Common statement by 177 European and national Civil Society Organisations and Trade Unions

12 September, 2016

A new Europe for people, planet and prosperity for all

Europe is at a crossroads, and the future of European cooperation and the benefits it brings are at stake. **This is about the future of our society and how we want to be viewed by the wider world. The future of our planet and the kind of Europe our children will grow up in.** The current crisis highlights the urgent need to reflect on fundamental questions: how do we ensure that the European project reclaims its promise of peace, democracy and solidarity? How can Europe work for its people?

Too many people across Europe are dissatisfied and disillusioned with the European Union and feel remote from its institutions and policies. But there are groups of committed politicians, trade unions, community groups and non-governmental organisations across Europe who are ready to take action and work for a renewed Europe. Together, we can shape a Europe that is inclusive, open, just, sustainable, and that works for people of all ages, social backgrounds and nations.

Where do we go from here to build the Europe we want and need?

Reject populist solutions

This crisis in confidence comes as people struggle with decreasing living standards, declining buying power and the rise of precarious work, hardship created by austerity policies, anxiety over movements of people to our shores, and the impacts of climate change and environmental destruction. As people search for answers, euroscepticism and nationalism, intolerance and misinformation are winning out over cooperation, humanity and solidarity with one other. **We must all – leaders, media and individuals – actively and at every opportunity speak out and act against division, marginalisation of different groups in society and those that play on fears for their own political ends.**

Tackle challenges together

Many of the challenges facing Europe – such as inequalities, climate change, natural resource depletion, and a global economy that benefits the few and not the many – are better tackled together than by countries individually.

The European Union, which embodies international cooperation and collaboration, needs to be leading in ensuring **sustainable and inclusive development, advancing human rights, and allowing for dignified movements of people, where refugees are welcome and all people feel safe.**

Fight for a sustainable, social Europe for people and for our planet

There needs to be a decisive and transformational change in political will, direction and policy. Such a vision is provided in the **United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which people, social justice, environmental and health protection, democracy and transparency take centre stage**. Guided by this agenda, EU economic policies need to go hand in hand with strong social and environmental

policies. The EU single market and international policies must promote enforceable rules to protect workers, consumers, all citizens – men and women, young and old – and the planet. EU policies must support democracy, dialogue and more equality within and beyond the EU. **We need a Europe that aims at improving the living standards of everyone.**

Work for better Europe, not less Europe

The current tendency to weaken EU institutions and to strip away protections for people and planet in the name of 'deregulation' is not the answer. **Current economic policies of reducing deficits and boosting 'competitiveness' have promoted too narrow an interpretation of growth**, and corporate profits have failed to make it into workers' wages or trickle down to improve people's lives.

It is these policies, not 'too much Europe', that have alienated people, leaving them feeling disempowered and left behind. We now need new, progressive European initiatives to deliver tangible benefits for people and to win back their confidence and trust. A 'better Europe' is where joint European action creates tangible benefits for people and planet. This includes **a new focus on equality and inclusion, a relaunch of the European social model to provide decent work, quality jobs and better living conditions, strong environmental protection, meaningful action on climate change, and an EU-wide effort to welcome and integrate migrants.**

Listen and engage

EU leaders, prime ministers, presidents, chancellors and parliamentarians must **listen and engage actively with citizens of all ages and social backgrounds** to understand and respond better to people's concerns and propose a new, positive vision of Europe. Everyone, perhaps most importantly the young, needs to be more actively involved in decisions that have an impact on our future. Together, we can take the decisions and actions on the issues that matter.

Make the case for Europe

We need a genuine, democratic and inclusive dialogue on the future of Europe, and on how the EU can deliver tangible benefits for Europeans. We stand ready to play an active role in this dialogue, and to **work even harder in making the case for the benefits that working together have brought to European citizens, and the values for which this Union stands.**

This common statement was drafted on the initiative of WWF, CONCORD, ETUC and European Youth Forum, and supported by the 177 signatories below.

European and International signatories

ACT Alliance EU
ActionAid International
ADG
Africa e Mediterraneo
AGE Platform Europe
ANME - Association for Natural Medicine in Europe
BirdLife Europe
BLOOM ASSOCIATION
CARE International

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Civil Society Europe
Climate Action Network Europe
COFACE Families Europe
CONCORD
Culture Action Europe
Don Bosco International
Don Bosco Youth Network West Africa
Dynamo International - Réseau International des Travailleurs sociaux de rue
EASPD
EFFAT
ENAR - European Network Against Racism
ENNA - European Network of National Civil Society Associations
ENSIE - European Network of Social Integration Enterprises
ERGO Network
Eurocadres – Council of European Professional and Managerial Staff
Eurochild
Eurodiaconia
EuroHealthNet
European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN)
European Central Council of Homeopaths
European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
European Confederation of Independent Trade Unions (CESI)
European Disability Forum
European Environmental Bureau
European Federation of Building and Woodworkers
European Federation of Public Service Unions
European Humanist Federation
European Institute Foundation
European Institute of Women's Health
European Medical Students' Association
European Movement International
European Network for Smoking and Tobacco Prevention (ENSP)
European Parents' Association
European Public Health Alliance
European Race and Imagery Foundation (ERIF)
European Trade Union Confederation
European Transport Safety Council
European Transport Workers' Federation
European Volunteer Centre (CEV)
European Women's Lobby
European Youth Forum
Fair Trade Advocacy Office
FEANTSA
Fédération Européenne des Femmes Actives en Famille
FEMS - European Federation Salaried Doctors
Friends of the Earth Europe
Fundación Jóvenes y Desarrollo
Greenpeace
HEAL - Health and Environment Alliance
Housing Europe
IBFAN Africa
IBFAN Europe
IBFAN LATIN AMÉRICA AND CARIBBEAN
ICSW - International Council on Social Welfare
IFSW-Europe - International Federation of Social Workers Europe
IGLYO
ILGA-Europe - European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association
International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)
International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)
International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA)
International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network
International Union of Tenants (IUT)
Light for the World International
Mental Health Europe
Migrant Tales
Misiones Salesianas
Naturefriends International
Network of European LGBTIQ* Families Associations (NELFA)
Oxfam International
PICUM - Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants
Plan International
Social Platform
SOLIDAR
SOS Children's Villages International
The Club of Rome EU-Chapter
The European Federation of Older Persons - EURAG
The Oslo Times
The Salvation Army EU Affairs Office
Transport & Environment
UNI Europa
Volonteurope
World Vision
WWF
YES Forum

National and regional signatories

ACT Grupa
Active Retirement Ireland
AEPADO - European Association for the Defense of Human Rights
Alaturi de Voi Romania Foundation
Albanian Society for All Ages (ASAG)
All Ears TM
arbeit plus - Social Integration Enterprises Austria
Artenave Atelier - Associação de Solidariedade
Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana
ASPUR
ATDAL Over40
Ateliere Fara Frontiere
Atelierul de panza SRL
Ateljee vzw
Baby Milk Action/IBFAN UK
BAGSO
BirdLife Finland
BirdWatch Ireland
Bulgarian Red Cross
CEIPES Belgium
Centar za životnu sredinu/FoE Bosnia and Herzegovina
Center for Equality Advancement
Centre for Peace Studies, Zagreb
CHEN, patient fertiltiy association, Israel
Conference of Religious of Ireland and Irish Missionary Union
Conseil de la Jeunesse
Consorzio di cooperative sociali EVT
Consorzio Sociale Abele Lavoro
Coordination SUD
CRIES
Cultúr Migrants Centre
Czech Society for Ornithology
De Omslag
EcoPolítica
ENEA apa
Estonian Green Movement
Estonian Human Rights Centre
FAEDEI - Federación de Asociaciones Empresariales de Empresas de Inserción
FATEC (Federació d'Associacions de Gent Gran de Catalunya)
Federació d'Organitzacions Catalanes de Gent Gran, Dones i Família - FOCAGG
Fédération des entreprises d'insertion
Filipino Women's Council
FONSS – Federatia Organizatiilor Neguvernamentale pentru Servicii Sociale din Romania
France Nature Environnement
Friends of the Earth Cyprus
Friends of the Earth Finland - Maan ystävät ry
Fundació Trinijove
Generation 2.0 Rights, Equality & Diversity
Generation Earth
Hellenic Ornithological Society
Initiative for Development and Cooperation
Inter Environnement Wallonie
JURATRI
KISA - Action for Equality, Support, Anti-Racism
Latvian Ornithological Society
Liga para a Protecção da Natureza
Lipu BirdLife Italy
Mayo Intercultural Action
NABU - Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (German partner of Birdlife International)
National Youth Council of Ireland
natur&emwelt
Natuurpunt
Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
Old'up
OVN -NL
Polish Society for the Protection of Birds
QED Foundation
RESIT - Rede de Empresas Sociais de Inserção pelo Trabalho
Roma Community Centre Vilnius
Slovenian Coalition for Public Health, Environment and Tobacco Control
Social Firms England
SOF – BirdLife Sverige
SOS/BirdLife Slovakia
Sport Against Racism Ireland
SST vzw
Stichting Laka
Tallinn Children's Hospital Foundation
The Integraiton and Support Unit
türkiye emekliler derneği
BirdLife The Netherlands
volare a s.stefano
WERVEL - Working Group for a Fair and Responsible Agriculture
Youth for Human Rights Denmark
Združenie Slatinka