



EUROPEAN YOUTH DEBATE 2018



E U R O P E A N
Y O U T H
D E B A T E



MILAN
5/7 APRIL 2018

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This booklet has been produced by
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European Youth Debate

Event Paper

WHAT IS THE EYD?

The European Youth Debate is a University students' forum organized in Milan by the student association European Generation with the purpose of bringing together young thinkers willing to share and debate their ideas on the main issues and prospects of the European Union. Each year students from all over the world gather to discuss about the most compelling European problems and to propose concrete solutions for addressing them.

This year, for the third edition of the event, participants were asked to focus on four different themes:

1. The opportunities and challenges provided by the setting of a Common Defence system and an Anti-terrorism programme;
2. The possible advantages and disadvantages of a Digital Single Market;
3. The status of International Cooperation and Neighbouring Policy; and
4. The enhancement of education.



Before engaging in the debate, students participated in an inspiring Conference that included speeches from the following influential Italian politicians, professors and journalists:

Michele Valensise, President of Villa Vigoni, former Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former Ambassador in Sarajevo; Sandro Gozi, Undersecretary of State for European Affairs; Brando Benifei, Member of the European Parliament; Beppe Severgnini, Editor in Chief of 7 Magazine and Vice-director of the Corriere della Sera; Massimo Gaudina, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Milan; Eleonora Evi, Member of the European Parliament; Carlo Altomonte and Vincenzo Galasso, Professors at Bocconi University.

Moreover, during the last day of the event, the participants gathered at “Palazzo della Regione” for a Plenary session. Each group had prepared a draft paper containing the proposed solutions to the issues discussed in the roundtables and had chosen a representative with the task of explaining their conclusions to the Plenary. All the participants were then asked to further discuss the matter, propose amendments to the drafts and finally vote on the approval of the Documents.

The event has been granted the high Patronage of the European Parliament, the European Commission and Villa Vigoni, and took place thanks to the precious support and patronage of the following institutions: the European Documentation Center of the Bocconi Library, the Italian Trade Agency, Banco BPM, ISPI, the European Student Associations Network.

ROUNDTABLES WORK

As previously mentioned, the 2018 edition of the European Youth Debate, has seen the participants involved in four different Roundtables. Each Roundtable, directed by two Co-Chairs, had its own theme to discuss in the course of a day and a half that were assigned to works. Every group has dwelt on the elements they deemed most relevant for their respective subjects.

The themes were the following ones:

1. Common Defence and Anti-terrorism;
2. Digital Single Market;
3. International Cooperation and Neighbouring Policy; and
4. Education.

In the following pages, for each roundtable, it is provided a summary of the works and final documents of each Roundtable.



1. COMMON DEFENCE AND ANTI-TERRORISM

The common defence and anti-terrorism group started the discussion defining few, shared, principles. They all agreed on the importance of trends occurring in the global geopolitical scenario, to be dealt with through a balance of hard and soft power and avoiding over-militarization. Also, they recognized the need to develop strategic instruments, such as a common strategic culture.

Then, the group elaborated some proposals, differentiating between the short term and long term perspectives of the different elements. Firstly, they recognized that the recent development of PESCO created different opportunities, as for example strengthening the position of EU Member States in NATO. Another relevant development is that of the Brexit scenario, which poses challenges but also the opportunity for a furthering of EU common defence.

On the long-term perspective, the most relevant point into discussion was that of a European Army. Due to the great complexity of the subject, they required further elaboration on the matter, through the drafting by the Political and Security Committee of a concrete proposal that should clarify the following elements:

- Defensive or offensive approach
- Supranational or intergovernmental capacity
- Compulsory or voluntary participation
- Speed of integration

Also, alternative proposals should be further elaborated.

Proceeding with the discussion, the table elaborated on the elements of Anti-terrorism. Firstly, they exhorted a more efficient use of the PNR system, and suggested extension of the powers of the European Attorney. Concluding, appreciating EU's efforts and EEAS' actions in Peacebuilding, conflict prevention and mediation, they stressed the existing gap in the field of sustainable peacebuilding; therefore, they called for the creation of a specific PESCO initiative focused on peacebuilding and Infrastructure for Peace (I4P).



2. DIGITAL SINGLE MARKET

The discussion in the Digital Single Market (DSM) Roundtable was centred around three issues, representing core challenges in this policy area: digital inclusion, geo-blocking and cybersecurity.

First, the full implementation of the DSM offers opportunities to citizens, and it should enable the whole population to take advantage of it, further promoting social inclusion. Showcasing projects, delivered via TV stations and local workshops, and harmonized user interface templates could help the elderly.

The employability of the unemployed could be enhanced by digital skills courses. Information sessions, such as tutorials for writing CVs and using job-search platforms, could be provided to facilitate the entrance in the labour market of refugees and immigrants.

Second, acknowledging that eliminating geo-blocking would foster economic growth, the roundtable agreed, nevertheless, on taking a gradual approach in order to take into account the disparities among Member States and the nature of some industries. In light of increasing the cultural understanding of the people of the EU, all Europeans should be given access to content produced in the Union.

There should be increased attention on the differences between physical stores and online stores and digital streaming services.

Third, with the aim of fostering a more secure cyber-environment and shortening reaction spans to vulnerabilities, a European unique personal identification system should be created, connected to a common authentication system available for institutions and businesses. The Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) should be given more funds and competences, enacting a coherent approach to cybersecurity among Member States.



3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND NEIGHBOURING POLICIES

In the International Cooperation roundtable the debate was structured on two main issues: the EU Trust Fund for Africa and the spread of European values in the context of EU Neighbouring Policy.

For what concerns the former, the discussion started with a search for a clearer definition of the Africa Emergency Trust Fund aims and scope and with an outline of a series of short term interventions for refugees protection.

Then, the main focus shifted to the identification of the root causes of the migration flows coming from Africa and of the consequent possible long-term interventions, in terms of migrants management, education and economics, to be implemented with new funds.

Due to its very broad nature, the debate about the second macro-topic started instead with a consensual choice of a specific area of interest, i.e. the post-Soviet bloc containing most of the countries currently involved in the EU Eastern Partnership.

It then proceeded with the delineation of several non-military interventions in the economic, social and cultural fields that are presumed to help exhausting the still quite high level of dependence of this set of countries from Russia and fostering a more effective diplomatic dialogue between the EU and Russia.



4. EDUCATION

After three days of discussion, six main fields of action were highlighted in the Education roundtable. First, the problem of inequality in the provision of basic skills was underlined. In fact, despite the common benchmarks set by the "European Strategic Framework for Education and Training 2020" (ET2020), several cleavages in access to basic skills have shown to be persistent.

Second, it was underlined how scarce participation in European political life constitutes a main challenge for the Union in the near future. This problem is exacerbated by insufficient knowledge about the EU and its functioning. As a consequence, filling this void is imperative for education systems.

Third, it was acknowledged how the job market is evolving at an ever increasing pace. This calls for a reform of national education systems so to make them more flexible and permeable to innovation.

Fourth, insufficient labour mobility and high unemployment were highlighted as major problems affecting European job markets. Thus, the reduction of mobility costs, so to promote the exchange of competences and skills, should be a priority. The education system can play a key role in this respect.

Fifth, inclusion was pointed out as one of the main objectives of education systems. In fact, minority groups (whether ethnic or social) still face higher risks of socioeconomic exclusion resulting from scarcer access to education.

Finally, the increasing number of people not employed or in education or training (NEETs) was considered a major issue in current European society. Consequently, this phenomenon should be better monitored and studied so to implement effective policies at the EU level via the education system.



FINAL REMARKS

For further elaboration on the works of the Roundtables, and for the final version of the documents elaborated and emended during the Plenary, please refer to the following documents:

- 1. EYD 2018 Roundtable works - extended
- 2. EYD 2018 Final Document - amended



The whole EYD2018 Team wishes to thank all the wonderful speakers, partners, and participants who have made this event possible.

It was an honour for us to work with, and for, you all.

See you next year!

Federico Calciolari

Alessia Pagani

Cecilia Mezzanotte

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Federico Calciolari.

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Alessia Pagani.

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Cecilia Mezzanotte.



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