

Supporting Young People as a Pillar of Europe's Demographic Renewal

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*Presented by: **Mladež Hrvatske demokratske zajednice** (MHDZ, Croatia),
Mladež Hrvatske demokratske zajednice Bosne i Hercegovine
(MHDZ, Bosnia and Herzegovina), **Forza Italia Giovani** (FIG, Italy).*

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Giovani Democratico Cristiani (GDC, San Marino),
Christian Democratic Youth of Slovakia (KDMS, Slovakia),
Mladí Lidovci (ML, Czech Republic), **Top Tým** (Czech Republic),
Young citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (MGERB, Bulgaria),
PAS Youth (Moldova), **Lebanese Forces Youth Association** (LFSA, Lebanon).*

RECOGNIZING THAT:

1. The European Union, through the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, recognises young people as key drivers of social, economic and democratic development and promotes their active involvement in decision-making processes¹;
2. **Europe remains one of the most successful political and economic projects**, yet is confronted with **negative long-term demographic trends**, including ageing populations and persistently low birth rates, with fertility levels across the Union remaining below the replacement rate, all of which require continued and coordinated efforts³;

- 29 3. **The median age in the European Union** continues to rise, while the old-age
30 dependency ratio is projected to increase significantly by 2050, placing growing
31 pressure on labour markets, social protection systems and intergenerational solidarity;
- 32 4. Young Europeans today have more opportunities than previous generations,
33 particularly in education and mobility, yet increasingly face a **prolonged transition to**
34 **adulthood**, characterised by delayed financial independence and **postponed family**
35 **formation**^{2,6};
- 36 5. Access to **stable, secure and quality employment** plays a decisive role in shaping
37 young people's life choices, including decisions on starting a family and remaining in
38 or returning to their local communities⁶, while the **prevalence of precarious forms** of
39 employment limits young people's financial stability and long-term planning capacity;
- 40 6. Access to **affordable and quality housing is increasingly becoming** one of the main
41 challenges for young people across Europe, with many unable to leave the parental
42 home before the age of 30, thereby **directly affecting demographic trends**^{3,4};
- 43 7. Regional disparities within the Union continue to shape opportunities for young people,
44 **particularly in rural, remote and less-developed areas**, contributing to youth
45 outmigration and causing territorial imbalances, which underscores the **importance of**
46 **cohesion policy**⁵;
- 47 8. **Freedom of movement remains one of the core achievements** of the European Union,
48 while balanced mobility and the creation of conditions for return migration are essential
49 for sustainable demographic development²;
- 50 9. Access to **quality education, training and lifelong learning opportunities** remains
51 uneven across the Union, affecting equal opportunities and long-term resilience;
- 52 10. **Mental health challenges among young people** have increased in recent years,
53 impacting their well-being, social participation and economic prospects;
- 54 11. **Digitalisation and technological transformation** create new opportunities, but also
55 risk widening inequalities without adequate access to digital skills and infrastructure;

56 12. The European Union and its Member States have **made progress in supporting**
57 **families** and **improving work-life balance**, while further sustained efforts and
58 investments remain necessary;

59 13. **Public investment in youth-oriented policies**, including education, employment and
60 housing, is needed to fully address demographic challenges;

61 14. **Demographic renewal requires not only economic measures**, but also a stable,
62 predictable and supportive social environment in which young people can plan their
63 future with confidence³;

64 15. A **comprehensive and forward-looking approach to demographic renewal**
65 necessitates the systematic integration of the youth perspective across all relevant
66 European policies and strategies;

67 **ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:**

68 1. EPP Leaders adopted, in Zagreb in January 2026, the Resolution entitled
69 **“Demographic Renewal: A Strategic Imperative for Europe”**, affirming that
70 demographic renewal constitutes a strategic priority for the European Union, on **an**
71 **equal footing** with competitiveness, security, energy, and technological sovereignty,
72 and underscoring the **critical importance of sustained investment** in younger
73 generations⁷.

74 2. Demographic change is increasingly recognised across the European Union as **a**
75 **structural challenge**, with direct implications for labour markets, public services and
76 the long-term sustainability of local communities³.

77 3. Across the European Union, as well as at national level, a range of measures has already
78 been introduced with the aim of **supporting young people and families**, although their
79 effectiveness still varies depending on specific national and regional circumstances.

80 4. **Investment in education, skills and innovation** remains a key factor for both the
81 opportunities available to young people and the long-term competitiveness of the
82 European economy⁶.

- 83 5. The **green and digital transitions** create new opportunities for younger generations,
84 but also **highlight existing gaps** in access to education, skills and the labour market.
- 85 6. **Europe’s long-term resilience** will largely depend on **whether young people** see
86 realistic prospects **within the Union** and choose to build their **lives and careers** in their
87 local communities, whether in urban, rural or remote areas³.

88 **YEPP CALLS ON:**

- 89 1. The European Commission and governments across Europe to further improve the
90 **transition of young people** from education to the labour market, by strengthening
91 traineeship systems and **first-job opportunities**, developing dual education models and
92 ensuring a **closer link** between education systems and labour market needs, taking into
93 account recent initiatives such as the European Commission’s reopening of large-scale
94 **entry-level recruitment**, which attracted around 60,000 applicants for approximately
95 750 positions, demonstrating both the high demand among young people and the need
96 for more frequent and accessible entry pathways into the labour market.
- 97 2. **The European institutions to systematically mainstream** the youth perspective, in
98 particular in the **preparation of a comprehensive European Demographic Strategy**
99 and in the **finalisation of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028–2034**,
100 ensuring that it effectively **promotes economic, social and territorial cohesion** across
101 the Union.
- 102 3. The European Union to **strengthen** and further **expand the Erasmus+ Programme**
103 within the next Multiannual Financial Framework, recognising it as **a key instrument**
104 **for the empowerment and participation of students and young people**, while
105 ensuring broader and more inclusive access to mobility and learning opportunities
106 across the European continent.
- 107 4. The European Union and its Member States to ensure that the **European Youth**
108 **Strategy beyond 2027 incorporates clear demographic objectives**, acknowledging
109 youth participation as an essential prerequisite for youth empowerment and for
110 advancing Europe’s demographic renewal.

- 111 5. The EPP to support the **strengthening** of Europe’s **demographic analytical,**
112 **forecasting,** and **strategic foresight capacities,** with the **full integration** of the youth
113 perspective, in **order to ensure evidence-based policymaking** and to facilitate the
114 **exchange of best practices** across the Union.
- 115 6. The European Union to support the **development of accessible** career guidance and
116 **employment systems** for young people, including the **digitalisation of public**
117 **employment services** and better use of data in guiding young people towards in-
118 demand professions.
- 119 7. The Member States to focus, in line with the European Affordable Housing Plan, on
120 housing policies that prioritize the needs of young people and enable them to achieve
121 independence at an earlier stage, including through the mobilization of vacant housing,
122 supporting access to affordable financing and mortgage schemes that enable them to
123 purchase or renovate their homes, the development of sustainable long-term rental
124 models, and the strengthening of affordable housing as a viable and accessible option.
- 125 8. The European Union and governments across Europe to strengthen support for young
126 families through a **more integrated approach** that connects housing, employment and
127 family policies, **with particular attention to childcare and flexible forms of work.**
- 128 9. The European Union to introduce a **European Child Investment Benchmark,** aimed
129 at encouraging sustained prioritisation of early childhood, education and family support
130 within national budgets and recovery plans, while ensuring that financial sustainability
131 frameworks, including **ESG criteria,** also take into account their impact on
132 demographic renewal and incentivise the private sector to integrate family-friendly
133 policies into corporate decision-making.
- 134 10. The EPP should give greater attention to **youth mental health,** including more
135 **accessible counselling services,** preventive programmes in education and stronger
136 responses to different forms of addiction, especially those **linked to the digital**
137 **environment.**
- 138 11. The European Union to **further support young people** in rural and less developed
139 areas, through investment in infrastructure, access to services and the development of
140 local economies, making the “**right to stay**” a realistic choice.

141 12. The European Commission to more **consistently assess the demographic impact** of
142 policies affecting young people, **particularly in areas such as housing**, mobility and
143 regional development.

144 13. The European Union and governments across Europe to further promote youth
145 **entrepreneurship by simplifying access** to finance and supporting self-employment,
146 building on measures that have already shown results.

147 14. EU institutions to ensure that young people are not only formally included in
148 policymaking, but **that their perspectives have a real impact on decisions shaping**
149 **Europe's future.**

150 **CONCLUSION**

151 At a time of growing geopolitical uncertainty and shifting global dynamics, demographic
152 renewal in Europe is not only about trends and numbers, but also about whether young people
153 feel confident about their future.

154 A Europe that offers stability, opportunity and perspective to its young people is a Europe that
155 remains strong and capable of shaping its own future.

156 The Youth of the European People's Party therefore calls for continued efforts to ensure that
157 young people can build their future here in Europe.

158 **Resources:**

159 1. European Commission. (2018). EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027.
160 https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en

161 2. European Commission. (2022). EU Youth Report.
162 https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/eu-youth-report_en

163 3. European Commission. (2023). Demography Report.
164 https://commission.europa.eu/publications/demography-report_en

165 4. Eurostat. (2024). Fertility statistics.
166 <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

167 5. European Commission. (2020). A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas.
168 <https://commission.europa.eu>

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- 170 6. OECD. (2023). Youth and Labour Market Transitions in Europe.
171 <https://www.oecd.org>
- 172 7. European People's Party. (2026). Demographic Renewal: A Strategic Imperative for
173 Europe.
174 <https://www.epp.eu/papers/demographic-renewal-a-strategic-imperative-for-europe>