
POLITICAL POSITIONS 2018/2019





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JCI (Junior Chamber International)

We are a global movement that challenges the status quo. We inspire young people to recognize their responsibility to create a better world and empower them to drive change.

JCI Europe is the area representative of JCI (Junior Chamber International) present in 34 countries with over 25,000 members — many of them young leaders and entrepreneurs — across the region. It empowers young active European citizens to take ownership of Europe and its future by contributing to the European identity, wearing it proudly and taking action to build the future they envision.

JCI (Junior Chamber International) is a nonprofit organization of young active citizens ages 18 to 40 who are engaged and committed to creating impact in their communities in more than 5,000 communities across nearly 120 countries. We develop the skills, knowledge and understanding in our members to empower them to make informed decisions and take sustainable action. As globally minded young people from all sectors of society — government, business and civil society — we all have rights, responsibilities and shared goals. We find targeted solutions to local issues benefiting our communities, our world and our future. Embracing new ideas, collaboration and diversity, we have the passion and courage to address the critical challenges of our time.

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Introduction

Europe is an embodiment of diversity but united in its shared history, culture and values. By embracing our multi-faceted identity and overcoming barriers we can achieve our vision of a strong and united Europe.

Today Europe is facing a rising global instability and political, social and economic challenges. European citizens, and especially young people, need to invest in the future of their continent. We believe that by building a common identity with a shared vision for the future, Europe can progress on a path towards prosperity, freedom and peace. Together, young active citizens need to step up for Europe and speak out for their political positions. JCI Europe wants to be the platform that unites young socially responsible leaders and entrepreneurs in Europe and give them a voice to bring forward their political demands.

With our political positions we aim to address political issues that are important to young active citizens throughout Europe and present solutions to pressing challenges our European societies are facing today.



Foster Respect for European Values and Fundamental Rights



We stand up for a strong, united Europe based on democratic principles and the rule of law that provide every European citizen the rights and freedoms to develop themselves in order to make sustainable impact in their communities.



The European states, the European Union as well as civil society must step up their efforts to safeguard and promote European values and fundamental rights such as respect for human dignity, minority rights, freedom of expression and equality before the law. Our pluralistic societies, inclusive public debates and individual liberties are precious goods, that have to be protected more than ever.



Democratic forces and institutions throughout the European states and public engagement need to be strengthened. Political decisions taken on European and national level have to be transparent and comprehensible for European citizens to ensure their legitimacy and accountability.

Increase Political Participation of Young People



We believe that national and European authorities, political parties and young people themselves all have a role to play in engaging young people in the European political decision-making process.



Political parties need to address youth issues more clearly and increase their focus on the younger share of their electorate. To avoid that young people feel left out from mainstream politics, entry barriers for young people to run for elections should be reduced and more young candidates should be put forward for election.



Teaching and educating about participatory democracy and raising awareness for democratic co-determination from an early level is vital in engaging young people politically. The European states should therefore further develop or include civic education in school curricula bringing in a local, national and European perspective.

Strengthen European Awareness and Build a European Identity



A strong and united Europe must be built on a shared European awareness and identity among its citizens, while at the same time acknowledging the social and cultural diversity of the European countries.



Education is one of the cornerstones of an informed, European society. To improve the public knowledge of and debate on European questions, European countries need to strengthen their investments in political education and better inform their citizens about the functioning of the EU's institutions, its competencies and decision-making processes.



In order to foster a European identity, we suggest taking measures to facilitate trans-European mobility and cross-border cooperation for studying, working and traveling to create a feeling of unity. The exchange of young Europeans through programs like Erasmus, emphasizing language learning and engendering more cooperation between universities, such as recognizing international higher education school diplomas, have to be increased.



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Foster Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement



As the European movement of socially responsible young leaders we call for effective policies that are in line with and advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a globalization process that is fair and sustainable for both our society and the environment.



We have committed to take special action to advance the SDGs covering Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. In line with these goals, we demand equal access to affordable education and the elimination of gender disparities in education, the promotion of an inclusive, flexible and equal European labor market, and ensuring inclusive, representative and transparent decision-making that promotes sustainable development in all European states.



To protect our climate and the environment and reach the goals of the Paris Agreement, the European countries and the European Union need to further pursue their efforts to reduce CO2 emissions and promote sustainable innovation technologies. Practices that aim for a circular economy like effective waste management and recycling should be further advanced in the European states.



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Create Better Conditions for Entrepreneurs and Foster Entrepreneurial Spirit

- ✿ Entrepreneurship is the motor of our society and an important driver of innovation. We need better framework conditions for young entrepreneurs that support them with the process of starting up and expanding their businesses. This also includes improving access to finance for start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the simplification of tax filings and creating an entrepreneurial culture that tolerates failure.
- ✿ To create better conditions for starting a business, entrepreneurship education for young people should be introduced at middle or high school level by making it an integral part of school curricula and offering training programmes about the development opportunities and alternative career paths that entrepreneurship can provide.
- ✿ The European states and the European Union must take effective measures to support an environment in which start-ups can connect with potential partners, investors and universities. Politics should create more incentives like European exchange programs for entrepreneurs to go pan-European with their businesses.
- ✿ As a network representing many socially responsible young entrepreneurs, we welcome steps to promote social entrepreneurship, facilitate their access to finance and develop an environment which enables social enterprises to start and grow.



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Strengthen Global Competitiveness of European Businesses



Europe needs to be more innovative to compete on the global market. A future-oriented policy must aim at sustainable investments in education, research and innovation to guarantee European companies' success on the global market. Innovative businesses and particularly SMEs are the drivers of growth and must therefore be strengthened through targeted investments, improved access to funding opportunities and support services.



To ensure Europe's global competitiveness, increase its attractiveness as a place to invest and create prosperity, the completion of the European Single Market and the removal of bureaucratic obstacles and trade barriers has to be a political priority. A start should be the reduction of barriers in labour mobility through faster recognition of professional qualifications.



A comprehensive and sustainable digitization of the European economy enabled by an adequate digital infrastructure will ensure that Europe keeps pace with the global market. The creation of a digital single market must be accompanied by providing a high-performance broadband infrastructure all across Europe as well as the development of a harmonized legal and regulatory framework.

Promote a Stronger Europe in the Global Economy



With regard to global trade, the European states need to act together with one voice on the global stage, rather than with multiple separate trade strategies as coherence is vital to strengthening Europe's global role. Global challenges need to be tackled together, thus co-operation with our international partners in the area of trade policy is important to ensure prosperity and growth.



To create growth and jobs for European citizens by opening new markets, open and transparent negotiations on international trade agreements should be advanced, that take into account European standards of social, environmental, health, worker and consumer protection.



Against the background of increasing global trade barriers, Europe needs to decisively counteract protectionist tendencies and fight unfair trade practices that distort competition to protect European workers and companies by effectively using its Trade Defence Instruments like Anti-Dumping measures.

Tackle Youth Unemployment



Although unevenly distributed, youth unemployment is a common European challenge that can only be solved by working together across borders. To tackle this issue, better entry-level opportunities into the labor market for young people have to be created through vocational training, the promotion and support of apprenticeships and employment-oriented training for young people.



The business sector must be better involved in projects linked to apprentice or mentoring schemes and other training programs. As experience has shown, connecting the education system and the job market leads to better and quicker matches between employers and applicants.



Furthermore, the European states need to invest more in education, provide equal and fair access to education and reduce school drop-out levels. Schools need to take responsibility for developing the practical skills students need to enter the workforce.

Develop Coherent Migration and Asylum Policy



A coordinated European immigration policy based on skilled labor requirements and the free movement of workers are important for the European labor market and contribute to Europe's socio-economic development.



Especially in the light of rising global migration flows, Europe needs a coherent and solidary migration and asylum policy that guarantees respect for human dignity and human rights. At the same time, causes of flight have to be tackled by effective development cooperation, neighborhood policy and a fair international trade policy and globalization process.



To meet the challenge of integrating refugees in European societies and national labor markets, asylum procedures have to be more efficient and quicker. Integrative measures like mandatory language courses or connecting qualified refugees with employers in need of skilled workers should be taken by European states to prevent social tensions.



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