



Call to Europe VI

MILLENNIALS AND POLITICS

'OVERVIEW OF THE SESSIONS and WORKSHOPS'

From the Country-based Surveys to a Global Plan for Progressive Action!

Introduction to Call to Europe 2016

It is high time to act and propose a progressive alternative to change the face of the contemporary institutionalised politics. If young people were to draw it today, it would be tired, wrinkled and in one shade of grey. Instead, learning from all what young people from across the globe told FEPS and its partners through a survey "Millennial Dialogue" – this already 6th edition of the Call to Europe will be a momentum to add colours, to lift the spirits and to make the eyes sparkle with excitement. So together with 100 young experts, young politicians and young participants we will look at how to make politics about passion, vision and mission. We will reflect on how to build a programme that represents now and the future, enjoying legitimacy across demographic strata. And finally, we will also discuss how to modernise the movement, so that being part of it becomes again a way to change the world and enjoy a lifetime experience.

This will be a conference like no other. There will be no long speeches, no plenaries without active participation of the audience and no conclusions without participants having a say on them. We are proud to confirm that also this year we will use our already infamous, interactive Call to Europe method for the plenaries, also with one Dragons' Den, Fishbowl and a set of workshops in the World Café style. You will experience politics at its best and you will have a possibility to formulate a proposal that we, with the help of speakers and especially our FEPS Young Academics Network, will jointly carry on as a task to translate into reality after the event is over. You will have a chance to talk to the Members of the European Parliament and other invited politicians in a very informal setting, having a chance to tell them directly what you think, dream and want to fight for. We want it to be fun most of all and we hope you will be able to stay and join us for the cultural programme lined-up accompany the political work.

All you need to do to be on board of this amazing experience is to log on our [website](#) and register! Please also feel free to browse the background reading, check out our opinion survey results and do not hesitate to get in touch with FEPS team for more information. Register quickly! The number of places is limited, so grasp the chance now!

Background of the Millennial Dialogue Project

Amy McDonald, one of the young and promising British signers, sang that there is not much that the world knows about "the youth of today". This is what prompts the misunderstanding, unfair judgements and lies at the core of the "negative press". The journalistic diagnoses often depict young people as lazy, apathetic and politically disengaged. The breakdowns of the electoral participation records show that young people are also absent within the framework of institutionalized politics and conventional forms of political participation. Hence, a very negative narrative has been gaining momentum *vis-à-vis* the Millennial generation (those born between 1980-2000). However, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and its partners refused to give in to this worn-out story and engaged in a global discussion with young people, academic experts and politicians to demystify the Millennial generation by offering them a platform to express their views and to be heard. The many myth-busting and constructive findings of the Millennial Dialogue research have become a reference point across a wide-range of geographies from the Americas to Europe, from Africa to Asia and Australia. It is clear that young people in fact never withdrew from politics or became inactive, but instead decided to take up different forms of engagement.



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The pilot phase of the project was launched in December 2014. The original team of founding members comprised of FEPS and its US partners: the Centre for American Progress, Global Progress and Generation Progress. At the beginning the efforts focused on designing an online survey alongside the method that it would be conducted with. The founders followed here a **3P rule** that became a principal logic of the project. It referred to “**participatory, positive and progressive**”. **Participatory** – as it was about giving the floor to Millennials themselves. **Positive** – as it was about finding jointly a solution on how to re-engage young people into politics. And finally, **Progressive** – as the new agenda was aimed at bridging the gap between social democracy and young people.

The initiative has attracted many partners – in Europe and beyond. Since then:

- More than **20.000 young** people were interviewed
- **31 countries** across **6 continents** are involved in this **global discussion**
- The surveys completed at time of writing include: Italy, Poland, Germany, France, Ireland, Romania, Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, UK, Canada, USA, Chile, Norway

This means that at this point there is a vast database available regarding what Millennials think, desire and are ready to engage in. We have come to the point where we have collected a lot of research findings, but now we need to deliberate on how to use this knowledge to change the trends, to translate it into the guidelines for a political agenda and for organisational reform. This is precisely the drive that lies behind organising this years’ Call to Europe as a momentum of the “Millennial Dialogue”. For us it is not the culmination point, but rather a decisive time to get together and design jointly with young people the way that this initiative can continue serving in (re)building bridges between Millennials and progressive politics.

OVERVIEW OF PLENARY SESSIONS

SESSION 1 – “HOW TO IMPROVE MILLENNIALS TRUST AND PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS”

Today only 1034 out of 7043 Millennials said to be very interested in politics. This number reflects the conviction that politics is not the only way to change the world. Their engagement in other forms of activism, including especially volunteering is greater – as there they can feel their efforts translate into tangible effects. In politics, and especially within the traditional political party system, on the contrary, they feel underrepresented, disregarded and hence instead of empowered – powerless. To that end, asked about the qualities that they associate with the traditional parties, they see many of them as dull, unattractive and lacking sense of humour – which in a colloquial manner resonates how they feel about them and their representatives, many of whom they do not even remember or recognise by name. This negative evaluation should be seen as a warning and hence the pertinent question of this panel: what, from the long list of demands of the Millennials, needs to be addressed first in order to change the trend and encourage Millennials to reconsider their access to established, institutionalised forms of political activism?

SESSION 2 – “POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE MILLENNIAL’S POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT”

It has been observed in the last two years that Millennials would re-engage in politics, if they find a breakthrough in the existing ‘business model’ that the traditional parties hold in their everyday lives. This partially explains the phenomenon of Jeremy Corbyn or Bernie Sanders, who themselves belonging to the long serving members of movement became, like nobody else, a magnet to attract youngsters to re-enter the party. Against the concern of the Millennials that politics is no



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longer a tool to change the world, in those two specific cases they have shown readiness to reconsider. In that sense they find that the two restore value into politics, which should be about honour, consistence in political line and public service. This is also why they are clearly resentful to the professional politics and politicians, and hence the scandals like the Wiki Leaks or Panama Papers resonate among them particularly strongly. To that end, in their voting patterns the Millennials show a great volatility – which can be explained that they follow their hearts regarding the leaders and the issues that at the given moment they find the most convincing. With this session we want to create the opportunity for Millennials and invited experts to discuss how to move away from the institutionalised understanding of the parties and see into their transformation to modern, issues based movements. We will particularly focus on the mechanisms that could ensure that parties could open up, pour a tangible and attractive content to the notion of “a party member”, and to that end be the vehicles for interesting grassroots ideas to be debated on the local, regional, national and European levels.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Workshop 1: “Millennials and Employment”

Millennials are multilingual, they have a stellar education and are used to live in an inter-connected world. This should predestine them to live in prosperity and benefiting from quality employment and adequate high wages. However, this picture could not be further from the reality at hand. Instead, this generation is suffering from exclusion and polarisation of the labour market, from disregard of the value of skills and qualifications, from lowering social mobility and narrowing opportunities to advance. In short, the Millennials’ expectations while maturing, entering the labour market and trying to gain independence are not met. Not only they cannot see the promised prospective quality jobs created, but also in the existing ones they see little that would make them consider occupational activities at the source of safety, socialisation and fulfilment. This makes them say that politicians are not delivering on the necessary socio-economic policies to give them better chances for a stable future, even if they themselves are not ready to give up. **7043 of Millennials have a positive outlook onto the future, and this busts a myth about them: they are not apathetic, they just don’t think it is progressives, among others, who can offer better prospects. On that note, the workshop will look at how to reconnect, having in mind already existing attempts – such as the PES-inspired European Youth Guarantee and the new Plan for Youth. The desired outcome is to define the core elements of a political agenda in the scope of the Next Social Europe.**

Workshop 2: “Millennials and Healthcare”

Millennials as a generation are concerned about their well-being. The notions of happiness, success and good health come on the top of their priorities. Individually, they wish to be empowered to pursue a healthy life style. Politically they expect that the authorities on all levels (from local to European) will strengthen their efforts in pursuing a modern health agenda, which stretches between ensuring healthy environment and food to universal access to sports (which they indicate they are interested in); and between increased public investment in the public policies preventing illnesses (also at work place) and in the safety nets supporting them in case of sickness. In fact, **93% of Millennials conveyed that healthcare should be the first priority in terms of public spending. This result busts a myth about them: they are not finding the welfare state boring and unattractive, on the contrary they want to see it modernise and expand. They want to see Just Transition to decarbonisation taking place. On that note, the workshop will look at how to translate these principles into a tangible agenda for modern, high-quality public services and herewith put an end to the sacrifices and cuts that have been made on the back of the regrettable austerity strategy. The desired outcome is to define the way to go beyond the politics of limitations, reconnecting the numerous fragments of the grand progressive debate on future of social economy: the care economy and how to transition/move to more social, care friendly, sustainable, green society.**

Workshop 3: “Millennials and Climate Change”

Climate change is a reality that Millennials are deeply concerned with – **Almost half of those surveyed (49%) singled out environmental policies as a key factor in influencing our quality of life now and in decades to come.** Containing the effects of climate change requires changing habits and investing in policies that cuts out CO2 emissions, a fundamental part of this change regarding the sustainable development agenda will then be towards adopting much cleaner energy policies. Millennials are very knowledgeable about the challenges and their keen understanding makes them much more ready to engage in these issues. Many believe that climate action will create jobs and a better society. In what way then is a **Just Transition** to a sustainable, carbon-free society envisaged? Born in the age of globalisation, millennials readily see the effectiveness of internationalism in tackling these issues. The workshop will look at how Progressives should maintain ownership of what have become ‘green issues’, building on the ‘**Progressives for Climate**’ initiative that FEPS began. It will put into question our current socio-economic model of production and consumption and look at how a quality living standard means working in harmony with the environment.

Workshop 4: “PES European Youth Plan” *organised with the PES*

Millennials are paying a high price in the current difficult economic and social context. More than one in five young Europeans under 25 is still out of employment. More than a third of the young unemployed in Europe are long-term unemployed (more than 12 months). At the same time high levels of child poverty persist, even in Europe’s richest countries as shown by the latest UNICEF reports.

The consequences of these developments are dire, as is also confirmed by many of the findings of the FEPS Millennial Dialogue project. A number of young people are disconnected from active participation in politics and society, while the EU is losing popularity among parts of the youth. Many young people are attracted by populists or far right and extreme-right movements. This is why the Party of European Socialists (PES) will bring forward a major policy initiative to provide our youth with new jobs, hope, trust and re-engagement – a European Youth Plan.

This initiative will be based on four pillars:

- Employment: A permanent Youth Guarantee, with a €20 billion budget, extended to people up to 30 years all
- Education: “Erasmus for all” by broadening Erasmus+ for all secondary and vocational education and training school students
- Culture: A European Youth Culture Cheques empowering young people as culture consumers and creators
- Child Guarantee: Ensuring children’s rights to healthcare, education, childcare, housing and nutrition, with the creation of a dedicated fund.

The PES wants to hear your voice: Join the debate on how to lift Europe’s youth and children out of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Workshop 5: “Millennials and Gender Diversity”

The Millennial generation is the grandchild of those who prompted the cultural revolution of the 1960s. They are therefore bound to be socially progressive, benefitting from the openings and the acceptance that their predecessors had to fight for. They were born into diverse societies, where the equality of gender is at least normatively well established and legally guaranteed by law. That is also why they feel so strong about anything that would jeopardise this –



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3640 of Millennials believe that equality of opportunities for all, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation and ethnicity should be protected and promoted by politicians. This translates into a number of issues. Millennials call for equal opportunities, which means, among others, that men and women should be enjoying the same chances to advance. This comes in line with the deliberations that FEPS has already also been promoting in the framework of projects such as Women Up or Transatlantic Gender Dialogue. Secondly, they believe in equal treatment – which is the lenses through which they approach the question of the LGBT rights. In the Irish Millennial Dialogue survey for instance, the Marriage Equality referendum brought a strong feeling of ‘can-do’ optimism. They stand strongly on the principle, but they do not connect these issues with any of the traditional ideologies in particular. This understanding helps busting another myth about them: the Millennials have clear political views, even if they do not find ways to associate these convictions with any of the traditional political forces. On that note, the workshop will look at how progressives could anchor themselves in this momentum, where there is so many inequalities and recognition agents for change. The desired outcome is the gender-proofing of the existing progressive agenda and the set of recommendations on how to advance with the proposals against the raising conservative and right-wing extreme tides.

Workshop 6: “Millennials and Education”

During the twentieth and twenty-first century social democrats successfully presented a renewed agenda focused on delivering equal opportunities. The objective then was to make Europe the most competitive economy based on knowledge, for which reason there was a commitment to broadening access to education and training. Although the intention did not materialise as planned and there are so many qualified youngsters described as NEETs (Neither in Employment, Education or Training), **Millennials haven’t lost the hope in a pleas that qualifications is the only way to equip them in the age of aggressive expansion of market capitalism onto the global level. In fact, 79% believe access to education has a very big effect in their future quality of life, as well as improving and maintaining good educational facilities.** This busts another myth about the Millennials: they remain faithful and ready to make an effort, hoping that this will translate into their emancipation as individuals, as citizens, and as members of the community that they are part of and wish to contribute to. On that note, the workshop will look at what sort of goals should be at the top of the progressive agenda in order to reaffirm commitment of the movement to enhancement of both formal and informal education and learning. That is especially the light of analysis by FEPS on emerging Digital Economy Union, which will require a new sort of cyber literacy from each and everyone. The desired outcome is a proposal for a new agenda regarding education (in all its aspect from civic education, through formal, vocational and up to informal learning). Alongside those, the participants will be charged with a question on how to come up with an adequate recognition of skills and knowledge, which would stop commodification of research on one hand, and on the other help develop a socially-just scheme to set proportions between middle-incomes and the top 1%.

Workshop 7: “The Political Challenge of ‘Grand Coalitions’ – The Youth Perspective”

organised with the Young European Socialists (YES)

Coalition or not, that is the question..

The single party system, a left-wing coalition, right-wing coalition, grand coalition and even the left and the far right coalition on the regional level... All this can be found in Europe at the present moment. Each option has its supporters as well as its opposers, debates get heated in aftermaths of elections, and it is not always clear what is the objective: power? voters' confidence? Future of the country? Youth organisations of the parties are only rarely consulted on the decision, never the less most of them keep arguing that governing with far right is the worse strategy to fight them and keep looking alternatives left-wing coalitions. Whatever the decision is, youth organisation has to take on board the best of each of the alternatives and use it for the next campaign. In our workshop we will discuss with representatives of youth organisations from Portugal, France and Germany as all of them are living very different political reality. Together with



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the audience and their experience we will see what aspects of each model should be used for the next elections and also if some of them can be taken on a European level.

Workshop 8: “Millennials, Campaigning & Political Engagement”

organised with the PES

Millennials do not feel a connection with the contemporary partisan system, but they are ready to imagine themselves as an initiator or as part of a campaign. **Millennials feel that their priorities are “lost in translation”, but nevertheless still exhibit readiness to mobilise and join or launch a political action.** They are very clear in what ways they find efficient to communicate a message and rally support. As a generation living in a digital era, they do consider internet an important medium – but that does not make them disregard neither traditional broadcasters or the power of one-to-one meetings. **That should be of a relief to the parties, which should herewith feel that the assumed tensions between i.e. canvassing and Internet door knocking is simply not real.** Therefore, how can progressive political parties and Millennials be re-engaged on common fights through political campaigns?

Workshop 9: “Youth UP - For more youth-inclusive politics”

organised with the European Youth Forum

Democracy is broken. Or so it might seem if you consider the decreasing turnouts in elections among young people in Europe and declining party memberships, meaning that young people are under-represented and excluded from democratic decision making. How to address these issues? How to restore trust among young people in the institutions of representative democracy? How to create a youth-inclusive politics? These are the questions to be answered in this facilitated brainstorm session by the European Youth Forum.

Workshop 10: “Referendum and the future of the EU”

organised with the Fabian Society

The continually awkward relationship the UK has with the European Union will be put to the people in less than a week from now. Brought about by pressure on David Cameron, Prime Minister, from eurosceptics in his own Conservative Party, the question voters are being asked to decide on is whether they want to ‘remain in’ or to ‘leave’ the EU. Even at this late stage the expected result is still very unknown.

Amongst some quite aggressive campaign tactics, the EU itself is facing numerous challenges; from the enduring consequences of the economic crisis to the challenge in dealing with the migration emergency. This makes it hard to anchor the communication on a tangible promise of better future prospects, prosperity and progress that the integration should guarantee for all its inhabitants. This clearly points out that what is desperately needed not only in the UK, but also across other Member States where the anti-European forces are growing in strength, is to devise a clear, positive case for Europe.

The negotiations process has kept the EU hostage for a while - making it impossible to make progress with important dossiers. Consequently this is much more than a national issue, it will deeply effect the whole integration process of the EU, whatever the outcome.

Workshop 11: “Millennials and Music, Culture & Social Media”

Millennials make their own personal brand online through social media. They are all about social amplification, discoveries and creating virtual communities. In fact, **9251 Millennials stated to be very interested in new technology, music and social media**. But the culture of Millennials is at odds with the one manifested by the traditional political

parties. Even though they get mobilised for diverse online campaigns, different methods applied by the political actors to knock their virtual doors have not substantially raised the numbers of young people engaging politically in reality. Asked why, the Millennials themselves underline that the most important thing is the ability to trust and hence a direct contact with a politician. This is why they value the local politics above any other dimensions. This busts another myth about them: the Millennials are neither alienated nor individualistic. To the contrary, they value group activities and want to belong to communities, which would allow them to share a certain collective experience. On that note, the workshop will look at how to reunite culture and politics, ensuring that the progressive movement relaunches its debate on the how to make their organisations spaces encouraging creativity, innovation and enabling a development of a distinctive collective reference point. The desired outcome is the set of proposals that would enable describing in what language and with what media progressive should communicate to convince the Millennials that they are ready to open up and become their space to share.



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Millennial Dialogue Reports conducted by AudienceNet

Australia - Per Capita and Chifley Center

Austria – Renner Institut

Belgium - Stichting Gerrit Kreveld

Belgium - Institut Emile Vandervelde

Bulgaria - INEP

Canada - Broadbent Institute

Chile

France - Fondation Jean Jaures

Germany – FES Berlin

Hungary – Policy Solutions and Tancsics

Italy - EYU

Ireland – the survey is completed in cooperation with the PES

Mozambique – CEEI

Norway - Labour Party

Poland

The Republic of South Africa - FES South Africa, GPF, MISTRA and NDI

Romania - Foundation for a Democratic Left

Senegal - Imagine Africa Institute and GPF

Spain - Fundacion Felipe Gonzalez

Turkey - Progressive Thought Institute

The UK - Fabian Society

The US - Centre for American Progress

In cooperation with FEPS member foundations and partners:



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