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Shared responsibility towards our planet

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In the future, the European Union has to face a range of problems, both external and internal. On the one hand, the EU is currently undergoing an existential crisis and on the other hand, it tends to respond to problems too late or not on time, while having a large bureaucracy. This leads to the inability to make decisions on time. The European Union should manage the consequences of globalisation in a consequent manner.

Unfortunately, we become aware of the consequences of our activities too late and then focus on the remedial actions instead of preventing these cases in the first place. Prevention should be treated as a priority. Globalisation has led to global problems, which are usually manifested in the form of ecological problems. These include overpopulation, food shortages, urbanisation crises and water pollution. What is more, we have to tackle vast amounts of waste, the ozone depletion, global warming, deforestation and erosions. Further problems include acid rains, GMOs and the decline of biodiversity.

In my opinion, the European Union has to change by increasing the cooperation of its member states in the most possible areas, but it is also crucial to find adequate solutions to our problems as quickly and as possible, before it is too late. Sustainable development has three pillars: society, economy and the environment. When designing our development strategies, agendas, as well as the specific measures and programmes, we must consider these three pillars and their correlations. Since it is the economy-ecology-society model that would make Europe sustainable by 2030, we have to further develop the win-win-win model. I think that the three largest challenges we are facing are: global environmental problems, the ageing population and the cooperation of the member states.

Today the main economic actors include the corporations, society/people and the governments of the member states. All have different tasks in the EU's sustainable development, so I would like to discuss these tasks separately.

Let us start by the corporations. Their tasks are: developing intercultural competencies and communication, eco-label products, business ethics, corporate engagement and attitude, establishing new eco-industrial parks or transforming

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existing ones, technological innovations-> less pollutant emissions, research and development.

The improvement of cultural competencies and communication helps companies cooperate better and the manufacturing of eco-label products reduces the burdens on our environment. Companies must adhere to business ethics. Also, I would like to see that corporations do not just assume these commitments on paper, but act according to them.

The creation of eco-industrial parks or the transformation of existing ones is very important, because it offers a much more environment-friendly approach. Technical innovations, coupled with research and development, result in the emission of less pollutants during production.

The other actor is society. Its tasks include: sustainable consumption->eco-label products, the extensive use of renewable energy, the protection of the aging society, the towns, values and traditions, the protection of nature and forests, assisting people (with insulation, solar panels, bicycle use, windows).

The consumption of eco-label products leads to sustainable consumption. In my opinion, younger generations should be aware of the problems that our society faces currently (such as environmental problems, ageing society, global warming and water consumption) and be educated about them from a young age.

We should try to save the Earth and the fastest way to do so is to use renewable energy sources wherever possible. In order to tackle the issues of the ageing society we must improve healthcare, support younger generations so that more children are born and adjust public transport to the needs of the elderly.

It is in our interest to protect our cities and our heritage that we leave behind for the next generations, and we have to try and make them aware of this heritage.

With the increasing number of houses built we have to solve the problems of deforestation and other environmental issues. In order to avoid air pollution we have to include people in the process and persuade them to turn the roofs of the new buildings into green areas by planting vegetation there.

We have to show people how to use previously unknown resources (for example grants by the government or the European Union).

The third actor is the government. It has the biggest impact on society and since every country has a different government, characterised by different attitudes, the toughest task is to find common solutions that are acceptable by all governments.

My ideas on how governments can manage the problems they have to face are the following: developing intercultural competencies and communication, sustainable consumption, business ethics, education->extensive use of green and renewable energies, public transport using renewable energy, healthcare, stricter laws (no greenwashing) and effective laws, protecting nature and forests by legislation, leading by example (states committed to sustainable development), stable political and economic environment, support for people (insulation, solar panels, bicycles, windows).

Just like corporations, governments also have to pay more attention to the development of intercultural competencies and communication in order to reach their goals more efficiently.

Governments need to support sustainable consumption and business ethics, because that would decrease environmental burdens.

In education we should encourage to include more lessons on environmental protection and on the environment, and teach children how to live a more eco-friendly life in the future, so that they can pass on this knowledge to older family members who did not have the opportunity to learn about these things.

Governments should endeavor to try and use renewable energy wherever possible and to use less of the conventional energy sources as soon as possible (for example Great Britain will ban non-eco-friendly cars from the cities by 2040).

We know that the ageing society and global warming lead to many new diseases and since in most member states healthcare provision is the responsibility of the government, we need unified healthcare systems. All governments must adopt stricter laws, as well as monitor the processes that cause lasting damages to the environment. These policies need to be more consequent and primarily focus on prevention.

We all know that governments are tasked with not only legislation and governance, but they must also lead by example. In a more stable political and economic environment it is easier for governments to fulfil their tasks and create more eco-friendly countries.

We must support societies to make the most of the opportunities given by the governments, while governments must make available the maximum support, be it financial help or other resources.

The cooperation of member states is crucial when it comes to a sustainable Europe, however, every nation should preserve its own traditions, values and culture. We must also accept and tolerate one another, and the European Union must strive to avoid wars.

- *we should protect and take care of the future*
- *we can live in peace with nature*
- *we can create a win-win-win situation*
- *we can reduce waste*

Chemicals and paints used in agriculture are soluble (similarly to cosmetics and other products), which are harmful to people and the environment.

We must try to create suitable living conditions and adequate sewage networks everywhere, while also maintain houses in a good condition or do the necessary repairs.

We should strive to create more liveable cities (which are green with no cars, except for public transport, with bicycle roads, parks, efficient waste collection and recycling, while trying to reduce food waste).

Countries need to implement new infrastructure developments in order to meet the challenges of global warming.

I think that we must curb the current pace of economic growth, otherwise it will lead to the destruction of our planet.

Environment and development are interdependent and it is in our interest to protect the resources we are given by our planet. At the moment water, soil and air are the most important resources we have to focus on, because these can cause the biggest problems on Earth.

It is a shared responsibility towards our planet; individual or national actions are not enough. We need a collective solution. We must be smart when it comes to technology, because the power we have must serve a more unified and more humane development, just like economy serves people, the peace and justice, as well as environmental protection. We must consider ethical and community aspects while working on strategies for our solutions.