

„Zukunft EU – für ein sicheres und stabiles Europa“

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With the European elections coming up in less than a month, it is crucial to let citizens know about their role in shaping the Europe of tomorrow. Young people, no matter their age, their gender or the place they come from, are key to this electoral process. As a young woman and a young farmer engaged at local, national and European levels, I do acknowledge the extraordinary power of young people when gathering their voices and values to reach common objectives. Also, these EU elections are not only a personal act of going to the polls; they are an opportunity to convey messages of first importance for the European youth.

The first message to convey is that **the European Union is the relevant level of power for many of our everyday issues**. Over the decades, the European project has evolved into a recipient of more and more everyday concerns, shared beyond borders. All over Europe, young people share the same difficulties in terms of access to employment, creation of businesses, income levels or social inclusion. In the agricultural sector, it is striking to realise that I, a young farmer from the Netherlands, face the same challenges that my fellow young farmers from Austria or Spain whether it is to start my business with appropriate investments or to face price volatility and a wide range of risks linked to adverse climate events or markets disturbances. All these elements are fundamentally linked to the action of the European Union.

The second message, even more important, is that **the European Union has created many opportunities for young people to strive**. It has enabled us to go abroad to acquire or reinforce skills, as students but also as young entrepreneurs. It has supported us when starting a business. It has contributed to the economic development of our regions, our rural areas as well. It has also supported youth organisations in ensuring their everyday mission of empowerment. In our sector, we now benefit from a series of measures within the Common Agriculture Policy, as young farmers, ranging from installation aid to investment support. This agricultural policy has provided economic stability to our continent and millions of people working in the sector.

Last but not least, **the European Union is and will continue to be a powerful collective adventure**. This is something we are well aware of in the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA). The strength of our network is the possibility to share common ideals and battles with young farmers, first and foremost young people, coming from all over Europe. It is the opportunity to share good practices, practical solutions to apply in our everyday life, on the farm and outside. The collective approach, at the basis of the European Union, is, by definition, the answer to all the major challenges we face, whether it is linked to climate change, globalisation or social inclusion.

Being conscious about the role of the European Union is the first step towards a safe and stable Europe in the future. To ensure we keep answering challenges, to the best of our ability, all together, we need a strong Union. Not only for this generation but also the next ones to come.

The European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) acts as a forum of dialogue between young farmers and European decision-makers, aiming at promoting a younger and innovative agricultural sector across Europe and creating food working and living conditions for young people setting up in farming and those who are already young farmers. Established in 1958, CEJA represents around 2 million young farmers from 23 countries and 32 national member organisations.

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