

# FINAL DECLARATION

Of the “Re-boot Europe!” Conference,  
organized online from 16 to 21 July 2020<sup>1</sup>

*On the occasion of the 20th anniversary  
of the South East Europe Initiative of the Franco-German Youth Office*

We, the young Europeans,

From our homes in the EU member states and the Western Balkans,

Closely **following** and supporting measures that Europe is introducing to **overcome** the COVID-19 pandemic, **prevent** further outbursts, and to **recover** after the pandemic,

**Supporting** the ideas, efforts and initiatives to **deepen cooperation** between European governments and societies,

**Concerned** about autocratic and nationalistic tendencies in societies and governments inside and outside of the EU,

**Remembering** the core values of European integration: peace, democracy, freedom, human rights and rule of law,

**Devoted to** further promoting these rights and values and ensuring that they are accessible and respected in every part of the continent.

After joint discussions and exchange of opinions over six days,

Bringing together perspectives from the “old” and the “new” EU member states and the “future” members from the Western Balkans,

We are more convinced and determined than ever that a stronger Europe is possible and needed.

To achieve this, we all - EU institutions, member states, future members, civil society from all across Europe, each individual - and most importantly - us as the young Europeans - must be part of a constant commitment and are requesting urgent action especially regarding the following topics:

1. Future of Europe: Europe is more than the European Union, even if the latter is a crucial dimension of it. The future of Europe needs to be discussed with and among all Europeans, not only current EU governments and citizens. Europe in general, and the European Union in particular, need to be redefined and redesigned as communities of shared values and principles which also have to determine the question of financial benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> Organized by Franco-German Youth Office, Regional Youth Cooperation Office, Youth Initiative for Human Rights, People et Culture, Une Terre Culturelle, Pulse of Europe Toulouse, crossborder factory, supported by the German Federal Foreign Office and the Franco-German Youth Office, at the occasion of the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

2. Dealing with the past and reconciliation: We can't look away from war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Europe in the 20th century, and also regarding Europe's colonial past, and we reject each effort of denial and relativisation of these crimes. We must continuously invest in reconciliation and peace efforts, ensuring that crimes will not repeat, and that all the victims will be recognized and respected.

3. Migration and brain drain: In order to integrate migrants and refugees we need to reinvent the common European migration policy. Such policy must be based on true solidarity instead of xenophobia and national egoisms, and on the creation of legal paths of migration. Within Europe, in order to counter unilateral brain drain from the Western Balkans, we need to create more opportunities for genuine political, economical and cultural participation of young people in our societies.

4. Solidarity: Without solidarity - between and within our societies - we are and will not be able to face common challenges. The global coronavirus crisis must not make us forget the challenges faced by those who are less visible in our societies, among them also refugees and migrants, and the need to fight much more against social and economic disparities.

5. Climate change and green deal: We should all become fully aware of the fact that we can have no future if we don't change the way we perceive life on Earth and our (mis)use of its resources. We need to make everyone aware of the situation and to stop harming our environment and us at the same time, through education in school, through everyday-acts of each citizen, and through courageous political and economical measures.

6. Open societies: It is crucial to defend and develop much more vigorously open and democratic societies against nationalist, authoritarian and populist attitudes, by transmitting much more consequently European values through education in and outside of the European Union, by allowing more young people to meet their pairs from neighboring societies and other parts of Europe, and by insisting on the respect of the rule of law, of free media and of protection of minorities within and outside the European Union.

7. Entrepreneurship and digitalization: Equal access to technology, training, entrepreneurship needs to be made possible for all youth, regardless of status, geography, level of studies and socioeconomic situation. It is essential to enable young people to be heard and to make an impact also in the economical world, by enabling all young Europeans to access technology and by developing measures that would guarantee that no decisions would be taken without including persons under 25 years.

8. Intercultural learning and dealing with complexity: Education should be at the heart of the European project, but education needs also to be rethought, in order to allow young people to thrive in this intercultural complex world. Mandatory intercultural training in the school/university curricula for the students and the professors must be introduced, and student, cultural and sports exchange programmes much more developed.

In Europe,  
July 21st 2020

You can support the Declaration by signing [on this link](#).