



European Youth Conference 2003:

“Inter-generational Contracts for Sustainability:

Building together a better future for the European Union”

16th - 21st September 2003, Brussels



Under the Patronage of Pat Cox – President of the European Parliament

Resolution



Main Supporters



www.jacobsfoundation.org



Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

www.gtz.de

ROBERT BOSCH STIFTUNG

www.bosch-stiftung.de

We also thank Unilever Sustainable Agriculture for their support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
PROPOSAL FOR AN INTER-GENERATIONAL CONTRACT	4
RESPONSIBILITY.....	4
OF THE YOUNG GENERATION:	4
OF THE PARENT GENERATION:	4
OF THE GRANDPARENT GENERATION:	4
STUDY GROUP RESULTS	5
EUROPEAN IDENTITY	5
ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE	6
THE MATERIAL RESOURCE CYCLE	7
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE	9
GOVERNMENTAL DEBTS	11
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	13
THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY	14
THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL MARKETS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY	15
THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS AND THE REFORM OF DEMOCRACY.....	16
POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE GENERATION BELOW 18	17

Imprint

Publisher:

Youth for Intergenerational Justice and
Sustainability - Europe e.V.
Rissener Landstr. 193
22559 Hamburg
Tel.: +49 (0)40 82290424
Fax: +49 (0)40 82290425
www.yois-europe.org

Copyright by Youth for Intergenerational
Justice and Sustainability - Europe e.V. All
rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in
part with correct quotation (YOIS Europe,
2003, Resolution of the European Youth
Conference 2003, www.yois-europe.org,
page) is desired.

Executive Summary

From the 16th to 21st of September 2003, 74 young opinion leaders from 22 countries all over the world gathered in Brussels, Belgium to participate in the European Youth Conference 2003. The conference was titled "Intergenerational Contracts for Sustainability" and focused on issues related to sustainability and the need for communication and cooperation between the young and parental generations. Several issues were discussed in ten individual study groups, in which the young participants worked on a proposal for an Inter-generational Contract as well as on solutions for the addressed problems. The "contract" outlines the responsibilities and roles of every generation in achieving Sustainable Development. With the ideas from these study groups, we hope to give impetus to politicians, businesspeople, teachers as well as others to create a better way of living together now and in the future.

A short summary of the issues addressed in the study groups:

European Identity

European identity can be fostered through institutional reforms and through addressing every single citizen. It is already in us to make the EU work. We have to develop our European identity.

Energy and Climate Change

Standing at the edge of the global energy crisis, we developed ideas and solutions for an intergenerationally and economically just world; striving for renewables and the Solar Revolution.

Material Resource Cycle

This study group started with a vision of sustainability in the material resource cycle through the closing of material flow loops and an effective elimination of the concept of waste. Proposals were developed according to responsibilities of the main stakeholders (government, industry, consumers and NGOs) in achieving this goal.

Sustainable Agriculture

Modern western European agriculture is heavily dependent on services that often are taken for granted. The priority must be maintaining and improving the capacity of the higher potential of agricultural lands to support an expanding population.

Education for Sustainable Development

Generations should work together to develop non-formal educational programs for sustainable development. These programs should focus on affecting paradigm shift, moving from a money driven society to a value oriented world.

Role of Companies in Achieving Sustainability

We advocate a more ethical and environmentally focused business culture to be achieved through increased transparency and stakeholder communication.

Role of Financial Markets in Achieving Sustainability

Pressure from financial markets is a major obstacle to companies achieving sustainability. This study group focused on concrete market based solutions to address this problem.

Governmental Debts

Long-term governmental debts are a serious menace to intergenerational justice because they transfer burdens to future generations. This study group made proposals to overcome this problem, distinguishing between the very different situations in developed and developing countries.

The Rights of Future Generations and the Reform of Democracy

For the first time in history, living generations have the capacity to permanently influence the biophysical conditions of life on earth. We propose that the rights of future generations be integrated into constitutions at the national and European level.

Political Representation of the Young Generation Under 18

This study group explored reforms and improvements in youth participation and representation in order to include the interests of the whole young generation. The following proposals were developed: proxy votes, voting upon request below 18, youth parliaments as well as improved formal and informal political education.

The results of the Study Groups must be seen as proposals for a concrete implementation of measures to include the interests of future generations into people's behaviour and to achieve a sustainable state of society.

The stated proposals outlining our aims for a more sustainable future is only the first step. Without the assistance of our leaders, media etc., in our respective countries, these issues will keep arising in the future. We hope our efforts have not been in vain!

Our future is in your hands!

Yours forever - the youth of today, the youth of tomorrow.

Proposal for an Inter-Generational Contract

Responsibility...

In order to achieve a Sustainable Development we all need to take over responsibilities and take action. However, the kind of responsibilities we undertake differ in regards to which generation we belong. A young person, for example, can develop new ideas and bring a fresh wind into discussions, but it has always been the parent generation who take the lead in political decisions.

Therefore the participants have identified the steps each generation should take towards achieving sustainable development.

of the Young Generation:

The young should be more open to taking the initiative and become more actively involved in peer education. An important issue is also to respond to the opportunities offered by the older generations and to take over responsibilities on a smaller scale. The young generation should furthermore understand its responsibility to put forward intra-generational dialogues and to participate in inter-generational dialogues.

To achieve this, we, the participants of the EYC 2003, intend to raise the awareness on issues like environmental protection, governmental debts, education, youth employment, political representation, governmental debts and the European Union.

of the Parent Generation:

Our objective is that today's decision makers take action towards our sustainable future. Politicians have to direct their actions according to the needs and interests of the young and succeeding generations. They should justify their decisions and provide the youth with new opportunities for active participation in social and political life. As the "deciding generation" should political decision makers take the lead in putting forward intergenerational dialogues. In support for the young generation to take over their responsibilities we demand sufficient financial support for the work of youth NGOs as well as offers for trainings for young people who want to get active.

of the Grandparent generation:

As we consider the grand parent generation just as important, we suggest that they be there as a tutor for the young people and pass on their knowledge and experience. Since the grand-parent generation is a growing political power, they should be more open to changes that are necessary in order to achieve a sustainable society.

Generations should work together and take responsibilities for a sustainable united world and carry out actions that lead to the common goal. As representatives of the young generation, we see the importance of achieving sustainable development and the need for working in partnership with all political decision makers.

STUDY GROUP RESULTS

STUDY GROUP *EUROPEAN IDENTITY*

AIMS and PROPOSALS

We believe that Europe is not defined by geographical borders, but by ideas.

We define European identity as a feeling of belonging based on sharing common values, beliefs and ideas and common experiences, as well as points in history. One is not determined as a European by birth but develops her/his identity during the course of his/her life.

We believe that a strong and sustainable Europe cannot be achieved without strengthening European identity. We believe that it might be realized by stimulating citizen's interest and engagement in European issues.

We see the undertaking of the following actions to be crucial for achieving that:

Reform of the European Union institutional system, which should reduce democratic deficit and build a sense of belonging, by:

- creating a more transparent and understandable law for all citizens;
- giving the European Parliament real power and increase the role of political parties by stronger coordination of national parties all over Europe, (and to) make parties more available for citizens;
- establishing a European single foreign policy and European Army;
- creating a basis for an efficient-working Monetary Union for all members (also for all new members);
- creating a common tax system based on the rule that every citizen of the EU pays a direct tax to the EU's budget which is then deducted from national taxes, on the long term basis.

Reinforcement of the informal and formal education focused on giving young people from all over the Europe possibilities to get to know each other, each others cultures, customs and languages, to get to know the richness of European diversity and to gain intercultural skills, by:

- creating one European school standard:
 - providing more agreements and establishing stronger cooperation between universities as the first step to reach one European university standard;
 - we need a common educational level after secondary school to be able to apply to other European universities than those solely in our home countries;
 - the certificates gained abroad have to be accepted in every EU-country;
 - this could be reached through intergovernmental agreements and supervised by the educational section of the European Commission;
- strengthening the idea of youth exchanges, supporting summer camps and "summer universities" across Europe, by:
 - providing better information about exchange programs and possibilities of using sufficient scholarships;
 - establishing, within the framework of the EU, a foundation for exchange programs which should try to involve all young people, also those "economically excluded" or "disadvantaged", both from EU member-states and candidate states;
 - supporting the idea of the creation of a network of European Community Colleges;
- supporting schools in organizing European Union Information Weeks, which would involve pupils, parents and teachers and other members of local communities in European issues;
- organizing sport events for children as the way to strengthen sense of belonging together and learn more about each other;

- giving easy-accessible information on the European Union by creating and publishing comics and games.

Conduction of common European events, which would help to create a European public among all citizens and connecting them on an informal level as well as help them to identify with Europe and share a sense of belonging.

As an example we suggest following:

- organizing "Eurovision de la chanson" especially for young people, common movie festivals, art exhibitions for youngsters etc
- creating TV-Channel which should be available and free of charge for everybody and could be based on following rules:
 - all governments are supposed to give money and provide one office in their country;
 - films would be presented in their original language with subtitles in the national (and if possible in minority) language;
 - every evening European news should be broadcasted in English with subtitles in national languages;
- establishing EU-EXPO, which should be organized both on a national and regional level - one country would provide facilities and all EU-members would present themselves with their regions, cities, culture;
- creating a European football team and organizing tournaments, which would be a big soccer event that will take place every fourth year - all the best football players from all the European countries would play against the best football players from America, Africa, Asia.

European Union public relation policy has to be improved in order to give organizations a better public image and make EU and its law and policies more understandable for ordinary citizens (the information weeks at school could be an example for a better and broader publicity of the EU).

STUDY GROUP

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

AIMS and PROPOSALS

Education

- Both formal and informal education have to be implemented;
- Informal campaigns are to be launched

Local Energy Agenda

- Energy policies based on regional and local conditions rather than universal solutions for the whole Europe are to be created;
- Ensure that these policies are imposed by European level authorities

Legislation

- Creation of a centralized system for incentives and penalties (Incentives for industries converting to renewable energy sources; Penalties for those exceeding agreed energy standards and timeframes of conversion);
- Constant and regular supervision/monitoring of emissions and level of pollution must be introduced;
- Dynamic emission limits (standards) must be created;
- Emission trading between coherent industries has to be enabled;
- Eco-labeling to be utilized;

Money

- Cost/benefit analysis of energy policies and overall pollution reduction should be performed;

- Periodic subsidies for renewable energies must be donated along with increasing budget for renewable energies (research, market and technological implementation);
- Create dynamic budgeting of European energy conversion project (i.e. to renewable energies);

Substitute non-renewable energy sources for renewable ones

We have many types of energies - wind, hydropower, tidal energy, sun/photovoltaic, biomass, geothermal energy (heat pumps), fuel cells, fossil fuels and nuclear power. We must set up a timeframe for coherent and stable adaptation of new technology implementation by society and industry. Analogically set up a timeframe for a stable phasing out of the fossil and nuclear fuels usage. The nuclear energy to be phased out by 2030. The EURATOM should be phased out and replaced with EURENEW (European Renewable Energy Agency). All the nuclear power plants that do not achieve these safety requirements are to be closed. No new nuclear power plants should be built. The cars driven by fuel cells must be introduced quickly.

By the year 2025 the share of renewable energy production in Europe should be 35%. Countries with the already high share of renewable energy e.g. Austria, Denmark and Sweden to increase their share of renewable energy even further.

By 2050: 80% of energy supply from renewable sources. The remaining 20% from fossil fuels but only the natural gas, as the least polluting.

Foster an international energy lobby

Research

- Car industry to convert to fuel cells;
- Encourage use of public transport;
- More research into new energy sources and preparing the implementation of new technologies to the market needs

Pan-European technology transfer

- Sharing and exchange of information and experiences for free

Rehabilitation of nature

- Removal of landfills and securing the old ones;
- Reforestation

STUDY GROUP

THE MATERIAL RESOURCE CYCLE

AIMS

Our vision of sustainability and intergenerational justice in the material resources cycle is a closing of the loop of material flows, providing incentives and information to convert waste into materials for new products and new activities. A number of the changes and demands we propose can be implemented at least partially in the short-term, but to attain true sustainability of the material resource cycle requires a long-term commitment, and participation of future generations. Within each of these generations, the various stakeholders, including government, industry, consumers, and civil society (especially NGOs), must cooperate and recognise the needs and motivations of one another, and will benefit by doing so. Also, the possibilities of the information society and the intelligent use of technology open up opportunities to overcome excessive use of material.

PROPOSALS**Action by INDUSTRY affecting...**

- 1) **Consumer**
 - a. Information of and communication with consumers
 - b. Supply of products which can be recycled
- 2) **Government**
 - a. Active participation in finding suitable instruments to force the implementation of material resource cycles
 - b. Self-commitment to complement governmental actions
- 3) **NGOs**
 - a. Cooperation (e.g. in developing countries)
 - b. Hand out transparent environmental reports or sustainability reports
- 4) **Material Resource Cycle**
 - a. Waste prevention
 - b. Improve final disposal (e.g. security of deposits, improve incineration)
 - c. Produce only products which can be recycled or reused

Action by CONSUMER affecting...

- 5) **Industry**
 - a. Demand products which can be recycled
 - b. Cooperation
- 6) **NGOs**
 - a. Active Participation in environmental groups
- 7) **Government**
 - a. Use of political power (voting and petitioning)
- 8) **Material Resource Cycle**
 - a. Active participation in waste management
 - b. Buy sustainable products

Action by GOVERNMENT affecting...

- 9) **Consumer**
 - a. Provide information
 - b. Education at school, for teachers and also adults
 - c. Education through media
 - d. Incentives for consumers to prevent waste (e.g. monetary incentives through "Pay-as-you-throw" scheme)
- 10) **Industry**
 - a. Shift subsidies for industries and public research (e.g. subsidies for the implementation of recycling processes)
 - b. Ecological taxation to internalise external costs (e.g. higher prices for raw materials)
 - c. Fund projects
 - d. Tradable permits (e.g. for waste or for the use of new resources instead of recycled raw materials)
 - e. Extend producer responsibility
- 11) **NGOs**
 - a. Support research

Action by NGOs affecting...

- 12) **Government**
 - a. Set political pressure to force important decisions
 - b. Help solving problems
 - c. Provide technical support
- 13) **Consumer**
 - a. Provide easily accessible information on the topic

- b. Create Youth awareness (informal education)

14) Industry

- a. Provide and communicate information
- b. Present public interests powerfully
- c. Cooperation (e.g. in developing countries)

Developing Countries

Proposals:

- 1) Companies of industrialized countries should produce with the same ecological standards as in their home countries.
 - 2) Companies of industrialized countries should demand ecologically produced raw materials.
 - 3) Industrialized countries should work together with developing countries in order to implement better ecological technologies.
-

STUDY GROUP

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

AIMS and PROPOSALS

Subsidies of EU

Aims and Objectives

- The structure of the distribution of subsidies should be reformed. Particular emphasis should be given to organic and small-scale farms.
- Reduction of subsidies for intensive commercial farming

Proposals

- lobby national agricultural minister (**short-term - 2005**)
- drafting of legislation to this end (**medium-term - 2025**)
- implementation of this legislation (**long-term - 2050**)

Genetic Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Aims and Objectives

- Efficient labelling in order to trace products containing GMOs easily (**short-term**)
- Consumers should become aware of the health and environmental implications of GMOs.
- For consumers to realise that they have power over companies' attitudes towards the environment, and that they can influence decision making that will be in favour of environmental sustainability (**medium-term**)
- GMOs only to be used as a back-up in case of an international disaster i.e as a seed bank only (**Long-term**)

Proposals

- Standardised labelling of products containing GMOs (**short-term**)
- Straightforward leaflets providing information on health hazards arising from GMO consumption, and on the impact that GMOs have on the environment should be printed and students should be exposed to environmental issues (**short-term**),
- GMOs should be used as a back-up in case of an international disaster therefore scientific research and development should not be halted (**Long-term**).

Soil erosion & biodiversity

Aims and Objectives

- Protection of habitats to prevent loss of flora and fauna (**short-term-mid-term**)

- Protection of marine animals by preserving their natural environment (**short-term-mid-term**)

Proposals

- Promotion of coppicing (**short-term**)
- Crop rotation (**medium-term**)
- Encourage planting of hedges around fields in order to increase biodiversity and as wind breaks, some farmers are not aware of the benefits of putting up hedges (e.g. reduction in the use of pesticides) therefore sceptical and not willing to give up land for hedges (**medium-term**).
- Control fish farming near sensitive tributaries (**medium-term**)
- Reforestation (**long-term**)

Organic farming

Aims and Objectives

- Establishing standard labelling for products throughout Europe- all organic products should be at least 95% organic (**short-term**)
- Improve customer awareness on the nutritional significance of organic products (**medium-term**)
- Reduction of ecological footprint of agricultural activities (**medium-term**)
- 50% of farms in Europe should be converted to organic farms (**long-term**)

Proposals

- More EU funded research schemes on organic farming (**short-term**)
- Imposing a tax on non-organic products to subsidise organic agricultural products therefore creating equal footing (**short/medium-term**)

Agriculture and natural resources

Aims and Objectives

- Making sure that people are aware of the fact that their actions actually have direct impact on the environment (**short-term**)
- Farmers should only cultivate what their land is able to sustain
- Products imported from far away imply greater costs in terms of energy because of the transportation. Therefore, encourage people to buy local products which are usually less treated with preservatives

Proposals

- Farming in areas where the climate and geology is favourable - draft guidelines from local authorities for farmers (**short-medium-term**)
- Analogical increase in water charge rates
- "Posh Tax: Imposing import tax on products which are produced nationally so that people will be encouraged to buy local products (so if its fashionable to buy foreign products as apposed to local they pay for the privilege) (**short-medium-term**)
- "ECO-TRANSPORT TAX" on airplane fuel. (**short-medium-term**)

Culture and rural communities

Aims and Objectives

- Maintaining present population in rural areas and looking for ways of increasing current population by offering access to proper infrastructure, public services (schools, cinema, etc.) (**medium-term**)

Proposals

- Creating awareness of the importance of agricultural heritage and education; e.g. farm camps, workshops, agri-tourism (**short-medium-term**)

STUDY GROUP

GOVERNMENTAL DEBTS

AIMS and PROPOSALS

Developing Countries` Foreign Debts

1. General Aims

- Creation of working economies
- sustainable development of third world countries

2. Obstacles and proposals to overcome them

a.) No **real democracy** or Rule of Law exists in many developing countries. However, only democracy and the rule of law can ensure that fiscal policy and debt management meet the requirement of the people.

Therefore, we suggest that

- no money should be lent to such countries, except if social and economic standards are adhered to; controlling should be effectuated through an independent organization that might be affiliated to the United Nations
- an independent organization, modelled after the OSCE, should foster the process of building civic societies in these countries.

b.) Money earned or saved in developing countries is **frequently transferred** to developed countries (flight of capital) so that the domestic population is excluded from the value chain. This makes it harder to increase purchasing power so that debts and interest can be repaid.

Therefore, we suggest that

- the movement from 3rd World Countries of domestically earned or saved assets to 1st World Countries should be prohibited through worldwide treaties
- the banking system in developing countries should be improved by means of co-financing and monitoring so that more transparency and more independence from governments would be achieved.

c.) The human capital of developing countries is **frequently educated** in Northern countries and does not return so that the figure of skilled academics in developing countries remains low. Thus, no sustainable growth can be achieved and subsequently, loans will remain open.

Therefore, we suggest to

- include an "obligation to return" in scholarship contracts
- strengthen universities in 3rd World Countries, mainly by co-financed projects that offer expatriated 3rd World countries' academics now working in Northern countries the opportunity to become members of newly-founded faculties in their home countries

d.) Developing countries have **no or only restricted access to 1st World Countries'** markets while at the same time 3rd World Countries are more and more flooded with 1st World Countries' products. This unjust policy bars 3rd World Countries from generating domestic growth which would enable them to repay their debts.

Therefore, we suggest that

- in exchange for the implementation of ecological and social standards, 1st World Countries' trade barriers should be lifted.

e.) Developing countries often **find themselves in a vicious circle**. With no capital available to them, they ask for credits; however, with no return-on-investment during the maturity, they lack the liquidity to pay back even the interests. So they run into new debts. This vicious circle could be stopped by implementing the aforesaid measures (a-d) and, as regards the remaining debts, by canceling the claim for interest for those loans not yet repaid. This, however, should be done if the countries in question comply with certain social and economic standards. The amount saved should be used for investment in infrastructure projects.

Future debts should be avoided. However, if debts should turn out to be the only option in a particular case, IMF or other organizations should not impose single-sided liberalization obligations on 3rd World Countries when at the same time the global trade policy (c & d) is not taken into account.

Developed Countries' Debts

1. The problem of intergenerational fiscal sustainability

Our aim is a sustainable and intergenerational just fiscal policy.

a.) Government debts are a transfer of burdens to future generations. When the benefits conferred to these future generations do not make up for the burdens, the fiscal policy is not sustainable.

b.) A high amount of debt is an obstacle for future growth, thus depriving future generations from their opportunities to live a life under conditions as convenient as the ones their predecessors enjoyed.

c.) Western civilization is based on the idea of democracy. Political power is derived from the people affected by policymakers' decisions. However, future generations are not represented in today's decision-making processes, even though they may be affected by the decisions these processes result in.

2. Methods to structurally limit the amount of government debt for the sake of future generations

The group examined various methods promising to structurally limit the amount of government debt for the sake of future generations.

a.) **Investment Clause (Ex.: Art. 115 GG [German Basic Law])**

ASSESSMENT: Most investments are only short-term-oriented and do not confer any benefits on future generations. Then again, there are expenditures which are not referred to as investments in the narrower sense, but which are of great importance to future generations (education). The meaning of the term is vague; the use of the provision doubtful, no practical consequences can arise in case of non-compliance.

b.) **Define a limit related to GDP (Ex.: EU Growth + Stability Pact)**

ASSESSMENT: Generally approved, but again: What sanctions in case of non-compliance?

c.) **Generational Accounting / Drawing Up Intergenerational Balance Sheet**

ASSESSMENT: Might serve as a general indicator for the future-friendliness of governmental actions, although quite a lot of concerns remain: How to assign certain expenditures to individual cohorts, how to cope with macroeconomic changes, how to foresee individual behaviour in the future etc. Still, generational accounting should be used as *part* of an inter-generational audit procedure that might be conducted either by a special commission (ex.: Israel) or by the respective Audit Office, provided it disposing over the necessary independence (Germany: Bundesrechnungshof).

d.) **Individual Rights for future Individuals**

ASSESSMENT: If individuals themselves were the only ones able to initiate action against such infringements, it would almost always be already too late and indemnification would work like a boomerang, burdening perhaps even more distant generations. Therefore, the only way to enforce these yet-to-establish rights in a fiscally sensitive way is to allow pressure groups – like YOIS – to pursue them at the time the infringement is happening before the courts.

e.) General Principle of Intergenerational Justice embodied in Constitutional Law

EU and national constitutions should contain a general principle, conveying the idea of intergenerational fiscal sustainability.

Proposal

"The government shall pursue a sustainable fiscal policy. A fiscal policy is sustainable as long as it does not impose more burdens on future generations than it confers benefits to them."

STUDY GROUP***EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT******AIMS and PROPOSALS*****Achieve sustainable development by implementing non-formal education in the existing education system.**

Non formal education should target all generations and improve intergenerational dialogue, through interdisciplinary methods such as volunteering, experimental and experiential activities, interaction between schools, businesses and NGOs.

Roles and Responsibilities of each generation (Time Frame: 5-8 years)**Youth**

They are the main actors in non-formal education through innovation, peer and trans-generational actions. Their responsiveness is a key factor towards achieving sustainable development.

Workers / Decision makers

Government:

- Edict laws to make education more flexible.
- Launch specific programs for example "responsible citizenship" programme.
- Reshape the curricula to include a multi-disciplinary approach and SD values.
- Support politically, financially and organizationally.

Teachers:

- Participate in new trainings to include Sustainable Development values in their work.

Businesses:

- Educate their employees through partnerships with the educators
- Give their support to non-formal education financially, but also through communicating and new products and services.
- Financial support for Sustainable Development.

Media:

- Involve their staff widely in the life-long education process to help deliver the value based messages of Sustainable Development

Elders

Share their life experience with all generations and use their free time to provide human resources towards offering non-formal education for Sustainable Development, for example by through running classes at community centres.

Conclusion

Generations should work together towards implementing non-formal education for sustainable development, in order to achieve a paradigm shift, moving from a money-driven society to a value-oriented world.

Although methods and results depend on regional, cultural and economic backgrounds of countries, life-long learning and an increased tolerance for change should be fundamental to this process.

STUDY GROUP***THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY******AIMS and PROPOSALS******2005*****Management and Human resources**

- Training and awareness programmes are introduced for management by qualified experts.
- Every company has an opinion statement on CSR and employee welfare.
- Companies offer opportunities for young people to gain practical work experience. These should place a strong emphasis on equal opportunities and be paid so as to ensure that the positions are available to all, not just those who are financially better off.
- Companies begin cooperation with government and civil society actors in developing countries with a view to sharing knowledge and technologies.

Resources

- There should be transparency on the ethical performance of suppliers by providing information on labour standards, social activities and environmental protection.
- Business should not source from the most ecologically fragile regions.
- Business should maximize the usage of recycled material and recycling options in non-core business areas.

Production

- Businesses save energy, reduce CO₂ emissions through implementing and promoting the Kyoto protocol.
- Businesses should be encouraged to invest in testing and implementing new resource efficient technologies.
- Businesses switch the major parts of their transportation processes to ecologically sustainable methods.
- Work environments meet ILO standards.

Consumers

- Clearer information is available to consumers (e.g. labelling of all GM products).
- Education on trade issues (especially fair trade) should be achieved through increased cooperation between businesses, NGOs and public institutions.
- There should be transparency on ingredients, trade backgrounds and environmental and social impacts through labelling products.

2025**Management and Human Resources**

- Businesses have knowledge of sustainable development, which is put into practice using the principle of eco-efficiency.

- Human capital is provided with a satisfying working environment which both enables and supports contributions to innovation, specially focusing on gender equality.
- Companies support employee migration and integration from developing countries in order to support labour markets (in cooperation with governments).

Resources

- There should be full transparency on suppliers and supply conditions.
- Businesses use eco-efficiency to reduce their usage of non-renewable natural resources by 50% of their 2005 levels.
- Businesses recycle waste and residuals within and for the company, also in core business processes.

Production

- The distances between production, consumer and supplier are minimized by giving preference to locally produced supplies.
- CO² emissions are reduced by 35% of their 2005 level.

Consumers

- Companies take responsibility in cooperation with NGOs and public actors for educating consumers on how to responsibly use their products and services.
- Companies are obliged to take back their products for recycling.
- Companies carry out life cycle analysis on long-period durable goods in order to inform customers on their environmental impacts.
- The real environmental and social costs of resource usage (water, energy etc) are taxed.

2050

- Equal minimum health, social and environmental standards are met across all countries.
- Companies use only renewable and/or recyclable processes and resources.

STUDY GROUP

THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL MARKETS IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY

AIMS and PROPOSALS

2005

Promote awareness of long-term financial risks to specific companies caused by non-sustainable activities.

To achieve this, exchanges and regulators should be encouraged to require large listed companies to publish independently generated ratings for "sustainability risk" in their investor reports. Additionally, investment funds would be required to publish an account of the sustainability risk of their holdings.

Encourage culture of longer term share ownership (and therefore hopefully greater investor involvement).

To achieve this, tax breaks should be granted on capital gains for shares kept for a long term of time. Additionally, we recommend preferential tax treatment for dividend income over capital gains income from share sales.

Encourage and enable individual investors to take sustainability risk into account in their investment choices.

To achieve this, ISO quality standards for financial advisors should be revised to include the provision of information on company sustainability and the risks associated in their investment advice. Additionally, proxy votes of institutional investors should be published, to provide transparency for all investors.

Investors in developed world have information available to allow them to consider sustainability risk when investing in large companies.

To achieve this, all new security issues from large companies should include information on sustainability risk.

Enable developed country investors to invest in sustainable projects in the developing world.

To achieve this, creation of structured finances entities in developed countries investing in sustainable projects in the developing world should be encouraged (e.g. sustainable micro credit projects).

2025

- Full disclosure of sustainability risk for all listed companies in developed countries, and large listed companies and investment funds in developing countries.
- Further development of sustainability ratings via the inclusion of supply chain sustainability risk for all large firms.
- Sustainability indices are a standard by which companies can be judged, and have developed a strong track record with investors.

2050

- All listed companies and investment funds in both developed and developing countries are required to publish information on their sustainability rating as a requirement for listing on exchanges.
- Investors (particularly institutional investors) take the responsibility index as the primary consideration when making long-term investment decisions.

STUDY GROUP

THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS AND THE REFORM OF DEMOCRACY

AIMS and PROPOSALS

For the first time in history, the living generation has the capability to influence the biophysical conditions of life on earth. This capability, when used without regard to ethical considerations, can have long-lasting, detrimental effects on the quality of life for future generations. This new situation requires urgent attention, as the stakes grow continually higher and our potential for devastation increases.

Recent and current life styles and practices have placed in jeopardy the rights of Future Generations. Politicians direct their actions according to the needs and desires of the present citizens in order to serve their electorate. Thus, the interests of future generations are all too often neglected. The fault does not lie with the politicians. The problem is rather a structural one since succeeding generations are not represented in present politics. It is not the principle of democracy itself that must be changed. We want to make reforms within democracy in order to face the new challenges.

The generation wielding power today has a responsibility towards the young generation just as we, the youth, will have a responsibility towards our descendents.

As young people from various European countries, we propose:

1. that the idea of Protecting the Rights of Future Generations is to be included into constitutions of all countries, with a view to the creation of "hard law" rather than "soft law". Intergenerational justice should

be operationalised through quantitative parameters. The implementation of intergenerational justice should be monitored in the different states through an independent mechanism, body or institution in accordance with national traditions.

2. That the above concept should also be embodied within the European Constitution.¹ The language employed in the draft proposal for the Constitution of the European Union does not cover the essence of the concept of intergenerational justice (the passing on of equal or higher ecological, financial, human, social and cultural capital/head) and, therefore, the rights of future generations need to be secured.

3. On the European level, a Commission for Future Generations should be created as a body within the European Parliament itself. This Commission should have the power to freeze the law-making process with regard to proposals which will have detrimental effects on Future Generations. The Parliament can overrule the decisions of the Commission by a two-third majority. Furthermore, an Ombudsperson will be appointed by the heads of states and governments. This should be an outstanding member of the community with an impeccable reputation.

4. The idea of protecting the rights of future generations shall be implemented into the legal orders of both developed and developing countries. With regard to intragenerational justice, the international community should take decisive steps to eradicate poverty and close the gap in wealth between developed and developing countries.

Regarding time horizon, the above proposals should be brought into effect as soon as possible (short-term).

Statement of our commitments

Since intergenerational justice is in fact an ethical value, it is necessary that it is shared by a great number of citizens. Therefore, activities to raise awareness for intergenerational justice should be supported and strengthened at both the domestic and European level. The members of the first of the succeeding generations, young people and children, should be both encouraged and empowered to become actively engaged in political affairs on a local level.

We commit ourselves to

1. contacting members of the European Parliament with the view to raising the issue of the representation of future generations
2. contacting members of our national parliaments for the above purpose.
3. raising awareness in civil society and ask NGOs to subscribe to the idea and actively support it.

STUDY GROUP

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE GENERATION BELOW 18

Introduction

In most modern democracies a democracy deficit still exists: About 20 % of the people don't have the right to vote which is generally all those citizens below 18. However, young people have interests that should be considered by political decision makers. They themselves generally have the interest to be re-elected and therefore try to maximise their votes. But in trying to do so, they don't consider the interests of the

¹ Annex: Currently the draft proposal for the constitution of the European Union mentions "future generations" in the preamble: "Enjoyment of these rights [i.e. freedom, security and justice] entails responsibilities and duties with regard to other persons, the human community and to future generations."

Furthermore, Article 3 reads: "The Union shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth, a social market economy, highly competitive and aiming at full employment and social progress, and with a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. (...)" and speaks also of a "solidarity between generations".

young according to their representation in society and the reason for this is that it doesn't "pay off". We believe that this situation should be changed.

A ground for serious generational conflicts and an in-balance of the political system are:

- The lack of political influence of below 18-year olds
- a relatively low participation in elections of young people above 18
- the demographic change: by 2050 the average voting age will be equivalent to the average retirement age in most European countries.
- a high and stable participation in elections of the elderly

AIMS

2005

- start discussions about the problem of political representation of the young generation and the solutions that we propose.
- Establish case studies about implementing proxy votes and voting upon request.
- a platform should be developed on the European and national levels where youth can exchange experiences regarding youth parliaments
- prepare a database about the European countries democratic systems so that the European youth can compare them and get ideas for reforms.
- establish regular meetings of youth parliaments with the municipality authorities
- promote the idea of involving more young people into politics
- we want to have a more cooperative approach to NGYO by the governments especially in transition countries
- promote the ideas of political education among students and kids forums

2025

- our proposal of combining proxy votes and the right to vote before legal age upon request should be implemented in most European countries
- the corruption should be diminished through education and a more accountable as well as reduced bureaucracy especially in transition countries. Therefore trust in the political institutions can be increased.
- the civil society should become a vital and recognized part of the society in transition countries.
- policy tests through young people should be implemented as a tool for checking the program of political parties regarding their future friendliness.
- Kids Forums should become a common tool for considering the interest of young children.
- Civic education institutionalized in all European countries

2050

- we would like to change the general attitude toward youth participation in the society
- achieve stable economies in transition countries in order to also stabilise the democracies there.
- no corruption

PROPOSALS

For the active voting rights

- change the law of voting rights in the way that young people below the legal voting age have the right upon request to vote earlier
We believe that the right to vote is a civil right and should not be hold back from youngsters that already have the interest to express their political opinion.

- For all young people below the legal voting age that are either not interested or too young to vote we propose proxy votes by parents, where each parent gets a ½ vote per child.
Currently the whole voting society has the proxy vote for those citizens below 18. The problem is that most of these voters are not aware of this and that they don't have extra votes for each citizen below 18. If parents get an extra vote for each child they can both present the interests of the child politically as they already do it other even more important cases like future education or nutrition.

For passive voting rights

- We encourage political parties to include more "young" representatives on their lists.
- We propose that on local and regional level young people should have a forum through youth parliaments or councils all over Europe.
- This way young people have a forum for expressing their interests and to learn taking over responsibilities.
- We ask schools to promote the importance of youth NGO's and encourage young people to take an active part in the social life of the society.
- We consider the work of youth NGO's to be very high due to the informal education that they provide.
- We have learned that political education in some counties is either under-developed or not existent.
- In order to develop stable democracies - especially in transition counties - it is important that the citizens are well informed about how the democratic system functions and what their rights are.
- We propose kids forums at Kindergarten or basic school level where young people are encouraged to express their interests and needs.
- This way it is for example possible to find out how their way to the school can be made more safe or how the local playground can be improved.
- We demand governments to have transparent and accountable policies in order to make politics more attractive to youth.