiations with partnership countries not respecting these European values should be frozen until they show real commitment to respect and adhere to our norms and principles.
- Economic sanctions against regimes and persons, including targeted trade restrictions to countries not respecting human rights and the rule of law is an important tool for the EU that should be applied with careful analysis so as not to wrongfully hurt societies

The outcome of the Platform on the Conference for the Future of Europe is a result of the common work of representatives of LYMEC member organisations and represents a compromise achieved within LYMEC, without prejudice to any further additional proposals the individual member organisations can add to this common ground work once the Conference for the future of Europe starts.

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