

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.

We, the young people of the SEE region, believe that Human Rights are the fundamental and non-negotiable building block of our European cultural and societal model, essential for the concretization of a true democracy that leaves no one behind and enables every individual to pursue personal security, wellbeing and self-realization. We, the young people, want politics to be the privileged place where to facilitate the process, promoting diversity and fighting discrimination. Therefore we propose what follows:

ETHNICAL DISCRIMINATION

1. REFUGEE/MIGRANTS

Policy: Dublin Convention

Problem: the responsibility of migrants' and refugees welcoming and integration is not shared among EU countries

What we want

- A Common European Asylum System Scheme, including WB6 countries | freedom of movement
Improvement of integration policies | more funding for integration | equal access to education and job market | extension of the definition of refugees to include political refugees
- Basic living conditions granted | Closing the hotspots
- Intercultural education and collaboration between the states for a better integration of refugees and migrants
- Raising public awareness regarding the distinction between migrants and refugees, through media campaign and informative actions by the states and governments
- EU assistance to WB6 countries regarding overcrowded borders

2. ISLAMOPHOBIA

Problem: misinformation, propaganda, politicization of the issue

What we want

- educational system addressing the issue
- CSOs initiative on non-formal education and raising awareness
- media control on violent extremism, strategic polarization and fake news

3. MINORS

What we want

- Effective measures against minors cheap labour and violence against children
- Shared responsibility by the countries in accepting and helping unaccompanied children who are migrants or refugees

GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION

1. LGBTQ+

Policies: European Convention on Human Rights (CoE) | Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Problem: lack of recognition, thus lack of rights

What we want

- promotion of advocacy, equality, reform of the education system
- Implementation of the Rule of Law via E.U. in collaboration with NGOs and CSOs
- Governments should legalize same sex marriages
- Governments should legalize the adoption same sex families
- Fight the propaganda against LGBTQ+ made by governments (especially in Poland and Hungary)
- Governments and private companies may come together and promote the same values to make sure that LGBTQ+ people are treated equally in the hiring process.
- Application of inclusive language within policies, laws, etc.
- Sanctions against verbal and/or physical violence toward the LGBTQ+ community (coercive measures)

2. WOMEN

Policies: European Convention on Human Rights (CoE) | Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Problem: Structural discrimination (generally related to the job market) | Personal safety issues

What we want:

- Equal accessibility to job opportunities
- Implement activities to lower the gender pay gap
- Actively work on dissolving the patriarchal ways of work in hierarchy structures which are dominated by men, especially in private enterprises
- Access to safe abortion / Access to mental health support in cases of perinatal and infant loss due to SIDS
- Help to go back to work after parental leave and actively support men who are using paternal leave
- Make it easier for women to report domestic crimes against them and actively build on the education of police officers to process such crimes.
- To rise awareness against the rape culture
- Governments and private companies may come together and promote the same values to make sure that women don't occupy no less workplace than men, and they're paid equally.

DISCRIMINATION BASED ON DISABILITY

Problem: In our knowledge, people with disabilities are among some of the most discriminated groups of people and even though, per se, on and EU level there are laws and regulations that oblige public institutions to have entrances and to be friendly towards people with disabilities, this group of people still faces major discrimination in their everyday life and are their life is much more difficult than any other group of people.

What we want:

- governments should improve the enforcement of the already existing laws
- governments of the SEE region should invest in making public transportation accessible to people with disability

- government should ensure each person with disability receives constant support by a personal assistant and greater economical support
- raising awareness among the population about physical and mental disability | government's support to NGO's working in the field | government enforcement of laws against verbal and physical discrimination
- Governments should start a program for employing people with disabilities.
- Governments should work towards raising a common (SEE Region) rare diseases fund for research and development, as well as share best practices.
- Governments should ensure access to mental health support.
- Governments should provide incentives on the raising of rehabilitation centers and/or multidisciplinary support centers.

DISCRIMINATION BASED ON BELIEFS

What we want

_ governments should be more inclusive and thrive towards recognizing and accordingly treating all the minorities because we live in a world where migration is something real and big and people are moving from country to country, and there is not a single country in the world without a certain minority, nevertheless, speaking about human beings that not by any chance should be discriminated, no matter what their background is, or their political opinion is, where they come from or any other reason or excuse.

DISCRIMINATION OF THE HOMELESS

What we want

All people should have the opportunity of earning money, so should homeless people. Creation of an organization that would take homeless people, give them shelter and find them jobs as equal parts of the community. That would better integrate them and reduce the structural inequality/ research into the needs and problems that are relevant to homeless people .

- Provide a Vocational Training opportunities and give them opportunities by adding value in the job market.
- Provide volunteering opportunities, in order for this group to be able to self build their home-shelters / buildings of community usage.

TRANSVERSAL ISSUES

- Raising awareness and visibility of the youth informal groups initiatives, community contribution towards youth eco friendly and responsible initiatives. More advertising and promotion from the government for students initiatives, like NGOs in which there can be created and supported a more human friendly environment (being part of an NGO, the members learn how an organization works, and if this NGO is human rights friendly, they can learn to act accordingly).
- Control System Establishing a monitoring system (Control System) by impartial and neutral organisations, which will demand may create reports every year and indirectly obligate companies to apply equal and better standards to their employees.

EDUCATION

Education gives youngsters and adults a chance to become aware, responsible and independent when it comes to making decisions and improving their life. It directly has an influence on decreasing poverty and it is a key element for economic and social development. Education needs to be taken as a multidimensional field which has various target groups, on different levels with different access.

We, the young people from the SEE region are stressing out the urge for serious educational reforms that will provide the young people with quality, accessible, affordable and inclusive education, that stimulates both their personal and professional development. By investing in the teaching staff, the infrastructure, the curriculums and the support system for the students, we can create informed, competent and health professionals and citizens.

In order to achieve this educational utopia, our countries have to prioritize and work on achieving the following educational goals:

- Radical improvement in the quality of education in the SEE region. We need education that will promote inclusion and fundamental rights and that will not only create great professionals, but also great citizens and members of the community.
- Making the education accessible and affordable for all young people on every level. This includes access to free and fast means of transportation from their home to the schools, as well as providing reasonable accomodation for the students.
- Establishing stronger partnership European Schools and Universities that allows more student exchange programs, conducted through better collaboration between student representatives and promoted by national, European and international NGOs.
- Introducing civic education subjects in schools, with clear and strict criteria on syllabus and teacher's qualifications, as well as by providing the students with extracurricular opportunities.
- Increasing the investment in the schools and universities in terms of infrastructure, access to digital technology needed for the educational process, scientific research, as well as investment in the school personnel.
- Establishing a practical side of teaching by introducing more experts from a respective area as guest teachers at schools and universities, career orientation opportunities, introducing "job-shadowing" program, paid internship, mentorship and field trip visits to public and private companies, in order to ease the transition from education to the labor market.
- Introducing an anonymous feedback system that will be used by the students during school and university semester that allows students to express their satisfaction, concerns and suggestions for improvement. The feedback provided by the students should be taken seriously by the school and university management and teaching staff.
- Improvements regarding the terms and conditions for hiring the teaching staff.

- Radical changes of the school curriculums and introduction of an international, neutral and impartial point of view, in order to keep pace with the present and to adapt to the new conditions.
- Increasing the training opportunities for the teaching staff of schools and universities in terms of digital competences, as well as for accommodating students with different needs and abilities.
- Providing support to families with low income to support the process of education for their children.
- Provide psychological support in schools and prioritize mental health and bullying issues.
- Introduction of classes for media literacy, internet safety and the educational purpose of the internet and digital technology.
- Introduction of sexual education classes in the formal educational system.
- Investing in facilities and university accommodations to improve the living conditions for students during their higher education
- Guaranteeing fair ranking of universities and programs so that students can make an informed choice on what to study and where to study

HEALTH CARE

From the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the defining messages has been that seniors are more affected than young people. However, health and non-health impacts on young people are proving to be significant. A common understanding of these impacts and the role young people are playing in driving solutions is essential to the pandemic response. Today the young people are aware that ensuring access to health services is the cornerstone of a successful health response. We, the young people from the SEE region, demand the improvement of healthcare access based on the youth-specific health-care needs, including mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and psychosocial support. Additionally, it is with utmost importance all young people to be able to benefit from basic health services equally, fairly and free of charge. Finally, we need access to youth-friendly content about health priorities and inclusive information-sharing. If you, the decision makers are willing to work with and for young people the following steps are our proposals:

- All young people should be able to benefit from basic health services equally, fairly and free of charge, regardless of their sexual orientation, religion, marital status and ethnic background, without violating their privacy;
- Destigmatizing talking about mental health. Young people need to know that they have strong support systems (counselors in Unis and in workplaces to whom they can talk to). People with mental health issues should be normally included in society and the work environment and they should be free to talk openly about it without being stigmatized;

- Promoting the importance of mental health during schooling (“being stressed out is not normal”), the importance of feeling good and healthy through education;
- Growing awareness about main health care issues (actively engaging youth in promoting health related issues, like pink October, etc.);
- Preparation of support system that will offer the young people mental health support services, regarding the Covid 19 outbreak consequences
- Making sure that every village, rural area, marginalized region has at least one family doctor/nurse. Better distribution of doctors and medical staff based on regional requirements and provide them with better tools and drug supply for work;
- Creating, valoriting, association in healthwork categories striving towards improvement of access to health care services;
- Study visits and exchanges of medical students from our region within the countries with well organized healthcare systems.
- More free consulting health care phone lines and communication platforms;
- Growing awareness about main health care issues focusing on preventive measures and actions.

Employment & living standard

Youth unemployment rate is the highest in all Europe in our region, the SEE region. Thus, the living standard and opportunities for equal development with other regions in Europe are lower. We the young people demand better opportunities for us and the young generations to come, and thus are proposing a set of goals that we together with the national authorities, governments and stakeholders can achieve by working together. However, we need concrete fast actions in order to achieve the goals set by us, the young people of the region, and these goals are:

- Investing in rural areas regarding the jobs and economy, by keeping basic infrastructure and services; Creating high-skilled jobs in rural areas; Developing green jobs connected to natural resources in rural areas (sustainable tourism); Empowering young people to go into the agriculture sector (food production); Encouraging property owners to rent/sell empty buildings.
- Support youth from rural areas by giving subsidies to the least developed regions, cooperate with banks and create special funds to grant organizations and businesses to support young entrepreneurships and hubs for startups.
- Fighting poverty by enhancing and giving wider financial support for social programs and policies.
- Easing school-to-work transition for young people through scholarships (for high school and higher education students); Subsidized employment and training programs; Easing process of requalification to another profession that is more needed in the local environment at the moment (shortening the time frame). We have to connect the labor

market with universities and high schools in order for students to get the right knowledge for their future jobs.

- Protecting the worker's rights by educating young people about their workers' rights, enforcing policies about student work (inspection) and setting up a clear legal framework for student work (minimum wage etc.). We have to make internships fairly paid and forbid by law unpaid internships.
- Promoting youth mobility and youth exchanges for better job chances and experiences; making exchange opportunities more visible and more approachable; deepening the relations between institutions and youth organizations for the development of policies, as well as providing additional scholarships to help students from weaker economic backgrounds to get a chance to use these opportunities.
- Invest in non-formal educational opportunities for young people, *organize soft skills building activities*, activities for writing CV, motivational letters, preparing for interviews etc.
- Investments in culture and connecting them with the formal educational system schools and giving young people the opportunity to enrich their culture at an early age.
- We need to invest in infrastructure and invite companies and other countries to invest in the region and open their operations in the region

Youth Participation

The factors that influence the lack of youth engagement to political and social issues in SEE countries can be observed as societal, and of state and organizational origin. At a social level, the restricted social mobility of young people from poor or illiterate families, restrains young people from knowing their capabilities and options. At an organizational level, civil society organizations and NGOs are not immediately accessible by young people, as they do not actively seek membership and their actions are not always visible. The State, finally, excludes young people from employment (few positions for internships, few scholarships, age limit instead of qualification limit for working in the public sector and participating in small-scale decision making) and education (no links between schools and civil society organizations, no courses related to politics, economy, advocacy). Young people are not aware of their capabilities and their options, unless they search themselves. Taking into consideration all these deficits, we the young people of the SEE countries demand the following actions and goals to be reached:

- Building** links between educational institutes and civil society organizations, by inviting the latter meet students and spread the word of their action
- Giving** more paid internship opportunities and scholarships, so that people see the social sector as a meaningful perspective

- Enhancing** social capital, favouring the creation of networks, Youth Hubs and Youth Clubs at a regional level, as well as associations and organizations, which will introduce young people to team work and micro-scale decision making
- Enabling** youngsters (through education) to understand contemporary problems and issues, by special courses, related to social matters, as well as state functions, by simulation programs
- Encouraging** people coming from poor backgrounds to get involved in their local community (voluntary work platforms to engage them in social work and action at a local scale)
- Recognizing** voluntary work as working experience and awarding it with ECTS credits
- Establishing** qualification, instead of age, criteria when selecting public employees
- Putting** no young people under pressure when it comes to their vote or the expression of their opinion (We are open to criticism, not to disrespect due to our age)
- Including** a certain percentage of young people in small and large-scale governance and in transitional justice processes.
- Encourage** students from educational institutions to be a civic voice by facilitating them the connection with NGOs and motivational speakers that will help to build their confidence in active participation.

SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN ECONOMY

We, the young people of the SEE of Europe are striving for a more sustainable, ecological and a region built on green economy. It is up to us, as young people, to push for change in order to use our earth's resources wisely and keep nature vibrant in our beautiful region. Our region has been facing rapid developments. People have been living in the present, using those left from the past with no responsibility for the future.

The lifestyle shift caused by COVID-19 has given us the opportunity to modify the mistakes that decision-makers have made continuously, by failing to understand the threat coming from the environment. This way, enabling us to restart our lives in a more eco-friendly way once the situation normalizes.

Thus, we, the young generation of this part of Europe are proposing the following goals for the years to come to the national states and the other relevant stakeholders:

- We make an appeal towards the political factors to take into account the 17th UN's SDG and to create a tool kit to put in practice. Moreover, the need for strong institutions in the implementation of Strategic Sustainability Goals should be pointed out and that it can be developed by reducing and preventing corruption.
- Invest in affordable and green energy. We need energy efficiency and better infrastructures for a more connected region and to effectively transition towards a more eco friendly and sustainable model of development". We propose a transition towards renewable sources, but without with not harming nature's resources. We also need cooperation among the

countries for reduction of energy dependence and invest in infrastructure upgrades to prevent and contrast hydrogeological instability

- Include climate change, sustainability, green economy and ecology in school curricula. Education is a key to awareness-raising, which will then lead to the prioritization of this topic and as such to long-term improvements. We need to raise awareness in all aspects of life for the need of immediate action towards reducing our greenhouse gases and creating a greener economy.
- Incentives should go to local farmers producing food and market them locally, thus reducing the ecological footprint. Furthermore, there should be incentives for green entrepreneurship, and support for larger companies to shift their economy to a green standard of work and lower their emissions. The state should also raise taxes for major polluters and hold them accountable
- The governments should propose legal changes and put in place regulations in order to achieve the goals of no deforestation, as well as land, water or air pollution. . This pollution in all our countries affects us all, regardless of nationality, and thus we are demanding for the governments to work together in order to achieve this goal.
- The governments of all SEE countries should work in close relationship with the civil society sector in order to achieve these goals.

Cross border cooperation towards democracy, security and resolving political issues in the region

We the young people from the SEE region believe that bilateral and multilateral cooperation and exchange will overcome old fears and barriers. We are urging for more open communication and cooperation between academics, youth and the decision makers on regional level for shaping a common future and prosperity. We are demanding an immediate end of the bilateral disputes that are directly influencing our future by putting aside their differences and to thrive bilateral cooperation between the young people and the decision makers as a vital part of a healthy democracy.

We have recognized the urgent need to engage young people in dialogue by creating concrete steps for shaping the future of the region:

- Working on accessing the European Union of the WB 6 (North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro); Starting the negotiation process with the EU; Working gradually on raising our GDP; Strengthening our democratic capacities and institutions; Fighting corruption on all levels, and then perspectively joining the EU by 2025, or 2030.

- Reforms in the political system, especially the the electoral systems as part of democracy, which will help smaller parties to actually have a voice, and independent people to be able to get decision making positions, as an answer to a high level of corruption, and to enhance inclusion of the civil sector society in legislative process
- Final resolution of the bilateral political issues (example.Serbia and Kosovo's dispute and North Macedonia and Bulgaria's dispute) by involving the young people in the process i.e. reconciliation of neighbouring countries.
- Leaving the past for the past generation and starting new initiatives according to the knowledge of the new generation by adopting new regulations for a common future.
- Understanding and advocating the freedom of speech and movement without political borders, By informational campaigns funded by the Government.
- Tackling discrimination and racism to reach better of communication and equal opportunities for all.
- Social security for the citizens in the SEE region.
- Building a stronger security network or better joint security response/logistic planning at the level of SEE countries in cooperation with NATO
- Finding strategic partnership and work on combating terrorism and extremism on regional level.
- Providing quality and affordable public services for everyone with difference or reference to their political leadership
- Promoting Diplomacy & International relations without referring to the decisions of lucrative politicians that work for their Political parties without respecting human rights and needs .
- The governments should be investing in youth capacities and educating them on the political issues
- Peace-building communication - a region that communicates in an intercultural dialogue for a peaceful, stable region that is tackling discrimination and racism to provide equal opportunities for all.
- Creation of SEE region youth council/alliance - we want advocates in a council where all non EU and EU countries are represented and can discuss their problems. Give the private market the opportunity to hire young workers for internships etc. of non EU countries => governmental level
- Youth independent space - exchange space for people from different nations.
- Health care access for everyone in all countries of SEE even when you travel
- Teaching every young person how to have a voice and to cooperate with powerful partners and talk to decision makers.- communication/political literacy