

JEF NL political programme



JONGE
EUROPESE
FEDERALISTEN
NEDERLAND

Preamble

This political programme comprises the status quo of political debates led within the Young European Federalists Netherlands. It portrays the current stance on European affairs taken by JEF Netherlands, takes into consideration the Political Platform of the umbrella organisation Young European Federalists (JEF) Europe as adopted at the XXIV European Congress in Valletta 2017, and serves as a guide of orientation for members as well as non-members in the goals and visions of JEF Netherlands. JEF Netherlands is non-partisan and not bound to any particular party or ideology.

The Political Programme is adopted by the General Members Assembly of JEF Netherlands. It can be amended at any time through the General Members Assembly.

I Democracy

The current European Union shall develop into a United European Federation founded on the values of democracy, subsidiarity, solidarity, the rule of law, transparency and respect for human rights. A Federal European Parliament with one seat shall be elected by the European citizens. The constituencies shall be laid out taking into concern regional cultural identities and spoken languages of the population.

The European government shall be elected by the Federal European Parliament. The allocation of ministries and division of tasks shall be chosen by the government. Ministers, including the European President, shall be subject to a constructive vote of no confidence and are accountable to the Federal European Parliament.

II Citizens' rights

It is of utmost importance that the citizen's rights in the United European Federation are safeguarded. This entails the responsibility for the European government to both promote and monitor fundamental freedoms and fundamental rights of the citizens. In case these rights are limited in an unacceptable manner on a state or regional level it must take effective countermeasures against any such activities. At the same time, it is important that these countermeasures are directed towards the responsible actors and not towards the population itself. This is why, along with introducing a regular review mechanism on democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights, the European government will have measures at its disposal to allow for an alternative distribution of the resources for subsidising projects with EU funds other than through national governments. In the 21st century, we consider unrestricted access to the internet as a fundamental right of European citizens.

III Equality and diversity

The European government counteracts any discrimination on the base of gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or nationality.

It establishes a binding gender parity norm and actively promotes gender equality in all aspects of life.

IV Cultural diversity

The European Federation ensures the protection of ethnocultural communities and promotes the conservation of cultural diversity and traditions. Regional languages and dialects will be recognised and supported through European, state, and regional authorities. In order to strengthen cultural diversity in the Netherlands, Lower Saxon and Limburgish receive the same status as Frisian.

V Education & Research

A federal Europe needs to be a global leader in innovation and research. The United European Federation encourages and facilitates cooperation between educational institutions and business in matters of innovation and product development. Furthermore, it funds initiatives that foster interdisciplinary cooperation and research to help teach multi-skilled professionals for the future.

VI Completing the Single Market

Unjustified barriers within the single market are removed. To improve the free movement of goods and services, the United European Federation particularly adopts initiatives to develop the circular economy.

The EU must further develop the Digital Single Market. It strives to become a forerunner in data transmission and storage by supporting digital infrastructure projects. Once 5G connectivity becomes available, Europe must adopt and utilize it across the Single Market. The Digital Single Market is also attractive for content producers, artists, and entrepreneurs who should have their work protected and receive fair remuneration. The United European Federation adopts legislation to strengthen and ensure net neutrality.

VII Expanding the budget

In order for the United European Federation to effectively fulfil its tasks, its budget needs to be set approximately 10% of the European BNI. Considering that the national governments absorb on average 50% of the respective national GDPs, this increase in the EU budget seems both fair and necessary. Budgetary redistributions across the various policy areas must correspond to the changes of our time.

The new EU budget should be fully financed by its own fiscal tools, such as a harmonised European corporate tax, a tax on non-EU imports, and other European-wide taxes. Currently, 80% of the budget comes from direct transfers from the Member States. By providing the United European Federation with its own fiscal tools, including the power to levy taxes, the budget should be based entirely on EU resources, thus empowering the federal level.

VIII Monetary policy

The European Union should establish a common Eurozone minister of Finance and Economy elected by the European Parliament.

IX Foreign policy

Speaking with one voice to the world is of vital importance for the United European Federation. Diplomacy and defence should be transferred almost exclusively to the federal level. The states may continue to have non-diplomatic representations worldwide, as well as national armed forces on a reduced scale, similar to National Guards. These national armed forces should coexist with a united European Defence Force overseen by a European Defence Minister. First steps towards a common European Defence Force could be granting all EU citizens the permission to serve in an army or defence force in a Member State of their choice and coordinating military or community services across the European Union. There should be a European frontier police replacing the various national customs offices.

To supervise the United European Federation's foreign and security policy, the figure of the High Representative needs to be transformed into that of a European foreign minister. Only the President and the foreign minister would represent the United European Federation abroad. The President of the European Council would stop having a function of external representation.

The current European Union requires an integrated defence and security policy in order to guarantee safety for its citizens. Decisions concerning foreign policy should be made by a qualified majority instead of unanimity in the Council. A permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations for the European Federation would display unity and strength.

X Migration policy

Migration is one of the core challenges the EU faces, therefore we call for an effective, cooperative and humane solution. The United European Federation will have a common migration and asylum policy.

The external borders of the Federal Union have border control as a crucial component to guarantee freedom of movement within the Schengen area. Asylum requests will be granted in a humane, dignified and lawful manner. Within the United European Federation, asylum seekers and refugees will be distributed in a fair system based on solidarity.

The European government will create a system for labour migrants, such as the Green Card system. Counteracting the conditions that act as push factors causing migration will be a major focus of European foreign policy.

XI Sustainability and Environmental Policy

Sustainability

All new policies and legislation adopted on a European level are tested on the grounds of compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals. The sustainable transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources is performed through close cooperation between the states of the European Union and through the smart implementation of dynamic energy grids. Public

investments need to be made to improve renewable energy technology for Europe to become a global leader in renewable energy. Additionally, the introduction of taxes on e.g. plastic could constitute a powerful source of a sovereign European budget.

Energy Policy

To achieve sustainable energy production, coal and other fossil fuels must be phased out. Europe must ensure a socially just transition to a decarbonised economy.

Taxation in a green economy is used as a means to foster both sustainable development and sustainable growth. This is why we call upon the current states of the Union to start levying tax on kerosene in aviation. Taxation on environmentally harmful goods and services are reinvested in programmes benefiting the environment and the climate.

Harmonising current taxes on environmentally harmful substances is central for attaining the goals set by international climate agreements.

Fossil fuel subsidies have to be discontinued.

XII Strengthening Rural Areas

A united Europe does not forget the citizens who are not benefiting from a globalized world. In order for citizens in rural areas to be able to participate in public and social life, a strong infrastructure is needed. Fast internet and a developed public transport system are rights European citizens should not be deprived of. In order to counter the trend of people leaving rural areas, their attractiveness has to be strengthened through the support of cultural initiatives and subsidies for small businesses which are crucial for self-sustaining communities(e.g. bakeries and grocery stores).

XIII Transport & infrastructure

The development of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) and common standards such as the European Train Control System (ETCS) needs to progress faster in order to better facilitate the interoperability of train networks in different countries. Considering the exorbitant amount of aviation within Europe, investment in high-speed railway networks and a further investment strategy need to be firmly established; the long-term vision must be a dramatic reduction in the number of flights for distances below 1000 km within a continuous landmass. Extensive investment in passenger and freight rail transport in order to connect citizens and businesses is crucial for reducing emissions and traffic jams. Mutual obstruction by the authorities of Europe's different states must stop; cross-border links need to be extended and services for Europe's citizens operated in mutual good faith. Furthermore, we encourage deeper cooperation between transport associations within the Union, by e.g. creating a one-stop platform for booking, to facilitate taking public transport for inner-Union trips, making it thus a viable transport option that is accessible to the people.