

Enjoy Your Future

Proposals for the future of Europe

Young people living in Belgium, with the guidance of JEF Belgium, have written down these proposals for the future of Europe related to the topics of the project Enjoy Your Future.

1. Introduction

It is in the best interest of young people to think about their future and to ensure that they have a say in how their future looks like. The proposals that will follow are based on discussions that happened from December 2017 to July 2018 during events organised by JEF Belgium or its local sections. The proposals are not necessarily reflection the organisation's views, but are representing the thoughts and ideas from the young people taking part in the discussions about their future and the future of the European Union.

2. Proposals for the future of Europe

INTEGRATION

The proposals for the future of European integration came forward on the basis of a discussion about European integration, Belgian federalism, and European federalism. The discussion was led by two experts, one on Belgian federalism and one on European federalism. It focused mainly on improving the way the European Union is structured, to make people feel more connected to the European institutions and the work they do.

Proposal 1:

Change the names of the European institutions to names have an immediate meaning (related to their function) for European citizens. E.g. European Commission to European government, Council of the European Union to European Senate.

Proposal 2:

Create transnational lists to make the elections of the European Parliament more about European politics and less about national politics. Candidates should have clear ideas about Europe, and votes should be able to vote for candidates from other Member States.

YOUTH

Young people are the future of every society. Therefore, to create a true European citizenship, youth across Europe should experience "Europe" as early as possible. The following proposals try to do this.



YOUNG
EUROPEAN
FEDERALISTS
BELGIUM



Proposal 1:

Encourage young people to have an experience in another European country by expanding the Erasmus+ programme to a truly inclusive exchange programme. It should go beyond student exchanges, providing opportunities for work exchanges, exchanges in secondary school, etc.

Proposal 2:

Build a European Civilian Service, creating socially involved young people, both locally and on the European level. A model that can be used is for instance the German Civilian Service.

Proposal 3:

Create a free test to obtain language certificates, that is recognized European wide (at least).

Proposal 4:

Make learning a second language mandatory from a young age (between 3-6 years old) to enable bonding across nationalities, creating true European citizens.

Proposal 5:

Learning about the EU should be mandatory in school. Learning outcomes should include knowing Europe's history, having basic knowledge about the European institutions and their functioning, knowing the key moments in the process of European integration, and learning how to have a constructive debate about European policies and how to engage in European politics.

WORK

The discussions under the "employment" section varied a lot. Both economic policies and how to stimulate the economy, and social policies and how to protect workers and increase labour mobility were touched upon during the discussions.

Proposal 1:

Advise trainees in the European institutions on how to include the salary earned during the traineeship in the different national taxation systems and make sure that they know the legal status of the traineeship.

Proposal 2:

Harmonise the different Member States' paperwork/specific forms that are needed to apply for social security benefits. Digitalise the common system by creating a European webportal for workers. This would reduce the unnecessary red tape people experience when moving from country to country.

Proposal 3:

Invest in sustainable growth, providing jobs for young people that will not damage the environment.

Proposal 4:

Invest in research and development to make Europe the continent of knowledge.

BORDERS

As a small country, Belgium is very open and borders are never far away, wherever you are on the Belgian territory. The proposals are both about internal and external borders. The discussion went beyond the discussion of borders alone, but also included a discussion about migration and a human approach to the migratory challenges.

Proposal 1:

Freedom of movement is a central building stone of the EU, and should be preserved. The answer to the fight against terrorism and controlling migratory flows should not be building walls.

Proposal 2:

The EU should be responsible for the protection of the external borders and Frontex should be reformed.

Proposal 3:

When finding solutions to the “migration crisis”, the well-being of the migrant should be prioritised, not the political fights between parties and countries. Migrants are humans.

Proposal 4:

Climate change is destroying the livelihoods of people across the world, with forced displacements as a consequence. The EU should be a strong advocate for an expansion of the Geneva Convention, including climate change as a ground to be recognised as a refugee. As long as this does not happen on the international level, the EU should have its own (extended) protection systems.

ORGANISED CRIME

Organised crime is an issue that cannot be tackled by Member States on their own. It can only be addressed by improved information and intelligence sharing.

Proposal 1:

Improve the cooperation between Member States regarding the processing of shared intelligence by creating a European agency that processes the shared intelligence of Member States.

Proposal 2:

Intensify the cooperation between police forces of different Member States, especially around border areas.