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**POLITICAL  
POSITIONS  
2019/2020**

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## Who We Are

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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 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.



Learn more: [www.jci.cc](http://www.jci.cc)



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## What We Want

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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, peaceful Europe.

During the last years, challenges like rising global instability, climate change, ageing populations or migration have risen that are putting social, political and economic stability in Europe at risk. Global challenges require global solutions and it has become clear more than ever that they have to be tackled with our collaborative effort.

European citizens - and especially young people - need to invest in the future of their continent. We believe that by taking responsibility for our European continent and actively engaging in society, Europe can further progress on a path towards prosperity, freedom and peace. As a platform that unites young socially responsible leaders and entrepreneurs in Europe, JCI Europe wants to give them a voice and bring their political demands to European decision-makers.



## Foster Respect for European Values and Fundamental Rights

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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

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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.



## Ensure Sustainable Development throughout Europe

-  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.
-  In light of complex, pressing challenges the EU and the European states need to develop an overarching SDG strategy that recognizes the interlinkages between all the SDGs and the importance of policy coherence between its member states, guiding their actions and acting as a role model for other countries worldwide. Implementing the SDGs is a task that the EU or European states cannot take alone. Multi-level governance approaches and the active involvement of civil society and different interest groups are crucial in acting for a sustainable future.
-  According to the principle of universality the European states must take into account the implications of their production and consumption patterns as well as their policies on developing countries. Impacts on developing countries must be assessed and the negative externalities of European states' action or inaction need to be included in an overarching coherent SDG strategy.



## Act against Climate Change and Reduce our Ecological Footprint

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Europe needs to become a leading force in climate action by adopting a long-term strategy to become carbon-neutral and thus contribute to the Paris Agreement's temperature goals. To protect our climate, our environment and living conditions for all life on Earth, the EU and European countries have to further pursue their efforts to substantially reduce CO2 emissions and promote sustainable innovation technologies.



To preserve our planet for future generations, we commit to taking measures that protect our environment like promoting and supporting zero waste policies, responsible production and consumption and in general a responsible use of Earth's precious resources. Practices that aim for a circular economy like effective waste management and recycling should be further advanced in all European states.

## Advocate for Equality and Diversity in all Sectors of Society

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As an organization that unites young leaders from different nations and cultures from all over the world in their common dedication to provide service to humanity, we strive to achieve equality and diversity in all sectors of society and grant every individual equal chances and opportunities.



We have committed to take special action to advance the SDGs covering Quality Education, Gender Equality and Decent Work and Economic Growth, in order to ensure equal opportunities for every individual regardless of age, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.



In line with these goals, we demand equal access to an affordable education, the elimination of gender disparities in education and work life and strengthening policies for the empowerment of women as well as the promotion of an inclusive, flexible and equal European labor market.

## Tackle Youth Unemployment

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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 a Coherent Migration and Asylum Policy

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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.

## Create Better Conditions for Entrepreneurs and Foster Entrepreneurial Spirit

- Entrepreneurship plays an important role in creating jobs, driving economic growth, addressing environmental challenges and enabling youth to turn that creative energy into ideas. Better framework conditions for young entrepreneurs that support them with the process of starting up and expanding their businesses must be created to ensure an entrepreneur-friendly environment. 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 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.



Photo Credits: JCI Germany



## Foster Sustainable Innovation and Green Technologies

-  Innovative technologies that promote climate neutrality and clean energy can support the European countries in reaching their climate and energy targets and are important for Europe's competitiveness. We believe that the further development and investment in green technologies present new business opportunities and a chance for economic growth and job creation in Europe.
-  As the clean energy transition has shown, switching to a climate-neutral and environmentally-friendly economy has the potential to spur the modernization of the European economy, provide incentives to develop new business concepts and bring societal and environmental benefits for European citizens.
-  Equally important, the development of the local private sector must be supported by providing eco-entrepreneurship skills that teach people how to start their own green business increasing opportunities to improve their standard of living and contributing to a cleaner environment.



## 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



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 role in the world. 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.



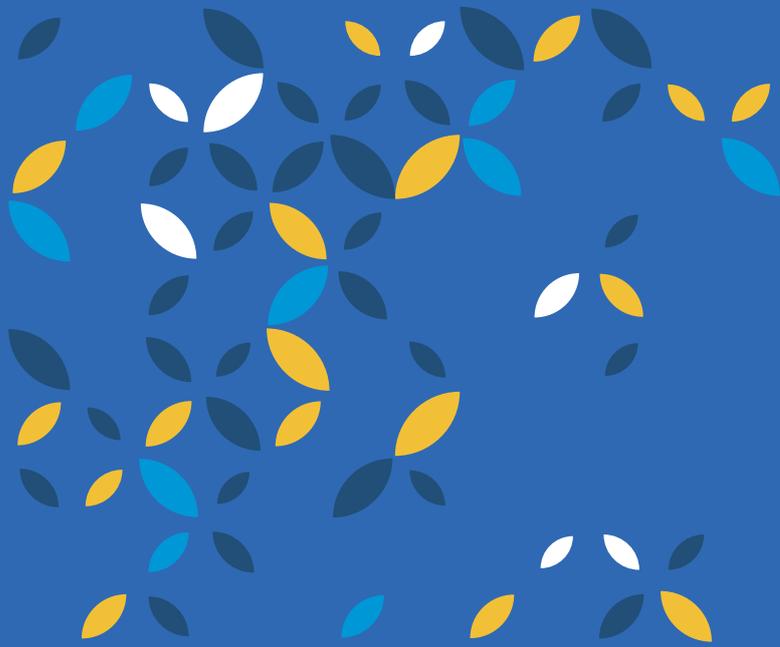
To create growth and jobs for European citizens by opening new markets, open and transparent negotiations on international trade agreements should be advanced, that take into account European standards of social, environmental, health, worker and consumer protection.



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.







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