

More Europe is the Solution – for the Unity of Europe and against Unilateral Actions

Resolution of the national conference of Kolping Youth at Kolping Germany on the future of Europe:

The European Union is the most significant achievement to ensure peace in Europe. The maintenance and protection of this union must be the goal of all persons with decision-making responsibility in Europe. Given the current challenges, the cohesion of Europe is endangered to an unprecedented extent. This includes various aspects from the Euro rescue policy to a lack of a common refugee policy or the suspension of legal principles in individual member states. As a result, it has become obvious that Europe is drifting apart rather than getting closer. National interests prevail the process of European decision-making.

Common aid for Refugees

With regard to the current refugee crisis, the European Union has demonstrated the inability to formulate a common policy. This is particularly expressed by the reluctance of the representatives of the member states. Implicit and explicit accusations cause a loss of trust in each other. As a consequence, most member states favour the path to renationalisation. This becomes most obvious due to a lack of solidarity with those countries in the European Union which must bear the political and financial costs of the heavy influx of immigrants. It is inappropriate if less heavily impacted member states only blame the states on the Southern and South Eastern fringes of Europe for insufficient and incapable border regimes. On the contrary, a common approach is needed that involves the whole of the European Union. In this context, nationally coordinated concepts are required across Europe.

- Kolping Youth demands the joint stabilisation of the external borders of the European Union in order to ensure the reception of refugees in accordance with humanitarian needs. Moreover, a quota solution is required to distribute and accommodate all refugees arriving in the European Union so that all member states are involved based on their financial and other capabilities to face the challenges of immigration.

Europe is a force of peace

The current refugee crisis is, at least in part, the result of global inequality which is based on poverty, repression and violence. The causes that force people to seek refuge in other countries, can only be overcome in the long-term and with the help of strong international partners. The stabilisation of crisis-ridden countries by peaceful means must be the task and the goal of the European Union as a whole. In this respect, development policy plays a crucial role. A common approach for the

coordination and promotion of development projects would reduce costs and increase efficiency after all.

- Kolping Youth demands a common foreign, security and development policy. By such a policy, the European Union will be considered a force for peace at many hotspots throughout this world and it can introduce these measures in a diplomatic and humanitarian manner. We strongly reject the option of military intervention - which is always to the detriment of the civilian population. In the short-term, it is imperative to keep financial promises to those states in the Middle East which have been accommodating refugees on a large scale.

Open inner-European borders are essential

For the millions of children and young people in the 28 member states of the European Union, Europe has become a matter of course. They are the first generation which has grown up in a Europe without border controls and trade barriers. The European idea was achieved in an incomparable manner due to the borderless interchange of persons and goods within the European Union. The temporary suspension of the Schengen treaty by different member states, however, has become a major risk to this basic European freedom.

- Kolping Youth demands the strict preservation of the free exchange of persons and goods within the European Union. Free cross-border traffic is and remains a prerequisite for intensive exchange between the people of Europe.

Europe needs young people with prospects

In terms of the global financial and economic crisis, the European states have gone through some very troubled times. In particular, the member states in Southern and Eastern Europe still suffer from the effects of the crisis but they also suffer from rigid rules aimed at consolidating their public budgets. As a result, social cohesion has eroded in many EU member states. Most of all, an extremely high and long-lasting rate of unemployment among young people in the Southern and Eastern parts of the European Union contributes to a rise of distrust of Europe's younger generation towards the democratic institutions and not least towards the European idea in general. The European Union can only react to this if it does not only consider itself an economic but also a social union. The success of austerity programmes should not only be measured in terms of economic growth. Economic growth at the expense of low wages and minimal requirements for employment protection undermines Europe's future.

- Kolping Youth demands a pan-European agenda against youth unemployment in form of a structural programme based on solidarity among all member states of the European Union.

The rule of law is imperative

The restriction of the judicial system as well as the restraint on freedom of expression and the press in some member states damage the credibility of the European Union. It cannot be in the best interest of the citizens that their governments erode human freedom and rights by questionable laws and by using legal niches. The independence of a judicial system and the media is an irrefutable asset! The European Union must hold on to the existing principles without exception.

- Kolping Youth demands the consistent application of the legal mechanisms and instruments of the European Union against all member states which limit the independence of the judicial system and the media.

Resistance against right-wing movements in Europe

Right-wing ideas have emerged in the centre of our society. Right-wing groups and parties attempt to take advantage of the current problems in Europe and the increasing uncertainty within Europe's population. At the same time, a unified Europe and its values are now being put into question and nationalist ideas are spreading.

- Kolping Youth demands the resistance against movements of this type. Political players must solve problems instead of mutually attributing blame. It is necessary to take public concerns seriously and to react to them.

Europe needs strong players

The different challenges show very clearly that the national level is not suitable for solving common problems in many political areas. The European level is often the most suitable one. For this reason, the structures and responsibilities of the European Union must be reinforced. Strong European institutions and rules are therefore required.

- Kolping Youth demands a reinforcement of the legislative competencies of the European parliament which is the only democratically legitimised institution in the legal framework of the European Union. Furthermore, Kolping Youth demands a European government that does not only act as a guardian of the European treaties but also shapes the political process.

The population is the sovereign

The emergence of a diverse European community demands more than only a bargaining for political decisions. Moreover, the population must develop a European identity. To achieve this, first of all, time is required, secondly perspectives must be shared and thirdly people must become more involved into the political system. Part of the population in the European states is uncertain because it feels that it is not taken seriously by the political elites. However, uncertainty and fear are not good

guiding principles. At the same time, there is a lack of interaction between the political elites and the population. As a consequence, many people do not understand causes and motives that lead to certain decisions.

- Kolping Youth demands the promotion of social and government initiatives for the exchange, transparency and the justification of decisions, the increase of opportunities to participate and the accountability of staff in charge of European policy.

In the face of the current challenges in Europe, the national conference of Kolping Youth at Kolping Germany declares its rejection of current actions and decisions made by the vast majority of decision makers in Europe. Instead of standing up for the unity of Europe, most of them focus on ways to strengthen national sovereignty. Based on the Catholic social teachings and the actions of the association's founder, Adolph Kolping, Kolping Youth considers it as its obligation to stand up for the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. We appeal to all of our Kolping brothers and sisters in positions of responsibility to fight for solidarity in Europe. For Kolping Youth, there can only be a European solution. Therefore, we are decisively against all trends toward renationalisation which have now become a reality in many parts of Europe.

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In behalf of Kolping Youth at Kolping Germany



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