

PP2-VI FYEG Political Platform - Europe in the World

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Political Platform text

6. Europe in the World

The current international system has not achieved its promise of ensuring peace, guaranteeing fundamental rights, and reducing global inequalities and poverty. Conflicts are taking place all around the globe. Illiberalism* and autocracy* are on the rise. At the same time, the international organisations and rules that have characterised international cooperation over the last decades are increasingly under attack. The changing geopolitical context (including the withdrawal of the USA from the world stage and the rise of other powers such as China) will have far-reaching consequences for the international system. On top of this, the effects of the climate crisis will contribute to instability. We stand at the beginning of a period of significant volatility.

The European Union has tried to establish itself as a global actor over recent years. We believe that it is only together that the European Union Member States have enough weight to tackle complex global challenges effectively. The external action of the European Union must be built on and guided by values. We believe that European foreign policy must uphold human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the respect of international law; preserve and build peace; pursue multilateral* solutions; and fight for effective action at the global level to fight climate change, the biodiversity crisis, and other global environmental and social challenges.

a. Multilateralism

Challenges such as the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic are global in nature and cannot be overcome by any state alone. In a world that is becoming increasingly connected and complex, international cooperation is the only way forward. At a time when international organisations are being undermined and with certain states pursuing a course of unilateralism*, the European Union, as well as other actors, needs to actively fight for multilateral solutions and the

strengthening of international organisations.

We oppose a move towards a world characterised by great power competition and the rule of the strongest. It is our responsibility to fight for a fair, rule-based international system that protects those who are more vulnerable and gives them the power to actively shape their futures. We stand for the strengthening of international courts and call for the EU to join the European Convention on Human Rights* in a timely fashion in order for it to be held to account in cases of human rights abuses.

The European Union will also advocate for reforms within the International Monetary Fund (IMF)* and the World Bank*. Their decision-making processes must be decoupled from the financial contributions of Member States. These institutions must contribute to a stable and sustainable world economy. Multilateral solutions on global issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, migration, weapons, and security should be pursued.

While being strong supporters of multilateralism, FYEG also believes that it needs to be deeply reformed. The current system is still institutionalising existing power inequalities instead of balancing them. The fact that five of the richest countries in the world, who happen to be among the largest military powers and weapons exporters, hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council* and have the right of veto is neither fair nor sustainable in the long term. In the short term, this system should be reformed by giving permanent seats on the Security Council to more countries, including those who have historically been exploited and hindered in their economic development by colonial powers, and by ending the right of veto. In the long term, the UN should evolve towards a global democracy in which representatives from all countries would be democratically elected.

b. Feminist foreign policy

As FYEG, we stand for the development and implementation of a European feminist foreign policy. Feminist foreign policy is a political framework that is centred around the well-being of marginalised people and invokes processes of self-reflection regarding hierarchical global systems.

There is an urgent need for the European Union to reconsider the way it conducts its external actions. Traditionally, foreign policy thinking tends to focus on military force and the security of states. Feminist foreign policy offers us a new, intersectional way to think about foreign policy from the viewpoint of the most vulnerable. It aims to elevate women's and marginalised groups' experiences and agency to scrutinise the destructive forces of patriarchy, neocolonialism, heteronormativity*, capitalism*, racism*, imperialism*, and militarism*.

For European states, this means addressing its history of colonialism. Many European states built their wealth on the brutal exploitation of other countries. Colonialism and its aftershocks are affecting countries and the hierarchies in the international system to this day. A European feminist foreign policy must be a decolonial foreign policy. A first step into this direction is debt forgiveness* and reparations for formerly colonised countries. In the longer term, the way the European Union conducts development assistance needs to be rethought and global economic institutions need to be reformed to effectively address the situation of formerly colonised countries.

In terms of peacebuilding, a European feminist foreign policy means that more women and other marginalised groups must be brought to the negotiation table. Our focus should not be on top-down processes, but rather on community-centred initiatives.

As part of a European feminist foreign policy, the institutions which shape foreign policy, such as the European External Action Service* and national foreign services, must reflect the diversity of the societies they work for. Foreign policy continues to be dominated by old white men, and it is the task of institutions to actively take steps to change this.

c. Peace and security

Peace is more than the mere absence of war. Our understanding of peace entails a positive peace that includes a commitment to justice and human rights and the eradication of poverty, discrimination, and social exclusion, as well as tackling the effects of the climate crisis.

Too often security is equated with militarisation. Such a perspective is not only false and limiting, but harmful. We need a paradigm shift in terms of security, putting more emphasis on crisis preparedness, resilience, and emerging security challenges such as hybrid threats and climate change. Further militarisation fails to meet today's security challenges. Instead of militarisation, we therefore call for an allocation of resources to where they can contribute to human security* and truly sustainable peace. This includes ensuring funding for civil society organisations and humanitarian organisations.

Human beings, not state security, must be at the heart of all security efforts. When it comes to conflict response, humanitarian action, dialogue, and sanctions must be prioritised over militarised intervention. Within international organisations dealing with security, the EU must actively fight for solutions built on the principles of human security. Within the European Union, we must put an end to the unanimity requirement to impose international economic sanctions.

Through the production and export of arms, Europe is fuelling conflicts across the world. We demand the end of arms exports. In line with the principle of human security, we also call on Europe to increase efforts to make nuclear weapons illegal under international law and join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*. We also advocate for the global prohibition of lethal autonomous weapons (LAWS)*.

d. Migration

We believe in the unrestricted right to travel and migrate for education, economic, security, freedom, peace, climate, and other reasons. Freedom of movement should be considered a human right. Your freedom and opportunities should not depend on where you or your parents were born or your ability to acquire a certain nationality.

Europe must become a safe haven for people seeking refuge. Illegal pushbacks* of migrants and refugees must stop, and the humane treatment of migrants and refugees upon and after their arrival ensured, in particular access to sufficient food, drinkable water, and healthcare. The housing of migrants and refugees in mass camps with poor living conditions must end, and dignified housing should be offered.

Human rights activists who organise voluntary sea rescue operations in the Mediterranean have been charged with heinous crimes. Assisting migrants and refugees should not be criminalised. The externalisation of border management, through agreements such as the ones with the Turkish government and the Libyan authorities, has further amplified the violations of human rights at the borders of the EU. This should be ended.

We defend the right to asylum. Europe must create legal and safe channels for migration. We demand humanitarian and resettlement visas, allowing refugees to come to Europe safely.

The Dublin system* should be abolished. Refugees should be able to effectively register for asylum, have access to asylum procedures, and be able to request asylum not in the country of arrival but in the country of their choice. We need a common European asylum policy based on the principles of solidarity.

Europe does not have a migrant or refugee crisis, Europe has a militarisation of migration and border policies crisis. FYEG is unequivocally against "Fortress Europe". The militarisation of border management, including through Frontex*, has turned Europe into a fortress, causing the death of thousands of migrants every year. We demand the abolition of Frontex.

Current border policies institutionalise racism and social stratification*. Instead, we should make sure that our migration policies serve to create a welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and peaceful Europe. This means equal access to education, job opportunities for all, the recognition of education and skills learnt in someone's country of origin, and the provision of language training. Moreover, it should be easier to gain study, work, and residence permits in Europe and to be granted family reunification. The granting of permanent residence permits should be the norm, not the exception.

Across Europe, millions of people live undocumented. The rights of these paperless people* should be protected. There are millions of young people who were born in the European Union but are not EU citizens because of their parents' migration status. Anyone who is born in the EU is European and should receive an EU passport upon birth.

e. The geopolitical challenges of digitalisation

Digitalisation has brought new geopolitical challenges. Digital companies and platforms are in an excellent position to use the flaws of the current international system to their benefit, for example to avoid taxation or locate the country that will offer them the best conditions and the lowest level of accountability. At a time when certain companies have become more powerful than states, only international cooperation and European legislation can provide solutions and protect citizens' personal data and privacy. We support dismantling the biggest tech companies to allow other actors to compete on a level playing field and to avoid the over-concentration of power. We also support the development of alternatives to tech giants that must show greater respect for people's data and privacy.

Digitalisation has also created new online battlefields. The cyberattacks reported by some media outlets, hospitals, and public services show the need to reinforce cybersecurity*. The attempts of some countries to influence democratic processes such as referenda and elections, for example through disinformation campaigns, also demonstrate the need to take preventative measures. We support a ban on targeted advertising* and the strong regulation of political advertising on social media.

Finally, digitalisation also has geopolitical consequences in relation to the consumption of rare earth elements (REEs). REEs are essential for the manufacture of many electronic devices but are only found in sufficient quantities in certain countries, which makes them a source of geopolitical tension. We support the development of recycling facilities in Europe as well as limits on the export of waste containing REEs.

f. Trade and global justice

Sharp global inequalities shape today's international system. Formerly colonised countries are suffering from the legacy of colonialism to this day. Global inequalities are also apparent in the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis, as those who are the most responsible are not the same as those who are most severely affected. Global inequalities are perpetuated by free trade and by international trade rules that leave countries powerless to face multinational corporations.

FYEG stands for global justice. Global justice entails a rethinking of how we conduct both development and trade. The EU should reserve 1% of its GDP for development cooperation and should advocate for raising the OECD* standard to 1%. This amount must be fully spent on improving the situation of people in poverty-stricken countries. It should neither end up with European companies that receive this as a covert subsidy, nor be spent to prevent migration to Europe. The EU must review how it and its Member States design trade agreements and finance development. Its development banks believe in outdated economic models that result in accumulated debt and large corporations stunting the growth of local businesses.

Trade must be fair. This means that trade can never be conducted at the expense of human rights, democracy, social and environmental standards, or the fight against the climate crisis. We oppose any trade and any trade agreements that do not fulfil these criteria. Like development policies, fair trade must acknowledge the responsibility of former colonial European states towards countries which have historically been exploited and hindered in their economic development by them. Fair trade must respect the interests of formerly colonised countries and must not counter the objectives of development policies.

The change we are calling for is not limited to trade agreements. We also call for regulatory due diligence and transparency in supply chains to prevent environmental harm and to ensure social rights. European companies should be able to be sanctioned in the EU for breaches committed in third countries.

FYEG stands for a different type of globalisation, one that is based not on increasing profits and trade at all costs, but rather on exchanging ideas, celebrating cultural diversity, and working together towards a better future.