

Essay 7-13

My Europe

I'd like to think to a round Europe where everybody speaks one language, with the same traditions where it doesn't exist war, racism, religious fights but on the contrary much peace and respect for all. That's the Europe, the future which I'd give to it. The Countries of Europe are versatile because all are worthy of being considered united like one community. I imagine in Europe cleaned seas and in the beaches a lot of children and more games to enjoy. The European flag is formed by a circle of 12 stars on a blue background which represents solidarity and harmony between people, I'd like on the centre of the stars there is written peace.

The official site of European Parliament is in Strasbourg, France, but why it can't be in my town in Nuğhedu Santa Vittoria? The only things that I wouldn't change in Europe are the single currency, which is Euro, because everybody can understand it, the European Union celebration is celebrated on 9th of May, circulate freely while avoiding the baggage check and documents at the border, to assert their rights, study and work anywhere because they do not need complicated procedures, be entitled to diplomatic protection because there are various embassies in any state of Europe, would not change the medical care to which all have the right, to assert their rights, the only thing I would change is the only live for six months in any European state without requiring any permit.

By the way, thanks to Europe and its resources have been carried out many projects that allow the growth of all its citizens so much that in 2012 he was awarded a Nobel prize for having contributed for years to the advancement of peace and development of human rights on territories of the old continent.

Europe I see at my eyes BRAVE because it is facing the emergency of migrants, specially Italy.

Gavino Loi, Italy

Europe of the future

Hello!

It's me – an ordinary girl who comes from a small village in Bulgaria, near to the Black Sea. My parents are people with modest means. I haven't been to any foreign countries, I haven't travelled a lot even in Bulgaria, but this fact doesn't get upset me. I have dreams, I have dreams for the future!

I am sure that when I grow up , I won't live in a small village, I will live in Europe – many-sided, but united, gay and strong. What kind of Europe do I want?

I want Europe to be careful and hospitable not only to the people but to the animals as well. I love animals very much! One of the greatest Bulgarian writers- Jordan Yovkov says, that if they could speak , they would be good as people or even better than us!

I would like in the future in Europe there won't be suffering children. Children should be loved, children should grow up happy in better world. Children who have dreams , even for simple things and to have daring to achieve their dreams.

I would like to live in community, where there is respect to everyone, where people are concerned about the nature. Nature is the thing that unifies us, despite differences between us. Community where there aren't tears and suffering. I feel sorry every time when I hear for a serial terroristic act. So much suffering, destroyed lives, broken families , sad children's eyes . Who needs that?

I have no answer for all that! I know that if there isn't peace , there won't be future!

Europe is many-sided and beautiful! I am sure that Europe will become better place if all Europeans fight for its future, if we are united and help each other! In this way we could build our common home – home for what we had dreamed.

I think like that! One ordinary girl who has big dreams!

Katerina Petkova, 13, Bulgaria

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What is Europe for me

For me Europe is a set of united continents to whom belongs: Italy, France, Germany,, Romania, Spain, Poland, Sweden, Portugal ecc...Europe is in the Boreal Emisphere, the weather is tempered.

So much so that in Europe has been constituted the single currency and the single language, which are respectively euro and English. This form of union, to have the currency, the language and to go to every nation with only the identity card let the economy of this set of nations to be more simplified for what concern the development of Europe.

I wish that Europe would offer more jobs and that there is more unity between us Europeans to be able to help those in need.

Nicola Serra, Italy

EUROPE AS WE WANT IT TO BE

Each nation has its national treasures, cultural heritage, nature, folklore and history. Our traditions make us; they build us up as a nation. They gather people and make them one whole. It is not something we have to learn, but something we carry in our souls – to be proud of where we are coming from and to preserve our past. Each nation brings along their own uniqueness and beauty through their tradition and history. We can learn from each other how to respect both our own nationality and the various cultures, the different moral and historic values. They make us stronger in difficult situations. Attacks all around the world aroused fear among people but they also gave rise to sympathy for the injured. That teaches us that we should be more united and stronger. It makes us a community – a European family.

Europe gives an opportunity for development of talented and creatively capable young people. Recently, we find more and more European projects uniting persons from all age groups. Contests for children and adolescents are conducted, which encourage individuality; dreams are made to come true and goals are accomplished. Such projects show people how to be tolerant, how our differences in terms of nationality, ethnicity, religion and culture actually make us **united and diversified**. That gives us a chance to rediscover the world in a different way, opening the doors to security and friendship.

Europe shows us the way to education, to getting to know new territories, worlds, people, cultures.

Europe can be called a multicoloured palette, which shows our nature. The difference in individuality and the beauty of each person and nation. Aren't people like flowers? They are all different, beautiful and unique.

The borders existing between us are only geographic factors. That is why my idea of **the future of Europe** is related to the idea of building security, peace, unity and friendship. For me, the European family is a beautiful picture of colourful flowers.

Mihaela Zdravkova Mihova, Bulgaria, 16

For Europe and the young people

Europe- so much ancient and at the same time so much young! Europe is the home that young people should own, because young people are the future of the Europe!

What do I want Europe to be? I think that Europe should give chances and opportunities to every young person to develop their abilities and skills. There are many clever and capable young people who haven't got enough money to continue their education. I think that this shouldn't be an obstacle for young people to fulfill their dreams. Indeed, do only rich people have right for a good education? I don't think so. Supporting the young people – Europe and they could be mutually useful. The young people would get an opportunity for expression and Europe would become many- sided community with future. The youth brings new life, inventions and creativity, different view of life. If Europe invests in the young people, especially in science, they can be able to put into practice those Utopian ideas for eternal youth, for revolutionary break in medicine and science. Many generations have dreamt for that.

I would like, except strong as regards ideas, inventions, patents, Europe somehow to find the formula of the success. I would like Europe to build reliable and safe future for all European citizens. I would like Europe to stand up for its rights and to be united. I would like in Europe to dominate- understanding, involvement and love! Europe should protect the most important thing- the peace! If there isn't peace none of these my thoughts and wishes can happen. There wouldn't be future for us.

We should fight for our future! We should use the experience and knowledge from the past, bravely and with hope to walk towards our joint future!

Petar Zhekov, 19, Bulgaria

Europe - my home

In nowadays , Europe isn't just a geographical denomination, Europe is a many- sided community where in harmony and peace live people who are distinguished by the colour of their skin, religion, language and convictions. Despite their differences , people would like to live in peaceful world, world of understanding, mutual respect and tolerance.

I haven't travelled in Europe, but I have been to many sights in Bulgaria and all I have seen is very beautiful. I have seen different kind of people – happy and sad, rich and poor. I think that people from other countries in Europe aren't more different than us in Bulgaria. I know that in the rich European countries there are people who live hard.

I would like Europe itself to be interested in people's fate. I would like people to live better, to have enough food, to have their own homes. I would like all neglected children to find out families. They shouldn't be abandoned at children's homes, because their biological parents neglected them. I would like these children to have lovely and careful families, because they haven't deserved to suffer. I would like these children to have dreams and future. I know what these children feel because I am one of them. I live in a children's home.

I would like no living creature of the world to suffer. It doesn't matter if it's a human or an animal.

I think that all of us- people and animals, we are here on the Earth just to be delighted with life.

I would like to live in a peaceful society , where all the people are good and kind. And I also want we, the people to be concerned about each other. I want all that because Europe is my home!

I want Europe to be that sort of - more anxious than ever, more loveable! I am sure that if all of us are harmonious and help each other , we can wade through the difficulties and achieve our future, this future , that we dream for!

Ivanka Kostova, 14, Bulgaria

Joana Pereira, 22, Portugal

You ask me about Europe?

A universe of diversity.

You can

visit the house where Mozart was born in Austria;
buy pralines in a chocolate shop in Belgium;
swim in the Black Sea in Bulgaria;
watch the filming of "Game of Thrones" in Croatia;
taste Halloumi in Cyprus;
take a walk on the Charles Bridge in the Czech Republic;
visit the Lego factory in Denmark;
view the limestone cliffs on the coasts of Estonia;
visit Santa Claus at his home in Lapland in Finland;
see da Vinci's Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum in France;
Pick one of the 300 different bread types that exist in Germany
take a picture of the Panathenaic Stadium, birthplace of the first Olympic Games in Greece;
watch a Waterpolo game in Hungary;
drink a pint of Guinness in a pub in Ireland;
take a gondola ride through the canals of Venice in Italy;
hike in the Ganja National Park in Latvia;
visit the geographical centre of Europe near Vilnius in Lithuania;
file a lawsuit at the European Court of Justice based in Luxembourg;
see the underworld temples of the Hal Saflieni Hypogeum in Malta;
drive through the tulip fields of the Netherlands;
visit the concentration camp of Auschwitz in Poland;
ask football star Cristiano Ronaldo for an autograph in Portugal;
look for Dracula in the Castle of Bran in Romania;
climb the High Tatra Mountains in Slovakia;
hear traditional folk music performed on Styrian harmonica in Slovenia;
see the running of the bulls at the San Fermin Festival in Pamplona in Spain;
receive the Nobel Prize in Stockholm in Sweden;
have a cup of tea with the Queen of England in Buckingham Palace in the United Kingdom.

So many different countries,
a community of multifaceted nations,
unified in geography, history and future.

Europe, we want to be!

What is Europe for us? Place of multilateral cooperation, security, economic development and prosperity.

For me Europe should be a united community that provides for the young adults a challenging environment, which will help them develop new skills and participate fully in the community. European society must encourage the youth to complete their education. The diploma should be recognized across the whole Europe and considered as an opportunity to get work experience, get training or learn from the experts on the different labour European markets. Europe must support the countries that help young people's transitions from education into employment. Contemporary society should create a unified approach and build an education-to-employment system that supports the youth in their process of pursuing a long term work placement, despite their lack of working experience.

Europe should put extra efforts when it comes to overcoming the poverty and social exclusion. This can be achieved by encouraging the countries in developing active inclusion policy. The policy should help benefit and encourage every citizen, that is in a long-term unemployment challenge to enable and join the work force and be a part of the labor market, so that they can be participating in the society and be able to lead a decent life.

Europe must be a symbol of unity of a lot of different nations. The main future goal is to find the silver lining - hopeful and comforting prospect in which conflict and wars will be forgotten. Each country should take a position and make a stand on its own, but all together to aim for one general foreign policy.

European nations should take as a responsibility to make United Europe as one. The main priority should be strengthen European identity, when it comes to nurturing about the values of humanism in a long term plan. We can all do our best to tolerance each other differences and and to live in unity without uniformity and diversity without fragmentation. Not for nothing the motto and the main concept of Europe is "Unity of Diversity". Although different, Europeans have to work together for one better future, for Europe we want to be.

Ivanina Vlahova, 26, Bulgaria

The empowerment of European citizenship

The public disaffection towards politics has grown from a mere concern to establish itself as a problem that both OECD (2001) and the Council of Europe (2001) introduce in their Recommendations as an institutional issue that needs new solutions. As an example, since the first democratic elections within the European Union in 1979 until today, participation has always gone into decline. The analysis that I do is the following: first, we have a society that doesn't not represented by the institutions or by the current political class; Secondly, a decision-making process too complex to civil society; Third, citizens do not feel part of Europe; Fourth, a town just informed about the tools you have at your fingertips. The solution is to implement a Participatory Budget decision to return power to the people. Made the prior of what I speak is democratic engagement and civic participation.

In recent decades, the EU has put special emphasis on public participation, aware that the future is moving in this direction. Since it was first directly elected representatives of the people in 1979, have been many advances in this field. A good example of this is the recognition of "European citizenship" in the Treaty on European Union in the nineties and its consolidation as such with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, where are collected all rights enjoyed by each and every European citizen. As well as the creation of the Ombudsman, the person in charge of guaranteeing the rights of the people against abuses that may make political powers. Already in the twenty-first century, the Lisbon Treaty (2009) represents another major step forward in the democratic joined the European Citizens' Initiative, very important tool to promote citizen participation while promoting the growth of civil society when developing EU policies. While the harsh conditions imposed: 1) must be proposed by a committee of seven people belonging to seven member countries of the European Union; 2) to collect one million signatures; with the addition that the Commission is not obliged to create legislation in response to a popular initiative; makes it very difficult to implement and thus achieve milestones. Finally, the large and ambitious program: Europe for Citizens, adopted for the period 2014 to 2020 shows that the political agenda is full volcano with the community to contribute to a better understanding of the European Union, its history and its diversity by citizens and promote European citizenship and improving conditions for civic participation and democracy in Europe. This program provides three major specific measures: twinning, creating a network of people and projects for civil society.

Despite all these efforts, and although we are still immersed in the pretentious program for the period 2014 to 2020 and is perhaps a bit hasty conclusions, the fact is that these solutions described above, have not generated the expected between population, at least in terms of Spain, because when asked, and I quote: "Do you think their voice counts in the European Union". According to results of the Eurobarometer Spring 2015, we see that 32% said yes, while 61% said no and the remaining 7% replied that no one knows. Adverse results clearly placed Spain at the tail of the European Union. Therefore, Europe is not giving voice to citizens. Why is it, however, this circumstance?

The analysis will then not intended to be scientific, but provide arguments based on their own experience or the people around me. So I think that the possible explanation for this situation is due to: first, disenchantment for politics, namely the lack of trust that citizens have with politicians for electoral promises unkept, distrust cover to the extreme, can even generate phobia. Given these circumstances, the attitude it takes most people is the "passivity" that results or, stay home and not go to vote or, completely ignore politics, ie do not keep abreast of what is happening, pretending that this does not affect them in their daily lives; Second, the lack of transparency in the drafting of laws, which come into play many parts, starting with the three main institutions: the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, and ending external

pressures makes it, by extension, a very complex process outside the scope of understanding by the general public. This Join us in the little sympathy generated by the policy, causing a rift in the two positions.

The analysis done so far is incomplete, in my opinion, but will add two elements: the non-identification as citizens of Europe and ignorance by citizens how they can make their opinion in the European Union. We split. First, when I speak of not identifying as European citizens, I mean through the European and the concept of "EU citizenship". That is, the women answer the question: How do you feel? In 2013 Eurobarometer on European identity, says only 38% (nationality), 49% answered (nationality) and European, but only 7% feel more European (nationality), compared to 3% ensures only European feel. This means that the Spanish are more Spanish Europe. Not to mention those who feel Catalan, Spanish and European or Catalans and Europeans, it would be much more complex to analyze. Therefore, if I, as a citizen, I feel that I am part of Europe, not m'implicaré on any matter related to this. It's drawer. Secondly, and lastly, although today, the Internet in general, but also the powerful web of the European Union, make available to the public a lot of information on any topic you want to know, the population as a whole, it will not look for it, but the hopes that this arrives. So, on one hand, are mainly young people who voluntarily are uninformed about how can make its voice heard in institutions that represent them (as little political interest), but on the other hand there is also a non-voluntary people are uninformed on this subject; are mainly or, elderly people who are not abreast of new technologies or, disadvantaged communities which unfortunately still do not have Internet access. Anyway, it is a fact that the channel information from the institutions that the general public is not working properly. Certainly both problems outlined here, are a serious problem for the proper functioning of Europe. First because, over time, could bring out the United Nation (term coined to describe those states that do not want to be subject to a body supranational, such as the UK) and second because the youth is the future Europe and its support but have also run the risk of seeing Europe as we know it today, multifaceted and united in its diversity, disappears completely.

Picking up all that has been said so far, the lack of public participation in European affairs could be attributed to four causal factors: 1) disaffection, disillusionment and rejection generated by the current political class and institutions; 2) the lack of transparency in decision-making within the European Union; 3) the prevalence of nationalist sentiment over Europe; 4) the information void in which he lives most of the population, either voluntarily or involuntarily. The union of these pieces forms, truly a worrying picture for the future of Europe, as if the public is kept apart from politics, regardless of why they have been led to take this attitude, witness the expiry of the European Union and its institutions. Institutions that have no reason to be if you do not have a broad citizen support.

In conclusion, the lack of citizen participation that we are living is a clear sign that the institutions in recent decades have been very isolated from the reality experienced by individuals and communities to the extent that there has been a disconnection has led to the appearance of two realities: the reality of the political class and the reality that citizens are living.

Therefore, it is necessary that the European decision-making bodies reconnect with citizens because without it, Europe is over. In these times, the citizen is not satisfied only to participate, but wishes to engage actively and directly in decision making. So, European bodies should take a step beyond than just consulting the opinion of the public. It is necessary to implement Participatory Budgeting at European level, seen that in some populations like Igalada they have been carried out with satisfactory results. Why? Because I think it is a wonderful tool to empower citizens. What benefits do we get with that? Well, first of all, to change the negative image we have of politics; second, to involve citizens in the decision-making process while learning its operation, so it works on the participatory and education field; Third, it promotes the feeling of belonging to Europe, as through

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participation you feel part of this; Fourth, it makes that citizens are kept informed about how the process actually means and how it is done, for example, the destination of the money to build a public square. Moreover, I think, who better than the people, the first affected by this long and hard crisis still causing havoc to decide where it is necessary to allocate all the money? It could be the key to the advancement and build together a better future for the next generations? Who knows, but I think they deserve a chance.

Montserrat Torras, Spain,25