

# The Grid-4-Europe

Porto (Portugal), 14-17 November 2019



## Final Report

33 young Europeans from 15 countries who are engaged in political parties and societal organisations met in Porto, Portugal, on 14 to 17 of November 2019 for the first “The Grid-4-Europe” meeting.

The GRID-4-EUROPE intends to disseminate knowledge about relevant issues of the European agenda and empower young people from the EU member countries to shape the agenda of the European Union through new ideas and new forms of understanding.

The GRID-4-EUROPE is a project of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation’s office for Spain and Portugal in cooperation with the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, aimed

- to promote dialogue and mutual understanding on issues of European policies among young representatives of social and political organisations from all member countries of the European Union,
- to provide a stable space for meeting between young people from European countries,
- to openly debate different perceptions and interests with regard to single issues of European concern and to search for common solutions,
- to improve the knowledge about each topic addressed by prominent guests and to present conclusions after group discussion periods,
- to make connections between young people in Europe, strengthening and consolidating youth networks across borders.

## Commitment and critical solidarity with the European Union

In his opening remarks, Wilhelm Hofmeister, the Director of Konrad Adenauer Foundation's Office for Spain and Portugal, pointed out that the European Union is a unique association that guarantees freedom, democracy, economic and social benefits to all its members and ensures peace and stability for the European continent. The EU is distinguished by its capacity to find common solutions to upcoming challenges. Despite some controversies over a series of issues, the EU must increase its capacities to look

for communalities and to search for common positions and policies. This European project needs a committed young generation who demonstrates engagement and critical solidarity instead of complacency and carelessness towards critical developments. The Grid-4-Europe will contribute to foster an engaged and knowledgeable attitude towards European affairs

## Climate change - Green is the new Black: European policies and national priorities

Vanessa Klocke, desk officer for Climate and Energy Policy, WWF Germany, and Klaudia Wojciechowska, Project Manager, Forum Energii, Poland, introduced the session about climate change, a topic that gained high priority on the European agenda as the European elections did confirm. Above all young people of Europe are mobilized by this issue because of the concerning increase of global warming which has already reached 1°C above pre-industrial levels (since 1850). Both speakers acknowledged the growing (although still insufficient) awareness, political efforts and ambitions facing climate change.



Klaudia Wojciechowska appealed to change our way to speak about the environmental challenge and to raise awareness about the severity of the phenomenon. She pointed out that at the end of the COP21 in Paris in 2015, 195 countries adopted the Paris Agreement that sets the target of a global warming limited to 1,5°C by 2100. This agreement relies on a bottom-up approach, meaning that every single country decides voluntarily about its own contribution to the global effort and sets its own targets. The EU was the first major economic area that adopted its objectives and committed to reduce its

greenhouse gas emissions by 40% until 2030 compared to 1990. This target is divided into two sub-targets:

- The Emission Trading System Directive (EU ETS) concerns the electricity and energy intensive industry sectors (like iron, steel, cement etc.) and aims at a reduction of 43% of the emissions compared to 2005
- The Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR) concerns all other sectors (for example agriculture, building, transportation, etc.) and pursues a reduction goal of 30% compared to 2005

According to Mrs. Wojciechowska, the current energy and climate policies mainly follow the lines of the so-called "3Ds": decarbonization (reducing emissions), digitalization (building smarter networks) and decentralization (of the energy production, of the consumption and of ecological action). These trends are complemented by the electrification of many sectors (power, transport and heating).

With its common climate policy, the EU has achieved to raise commitment among the member states. While many member states are still lacking a legally binding national target, the need to mobilize in order to comply with EU objectives and legislation has become pressing. For example, Germany adopted its first climate protection law in November 2019 and Vanessa Klocke strongly attributed this achievement to the European legislation and efforts. Besides, through a strong modernization of European industry and economy, the EU has managed to decouple greenhouse gas emissions from the economic growth. Between 1990 and 2016, the emissions were reduced by 22% while the European GDP

grew by 54%. However, as a participant remarked, the decoupling of national emissions and GDP is partially due to the delocalization of heavy industries away from the EU, above all to China and Asia. Thus, reducing the indirect impact of carbon emissions caused by the heavy industry abroad through imports should also be an objective to be taken into account by the EU in the future. Nevertheless, the experts considered that by creating new industries, qualified jobs and innovative technologies, the EU demonstrates to other parts of the world that this transition is both possible and beneficial.

The EU is on track to meet the target of 40% by 2030, but both speakers underlined that it will be necessary to raise ambitions to meet international targets. Indeed, the IPCC Special Report confirms that the world needs to limit the climate change to a maximum of 1.5°C, while the current policies in place around the world are projected to result in an over 3°C warming. The report also indicates that, in order to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C, the world will have to achieve a net-zero CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions at the global level around 2050. Following Mrs. Klocke and Mrs. Wojciechowska, the EU needs a long-term strategy to reach climate-neutrality before 2050. The new President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has committed to put forward a “European Green Deal” in her first 100 days in office. This deal should entail more ambitious targets for 2030 (50% or 55% of emissions reduction), a long-term goal of climate-neutrality by 2050, as well as the creation of a Just Transition Fund to help the most affected populations and guarantee a fair transition. As Ursula von der Leyen herself highlighted, ambitious climate policies represent the opportunity for the EU to take a strong leadership role internationally and to lead our partner to act as well.



The participants and experts discussed the different perceptions of climate change by the European citizens, depending on the countries, but widely agreed about the fact that climate change has become a sensitive and very present topic in recent time. After a reflection in smaller groups, the participants proposed measures that could be implemented by the EU.



They brought up various ambitious proposals, from the creation of an Energy Union, that would allow a better allocation of the energy production depending on resources and natural conditions over the EU territory, to the development of a circular economy. They discussed numerous measures that could reduce the emissions of transportation, for example by ameliorating the railway network in Europe or by subsidizing trains and taxing flights to re-equilibrate the price relation in favor of the less polluting option. A participant highlighted the necessity to change the mentalities of European citizens in order to accelerate the transition process. This implies to propose reliable and accessible ecological alternatives and to enable all sections of the population to be part of an inclusive transition. Mrs. Wojciechowska added that politicians and environmental activists have to change their discourse. She considered that they should stop speaking about the climate change as a global issues implying global actors and rather put forward the local opportunities represented by a transition into the future world characterized by a better quality of life in a protected environment. Despite of these many proposals, the participants observed that obstacles remain that have to be overcome, such as the political unwillingness of numerous national policy makers, and the funding of climate transition in a context of tensions about the EU budget.

## Social Europe – Change, achievements and challenges in EU's social policies

The second session was dedicated to another pillar of a sustainable European development: social justice. Claire Dhéret, Head of Programme/Senior Policy Analyst, Social Europe and Well-Being, European Policy Centre, Pedro Mota Soares, Former Minister for Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, Portugal, and Martin Laurberg, Senior Advisor, Confederation of Danish Employers, presented their points of view on the achievements and challenges in EU's social policies and gave to the participants the tools for a fruitful debate.

Nowadays, the EU represents only 7% of the world population, but at the same time 25% of the global GDP and 50% of the global social expenditure. Promoting the values of peace and social justice, the EU has an extremely important role to play for the economic prosperity and for the social rights of its citizens. The employment and social policies belong to the shared competencies, meaning that the EU and the member states both are able to legislate and adopt legally binding acts. In this sector, depending on the kind of measure, the adoption of a new European legislation either requires unanimity or can succeed by an ordinary procedure with a qualified majority in the Council. Historically, the EU social policies have been mainly developed in order to facilitate the freedom of movement and the integration of the member states into the common market. The role of the EU in social matters is mainly defined as a complementary role to the national level. Thus, the EU can only set minimal standards, but this constitutes a means to strengthen social policy in general by allowing member states to converge towards a high living standard. Mrs. Dhéret considered that major achievements have been realized under the last mandate of the European Commission. Jean-Claude Juncker committed to achieve a social triple A and a large number of legislative measures have been adopted in the last five years, like the revision of the directive about posted workers and the directive on transparent and predictive working conditions. At the end of 2017, the EU adopted the European Pillar of Social Rights, a set of twenty entitlements (for example the access to social protection and the access to a decent job), which the EU

institutions and the member states have committed to guarantee. As Mr. Mota Soares highlighted, the EU social policies have contributed to the reduction of inequalities and the protection of the European quality way of life.

Despite the achievements of the EU in social matters, all experts agreed about the fact that important challenges will have to be addressed in order to guarantee a prosper future for the idea of a social Europe. The EU remains a very heterogeneous socio-economic area and the member states face different situations (visible in the diverging unemployment rates and level of wages for example). This national context and the political culture lead to diverging needs and priorities, as can be shown by the share of the GDP dedicated to social expenditures in each member state which varies from less than 15% in Rumania to around 34% in France. Beside these internal discrepancies, the EU is confronted with regional challenges, such as an aging European population and the stagnation of the labor productivity.



Mrs. Dhéret deplored that the initial ambitions of the European Commission have mostly been diluted in the course of the discussions with the states and social partners, because they often refuse binding regulations. The Passerelle clause allows derogation from the legislative procedures initially foreseen by the treaties. Specifically, and under certain conditions, it opens up the possibility to switch from the special legislative procedure (unanimity) to the ordinary legislative procedure (qualified majority) in order to adopt an act. It is an instrument which could be used to foster the development of a stronger social Europe. However, in Mrs. Dhéret's opinion, the new president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, does not seem to give a crucial position to social policy in her vision of the

EU. Indeed, in her first letter to Commissioners and in her first speech, she did not directly address the topic of Europe's social dimension and she strongly insisted on the principle of subsidiarity, implying that the Commission could partially withdraw from social files in favor of the member states. According to Mrs. Dhéret, this could represent an obstacle to the construction of a strong social Europe and slow down the progress of social conditions.

Mr. Laurberg adopted a more skeptical point of view about the capacity of the EU Commission to produce suitable social and employment policies. According to him, the centralization of the decision making is problematic because it does not allow national, regional or sectoral differentiations. He considered that the EU decision makers often ignore the real situation and needs of enterprises and workers, what make the concrete implementation of the EU social policies difficult for economic actors. He acknowledged the benefits of EU social policies, but warned against the real, often underestimated risk of a strong intervention in labor policies. In the latter sector, the action of the Commission creates, according to him, a burdensome bureaucracy which could be an obstacle to economic prosperity. Therefore, he appealed to decouple social policies from labor market policies comparable to the model of Scandinavian countries. Relying above all on the Danish case, he promoted common strategies in socio-political matters (social assistance, health, immigration, etc.) on the one side, and a very decentralized management of the labor market (working conditions, night shifts, minimum wage, etc.) on the other side. On the contrary, Mrs. Dhéret promoted a complementary approach



between labor policies and social policies in order to act on all aspects of social issues. She affirmed that there is no contradiction between national social and labor policies and ambitious objectives fixed at EU level. In her opinion, Northern member states often misunderstand the objectives of EU which do not aim at streamlining all social models, but rather at contributing to the convergence of social standards.

Mr. Mota Soares praised the European social welfare, but warned against national debts and appealed to collectively reflect on the funding of social measures. He considered that "the worst enemy of social protection is a bankrupt State" and promoted the reduction and better allocation of social expenditures as well as the flexibilization of the labor market in order to vitalize the economy. He presented the reforms in Portugal between 2011 and 2014 in order to show how reestablishing the public budgetary balance and reducing social costs enabled his home country to stimulate the economy, reduce unemployment and guarantee better sustainable social conditions to the population.

Finally, the experts discussed the future evolutions of EU's social policies. These will probably mostly rely on the implementation and complementation of measures that have already been passed, for example by strengthening the twenty entitlements of the European Social Pillars. It will be difficult for the Commission to attain new achievements and legally binding measures, like the creation of a European minimum wage proposed by Ursula von der Leyen. According to Mrs. Dhéret, an important challenge for the Commission will consist in adopting a more cross-cutting approach so as to strengthen the social dimension of the EU policies across different policy sectors and to ensure that economic, social and environmental challenges are addressed together.

During the discussion, a large part of the participants considered that, due to the inequalities between states and among the states themselves, it would be preferable to concentrate social policies in the hands of the member states. They stood against any harmonization of social policies and criticized von der Leyen's proposal of

the creation of a European minimum wage. In their point of view, the role of the EU should not consist in adopting common legislation in social matters, but solely in encouraging best practices and the exchange of experiences between countries. Some participants suggested to face the diversity inside of the EU by defining specific social policies for regional areas. This would allow the EU to better take into account the concrete situation on the spot, as well as the divergent needs and challenges of the populations and at the same time to adopt a comprehensive approach, aggregating regions of different member states which face similar social issues. Contrary to the experts who advocated for a broader approach some of the participants were in favour of European social policies exclusively focused on education and employment. They considered the support for better jobs and higher employment rates as the main solution in order to reduce inequalities and poverty at the EU level. Simultaneously, most participants underlined the need for solidarity among European nations, but there did exist disagreements on the matters concerned. One group of discussants promoted a solidarity limited to few transnational issues like

the fight against climate change and a common reaction to immigration. Others appealed to a broader range of measures in order to help the weakest member states to catch up and to reduce the gap. As a participant interestingly highlighted, the readiness for international solidarity in the EU will strongly depend on the sense of belonging of European citizens themselves and their own progress they perceive in this matter. All together, the session demonstrated that European policy makers and not at least the EU commission have to work harder to justify new and enlarged competencies in the area of social policies to convince the support of the young generation.



## Political bargaining: Methods of political negotiation and conflict resolution

Roland Freudenstein, Policy Director, Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, Brussels, and Dr. Francesco Marchi, Adjunct Professor of Political Science and Negotiation, ESSEC Business School, Paris, treated a cross-cutting topic which is a crucial tool in every dimension of politics: the political bargaining.



Negotiation is a tool which is used in different contexts and can take several forms. Francesco Marchi defined negotiation as a mode of decision-making amongst others that is caused by the need

of the diverse parties to change the status quo. The need to negotiate also insinuates that the implied actors find themselves in a situation of interdependence. Finally, a negotiation must be a productive process which aims at resulting in a fair deal. This latter point is important because the fairness perceived or not by the protagonists determines the level of acceptance and the sustainability of a deal.

In politics, among others in the EU, actors with very different backgrounds, professional cultures and approaches have to make joint decisions - and negotiation constitutes a way to reach compromises and resolve conflicts. As Roland Freudenstein explained, the European powers have privileged other modes of decision-making for centuries and permanently conducted wars against each other. After the Second World War, the fathers of the EU tried to redefine the nation-

states, in order to change their relations by jointly exercising elements of national sovereignty (amongst others commercial policies) on the basis of common rules. In the most sensitive sectors (for example in the field of security and foreign policy), decisions are taken by unanimity in the Council, while most of EU legislations (for example the support to employment, culture and education) are adopted by a qualified majority vote. In both configurations, the member states try to reach a compromise before the decision making, because even in qualified majority voting, national governments avoid to be part of the minority. Thus, bargaining is the essential element of the EU.

Mr. Marchi divided the cycle of political bargaining in seven phases: the pre-negotiation (1) and the agenda setting (2) are followed by the negotiation, first of broad lines (3) and then of details (4). The discussions normally lead to an agreement (5) which has to be implemented (6). Finally, the parties of the negotiation should evaluate (7) the process in order to understand what lead to success or failure and learn out of it.



Many negotiators tend to be focused on the negotiation phases and the agreement, but Mr. Marchi insisted on the importance of preparation and evaluation in order to anticipate possible obstacles, to be aware of one's own advantages and weaknesses, and to evaluate those of the negotiation partners as well as to imagine potential compromises, etc. He especially highlighted the necessity to consider the historical, social, geographical, institutional context of the subject, because all these elements can influence the outcomes of negotiations.

Mr. Marchi identified three key questions that one should ask to analyze or to participate in a negotiation. Most political actors enter a negotiation solely asking themselves about the content of the discussion: what is the substance of the negotiation and which is the expected outcome? This is one important variable in the

negotiation, but two other questions are crucial. The second question concerns the actors involved (the negotiating parties as well as any external influencer), their background, their interests and their relationship to each other, in other words: who are the protagonists of the negotiation? As a third interrogation, the expert appealed to the participants to systematically reflect about the negotiating process itself and the implementation of the agreement, what means: how is the negotiation organized, how is the agreement to be reached and how will it be implemented?

Trying to put these advices into practice through a role play, the participants could confront themselves with the issues emerging during political bargaining and identified ten key elements for a good preparation before a negotiation.

- About the actors: which relationships do negotiators have to each other? What are their mandates, meaning who do they represent and which decisions are they able to take? Who are other stakeholders influencing the negotiation?
- About the issue: What are the motivations and objectives of the negotiating parties? Which acceptable solutions could be found at the table? And away from the table? Which arguments or justification can each party use to defend its position?
- About the process: How is the negotiation organized (place, time management, etc.)? How will be communicated about the negotiation round? Which logistic choices have been made and which advantages can be taken of it?



Mr. Marchi encouraged the participants to carefully prepare each negotiation, to avoid any rush and to remain open to compromises in order to always guarantee the best deal for both sides.

## Fighting Corruption - Closing the holes

Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, Professor of Democracy Studies at the Hertie School in Berlin; Chair of European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State-Building ERCAS, and Codru Vrabie, Independent Analyst from Bukarest, Romania addressed the challenge of corruption in Europe.



Corruption is present in every country and is still systemic in most of them. Europe is the least corrupt continent in the world and this can partly be explained by the welfare of our continent. Indeed, Alina Mungiu-Pippidi defined corruption as a way of organizing scarcity, a possible reaction to lacking public resources. Nevertheless, corruption remains an important issue in some EU member states. Furthermore, a majority of Europeans perceive their country as affected by corruption even if only a minority of Europeans declare having been personally affected by corruption in their daily life.

According to Mrs. Mungiu-Pippidi, Good Governance is a universal governance, meaning that resources are spread as broadly as possible, in contrast with partial governance, in which resources are concentrated in the hands of some privileged individuals. To illustrate this definition, she compared the rent-based economy of a corrupt country, like Hungary, with the evolution of businesses of a less corrupt country, like the United Kingdom. In a corrupt country, some companies surprisingly lose or win shares on the market when the government changes. This phenomenon reveals a connection between economic and political actors.

Although corruption remains very present, the phenomenon can be difficult to catch or to detect. Amongst the many indicators that can be used to diagnose corruption, three especially revealing ones were presented to the participants:

- Single bidder contracts: The risk of corruption can be considered as high when attractive public contracts are attributed without competition because only one bid is submitted in a tender.
- Political connections: The connection between political structure or actors and owners or donators of a company is the most predictive factor for winning public contracts in Europe.
- Agency capture: If one provider receives more than 50% of the contracts of a public agency, it highly probably is a corruption case.

When it comes to solutions, the creation of new regulations first appears as the best way to face the corruption challenge. However, studies show that more regulations do not systematically reduce corruption. In Europe, the most corrupt countries are the ones which have the most regulations, while the less corrupt countries often have less regulations. This can partly be due to the pressing need to fight corruption in the most affected countries, but impact studies show that this larger regulation does not have a significantly decreasing effect on corruption. According to Mrs. Mungiu-Pippidi, only two kinds of measures have proven their usefulness: firstly, laws promoting the transparency of political finances and secondly caps on public spending. Other regulations as for example the increase of burdens for enterprises and private actors generally are ineffective. In a context where the rule of law and the independence of justice are not fully guaranteed, a confusing number of rules and a large bureaucracy may even act as aggravating factors for more corruption.

Mrs. Mungiu-Pippidi explained that anti-corruption policies can be based on two kinds of measures:

- Positive measures which create obstacles to corruption: independent justice, free media and an active civil society are gatekeepers against corruption. However, these are structures that can only be established on a long-term perspective and rarely are fully achieved.

Thus, these measures can hardly be considered as the only anti-corruption strategy and need being completed by a second kind of measures.

- Negative measures which eliminate regulations and structures inciting to corruption: in contrast to the intuitive reaction, these measures consist in removing regulations and reducing bureaucratic burdens. Provided that budget transparency would be guaranteed, Mrs. Mungiu-Pippidi considered the deletion of trade barriers and liberalization of the market as the best anti-corruption policies. She explained that competition would reduce ineffective expenses like rents and corrupt practices creating a new economic and social pressure on economic actors.

In the discussion, the participants brought in own experiences with corruption cases from their home countries. They highlighted the role of the public opinion which can bring changes in behaviors putting pressure on politicians and business actors. They also discussed the relation between lobbies and political leaders. Both experts underlined that lobbies can perfectly be part of a democratic system, but their action and the relations of politicians to lobbies need a high level of transparency. It was proposed that political representatives should have the obligation to publish information on their contacts, communicating with the citizens about who they meet and for what purpose. The digital tool, free media and vigilant citizens generally were considered as crucial elements in order to endure the fight against corruption.



## Is Democracy going Digital? Transforming political engagement

For the last session of the first Grid-4-Europe, Alexandre Luz (Communication Expert and CEO of Nextpower) and Maia Mazurkiewicz (Alliance4Europe) addressed the challenge of digitalization and its implications for democracy.



Between the middle of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, the public services began to digitalize in Europe. During the 2000s, digital

tools have been increasingly used in politics, above all during electoral campaigns. Alexandre Luz explained, however, that this communication remained a top-down communication, from the politicians to the citizens. Therefore, the politicians could, thanks to the new technologies, broadly share their opinion and messages, but could not establish any real dialog between them and their voters. The US presidential campaign of 2009 constituted a new step in the digitalization of the politics. For the first time, social media played a central role, in a more interactive communication as well as for the fundraising. Nowadays, digital tools are already crucial and the society continues to evolve towards the digitalization of all spheres of life. This evolution will go on and it is necessary to prepare the future of democracy in this new context.



Both speakers appealed to the young participants to reflect on the importance of social media in their future political engagement. Social media allow users to share their opinions with a wide range of people and digital tools can contribute to an increase of transparency in politics. However, digital instruments, especially social media, carry some significant risks for individual rights and democracy. Social networks collect numerous data about users. Mr. Luz considered that a candidate who would be able to gather this information and use the multiple tools offered by new technologies, combining these with sufficient financial resources and the creation of fake news, would very probably win an electoral campaign, what deeply questions democratic processes.

More generally, social media and digital tools are changing the relation between the citizens and the way they process information. Indeed, as information is circulating increasingly faster through large parts of the society, propaganda, disinformation and manipulation are easily disseminated and can produce severe shifts of political attitudes. Maia Mazurkiewicz showed the example of an important communication campaign against refugees in Poland which strongly relied on disinformation and fake news. This campaign and the general political discourse on refugees in Poland conducted the Polish citizens to massively reject refugees and the solidarity mechanisms to face migrations waves inside of the EU. Disinformation is based on a very emotional kind of communication, with short and easy messages. In the same time, the usage of digital data like statistics, is a common way in order to consolidate an affirmation and to give high credibility to fake news, but those data are often manipulated. The wrong use of words and concepts can also lead to disinformation and is able to distort the perception of the audience. Referring to the precedent example, an amalgam is often created between refugees and immigrants, often leading to a general reject of all foreigners, independently from their status and background.

Recent studies showed that the vulnerability to fake news can not necessarily be explained by a lack of education, but could rather be considered as a generational phenomenon. Indeed, it has



been shown that the so-called “baby-boomers” tend to be more receptive to fake news than the youth. According to Mr. Luz, this is due to their lack of understanding and mastery of digital tools and it represents a democratic challenge nowadays, because the baby-boomers tend to participate more in elections than younger generations. Therefore, laws are needed to protect the citizens from manipulation. The EU and its member states have already implemented important measures, like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which regulates the processing of personal data by individuals, companies or organizations relating to individuals in the EU.

In the discussion, several topics have been addressed, like the difficulty to deal with disinformation and the dangers of data manipulation. A participant shared her concerns about the risks of e-voting, aggregating a high amount of politically sensible data that could be fraudulently accessed and used to influence, or even actively modify, democratic outcomes. Mr. Luz considered that the existing technologies allow sufficient protection of this data and underlined that this could be a mean to fight against abstention in the current society, where many individuals consider the vote as too costly in terms of time and efforts. Wilhelm Hofmeister added that we are facing a redefinition of democracy. The new democracy concept could bring new forms of participation like the e-voting, which has already been partially initiated in some countries while others like Germany are more conservative on democratic rituals and still refuse to consider this option. Mr. Hofmeister nevertheless warned against the threats that e-voting could represent and insisted on the necessity to establish a secured system against any external interference.

## Message of Lídia Pereira, MEP and President of YEPP



Lídia Pereira, Member of the European Parliament and President of the Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP) outlined in her closing remarks the main challenges for the newly appointed European Commission and the responsibility of the European Parliament for critical support of future common policies. She emphasized that the future of the European integration and the European Union will depend on the young generation. The Grid-4-Europe should contribute to create a network of young Europeans who will prepare the ground for future cooperation, development and peace on the European continent.

## Participants

**Joao Diogo Barbosa**  
Portugal

**Louis Bout**  
Belgium

**Andras Braun**  
Hungary

**Felix Diekmann-Lange**  
Germany

**Gakopoulos Vasileios**  
Greece

**Kinga Gaspar**  
Hungary

**Gereiss Gatis**  
Latvia

**Heidi Hanhela**  
Finland

**Thelma Harris**  
Ireland

**Matthias Huber**  
Austria

**Panagiota Kaltsa**  
Greece

**Vivien Keilbar**  
Germany

**Robert Kiss**  
Romania

**Pavel Komarek**  
Czech Republic

**Taavi Liivo**  
Estonia

**Jack Maatthijnsen**  
Belgium

**Duka Malbor**  
Albania

**Maia Mazurkiewicz**  
Poland

**Delia Mitroi**  
Romania

**Michael Murad**  
Czech Republic

**Genevieve O'Mahony**  
Ireland

**Fabian Poitinger**  
Austria

**Jan Prikryl**  
Czech Republic

**Zsofia Racz**  
Hungary

**Michael Riedhart**  
Austria

**Tamas Szöllösi**  
Romania

**Andre Tavares**  
Portugal

**Nikolaos Theodoropoulos**  
Greece

**Jose Vilar Gomes**  
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**Mathias Weseth**  
Norway

**Santa Zarane**  
Latvia