

EU Future Talks Salzburg



Results

EU FUTURE TALKS SALZBURG RESULTS

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Schuman declaration and the 30th year of Austria's EU accession EUROPE DIRECT Land Salzburg initiated the fourth EU Future Talks at the Chiemseehof in Salzburg with more than 80 young participants from EU founding members and Austria. The conference, which was organised in cooperation with akzente Salzburg, aimed to formulate young people's demands for the future of Europe. The final discussion with Members of the European Parliament on 21 November 2025 is available on a livestream: [Salzburger Landtag Live](#) and via www.salzburg.gv.at/europedirect. The proposals of the young people aged 18-25 years - listed below - resulted in the attached paper and were developed over the preceding days in four parallel workshops, namely "Competitiveness & Sustainability: conflicting interests?", "Freedom, security & solidarity: together as EU fundamental rights", "Geopolitical challenges: the role of Europe" and "Digital transformation & AI: changing times in Europe". It is in their interest and a top priority that their proposals are considered and integrated into the ongoing discussions.

SCHULZEN, Hannah (BE)
PALM, Eliano (BE)
LETOR, Jean-Luc (BE)
GAUDER, Jessie (BE)
HERMANN, Lara (BE)
KISTEMANN, Leon (BE)
MAUSEN, Ramona (BE)
SCHREINER, Alina (DE)
BRIEL, Cedric (DE)
DE MARÈ, Annabelle (BE, DE)
DINGWELL, Felix (DE)
PECI, Artim (DE)
LAMERS, Ben (DE)
HUMMEL, Janina (DE)
ANDREOLI, Francesca (IT)
FILIBERTI, Francesco (IT)
KOSTOV, Georgi (IT)
BENEDINI, Ludovica Andrea (IT)
KANDE, Sara (IT)
BARSI, Valeria (IT)
TSCHÖLL, Manuel (IT)
PUR, Alexander (IT)
STOCCHERO, Gaia (IT)
GIAMBI, Martina (FR/IT)
CREPAZ, Giacomo (IT)
ZINGA-BOTAO, Teja (LUX)

MICHELS, Daniel (LUX)
LIESER, Felix (LUX)
LIESER, Lea (LUX)
ABADE, Sabrina (PT/LUX)
SOMESAN, Alexandra (LUX)
ADELAKUN, Esther, (LUX)
NIKOLOUDIA, Maria Eleni (LUX)
GROLL, Gwenn-Lise (LUX/FR)
LADOUCEUR, Nina (FR)
MENETRIER, Lisa (FR)
BATOUCHE, Magali (FR)
ALBORNOZ, Jade (FR)
RAYMOND, Marie (FR)
LARRAMENDY, Kylian (FR)
BACH, Raphael (FR)
MARCHIX, Estéban (FR)
VERHAAGEN, Sebas (NL)
BUITING, Jib (NL)
DUIJSENS, Lotte (NL)
VERBEEK, Nina (NL)
ROGNIN, Louna (NL)
BERGMANN, Julia (NL)
MASDEU CANO, Jordá (ES/AT)
GLÓWEZewska, Maja (PL/LUX)
MESARIC, LUKAS (SI/AT)
DIXON, Charles (AT)

ANGERMAYER, Adrian (AT)
KAUPP, MAX (AT)
TANZER, Thomas (AT)
SOBHANI, Ariana (FR)
TALAN, Vladyslava (AT)
CONG, Wang Xue (AT)
ROM, Bar (AT)
DAKU, Fatlinda (AT)
POTAPOVA, Daria (AT)
FAGERER, Nicolas (AT)
KIERNER, Anna Christina (AT)
BOŠKIĆ, Đorđe (AT)
BICHLER, Fabienne (AT)
SEIDL, Marie (AT)
PODLOGAR, Lina (AT)
NOOR, Hannan (AT)
WÖRTER, Luise (AT)
DÜCKELMANN, Felix (AT)
LIENBACHER, Nico (AT)
THURNER, Christoph (AT)
SHCHERBATIUK, Anastasiia (AT)
DIMOVA, Ivon (AT)
KRASNOV, Michael (AT)
DJORDJEVIC, Jana (AT)
KORNMESSER, Hannah (AT)
WALLNER, Vinzent (AT)

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DEMANDS AND RESULTS FROM THE “COMPETITIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY: CONFLICTING INTERESTS” GROUP

CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

The EU's process for sustainable development has left citizens disenchanted. According to a Eurobarometer survey from 2025, 78% of respondents said they knew little or nothing about how to interact with governing bodies.

We therefore desire publicity and awareness of corporate, national and EU actions in the fields of sustainability and competitiveness. We are calling for publicly accessible, transparent platforms and curriculum changes in schools to address these issues. Furthermore, it is important to engage with those who are more distant from democratic life in order to have a long-term impact on our community.

CONSUMPTION

For many Europeans, choosing sustainable options in daily life remains surprisingly difficult. In transport, for instance, travelling by train across the EU often costs several times more and takes much longer than a flight to the exact same destination. Even with EU initiatives such as Connecting Europe and increased investment in rail networks, flying remains the cheaper and faster choice for most citizens, making it the more appealing option.

The same pattern appears in nutrition. Instead of encouraging plant-based diets, recent political debates focused on symbolic questions like whether vegan products should be allowed to use names traditionally linked to animal-based foods. Significant progress should be made towards healthier and more sustainable food choices, and the EU must raise awareness of the significantly higher environmental impact of animal-based products.

Overconsumption reinforces this challenge even further. Ultra-cheap online fashion platforms continue to dominate the market with products that do not meet EU environmental or social standards. They fuel a culture of disposable consumption, increase waste and undermine European producers who follow stricter regulations but cannot compete with such low prices. We demand that the EU focuses more on solving these issues so that it is not easier for citizens to choose the less sustainable option.

COLLABORATION

Draghi's report highlights the scale of investment needed for Europe's reindustrialisation, especially in green and strategic sectors. Yet our capital markets remain underdeveloped, pushing innovative European companies to seek financing in the US, even though an EU innovation fund already exists. To succeed, Europe needs a true Capital Markets Union capable of mobilising the financial strength of all 27 member states. We advocate improving the European Union and ensuring a lasting financing for our reindustrialisation.

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DEMANDS AND RESULTS FROM THE “FREEDOM, SECURITY & SOLIDARITY: TOGETHER AS EU FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS” GROUP

MIGRANT INTEGRATION

Many migrants arrive in Europe fleeing war, instability and humanitarian crises. They bring important contributions to European societies, but still face serious barriers to integration. Limited language support, unequal access to education and employment, and cultural or religious discrimination often prevent migrants from fully integrating in their communities. Current policies are ineffective and do not address these challenges effectively. The EU should focus on language support, enforce anti-discrimination rules, and promote local community initiatives that build trust and participation. Integration policies must be practical, transparent and based on shared European values of dignity and equal treatment. A stronger and more coherent EU framework would help ensure that migrants can become active and confident members of European societies.

GENDER EQUALITY

Despite significant EU funding, women across Europe continue to face discrimination, harassment, femicide and persistent pay gaps in their daily lives. The high rates of femicide in several Member States and the ongoing gender pay gap show a clear gap between EU investment and real results. EU funding should focus on concrete, measurable improvements: stronger protection against gender-based violence, mandatory pay-transparency tools, targeted support for women's economic independence, and sexual and affective education in schools, to prevent further violence. Funding must deliver real progress, not symbolic measures. A Europe that values freedom and equality cannot rely on policies that fail to produce meaningful change in women's lives.

RESILIENCE TO HYBRID THREATS

Hybrid threats, including disinformation campaigns and drone attacks, increasingly undermine European security and social stability. Most EU residents see disinformation as a threat to democracy, and exposure to false information is widespread. These threats bring financial, economic and political costs, putting pressure on institutions and citizens. The EU must build a more coordinated and resilient response. Strengthening digital literacy, improving cross-border intelligence sharing, and creating clearer frameworks to counter hybrid operations are essential priorities. The Union should invest in advanced technological capacities, transparent information systems, and strong cooperation between public authorities, civil society and the private sector. A safer and more resilient Europe requires steady preparation, rapid response tools and a clear commitment to protecting democratic stability.

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DEMANDS AND RESULTS FROM THE “GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES - THE ROLE OF EUROPE” GROUP

INTERNAL REFORMS FOR A UNITED EUROPE

The European Union must place peace and diplomacy at the core of its foreign policy. Decisions taken in the name of all Member States must reflect their collective interest, not the preferences of a few. We therefore highlight the need to reform unanimity and veto powers, as these mechanisms slow decision-making. The EU needs a more efficient system that maintains inclusiveness while preventing paralysis, supported by a strong culture of dialogue and a genuine willingness to negotiate.

Foreign policy decisions should bind the Union when they clearly serve the common good. The High Representative must embody this balance by representing all Member States impartially, prioritising de-escalation, and promoting unity and consistent diplomacy. A Union that speaks with one measured voice is better positioned to promote stability in an increasingly multipolar world.

ENLARGEMENT

Enlargement must reinforce, not strain, the EU's democratic foundations. Because accession reshapes institutions and long-term cohesion, the Union must remain stable, united, and protected against internal fragmentation. This requires transparent and trustworthy electoral processes, the absence of major political scandals, and a high level of public confidence in democratic institutions. The EU must also reinforce digital democratic resilience by providing reliable information tools and ensuring proper oversight of major platforms. Through community fact-checking and transparent labelling, not censorship, citizens can better identify misinformation, strengthening stability and public trust.

Candidate countries must meet strict standards: transparency, rule of law, independent courts, and the absence of major corruption scandals. Enlargement should not be accelerated for geopolitical motives, as premature accession risks polarisation, public unrest, and weakened trust in institutions. The EU must avoid creating instability or social tension in candidate countries; its support should reinforce cohesion, not trigger division. The process must therefore remain patient, responsible, and grounded in genuine readiness, with all EU actions guided by its core values: democracy, transparency, and long-term stability.

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AUTONOMY / DEFENCE UNION

In an era of global uncertainty, the EU must strengthen its strategic autonomy to act more freely and effectively in defence matters. Developing a common strategic defence approach will build long-term resilience and reduce vulnerabilities, ensuring that Europe can protect its interests even when external conditions shift.

Relying too heavily on the United States weakens Europe's capacity to act independently, particularly when U.S. political priorities change. True sovereignty requires the Union to develop its own capabilities, its own strategic vision, and its own decision-making freedom while maintaining balanced cooperation with partners. The EU must ensure that all NATO members uphold the Alliance's defensive mandate, acting with restraint and avoiding actions that could generate instability or harm EU Member States.

DEMANDS AND RESULTS FROM THE “DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND AI: CHANGING TIMES IN EUROPE” GROUP

DATA PROTECTION IN RELATION TO THE USE OF AI AND THE DANGER OF CENTRALISED DATA USED FOR LAW-ENFORCEMENT

The development of AI offers benefits, but personal data is often used in ways that are hard to trace, and removal from models is practically impossible. Most people use multiple services a day, and it gets hard to track your personal information. We call for an EU-regulated service or platform that makes it easy to trace where your personal data goes and how it is used, as the GDPR grants these rights but makes them difficult to exercise in practice.

For Palantir and other scoring algorithms used in law-enforcement, we call for full transparency regarding the data they use and the procedures they apply.

PROTECT SOCIETY FROM HARMFUL USES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

As AI usage is on the rise and we all feel the impact it has on us, it's important that we as consumers can use it safely. We call on the EU to establish robust safeguards that prevent the manipulative use of artificial intelligence by private companies. No organisation should be permitted to deploy AI systems that exploit user behaviour or undermine individual autonomy. Citizens must have access to clear, user-friendly tools that explain how their personal data is processed and how algorithmic systems shape the content they see. Furthermore, all AI-generated content should be clearly and consistently labeled. This measure is vital to reduce the spread of misinformation and to ensure that the public can distinguish authentic information from automated output. Greater transparency in algorithmic design is essential to support critical thinking and informed decision-making.

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MANDATORY INTRODUCTION OF AI IN EDUCATION

Today, AI is still not fully welcomed or integrated into schools, largely because there are not enough educators trained in this field. To overcome this, we propose involving external professionals who can regularly teach both students and teachers, ensuring that everyone gains a basic understanding of AI, its opportunities, its risks, and how to think critically about it. At the university level, we also call for mandatory modules on AI and digital literacy, so that higher education institutions can prepare students to engage responsibly and confidently with the technologies shaping tomorrow's learning environments.