

Excerpt of the message of Pope Francis to the participants in the EU Youth Conference in Prague

Dear young people!

I am very happy to address you who are participating in the European Youth Conference. I would like to tell you something that is very close to my heart. Above all, I invite you to transform the “old continent” into a “new continent”, and this is only possible with you. I know that your generation has some good cards to play: you are attentive young people, less ideologized, accustomed to studying in other European countries, open to volunteering and sensitive to environmental issues. This is why I feel there is hope.

As young Europeans, you have an important mission. If in the past your ancestors went to other continents, not always for noble interests, it is now up to you to present the world with a new face of Europe.....

Perhaps you have heard of the [initiative, launched in September 2019, called the Global Compact on Education](#). It is an alliance between educators around the world to educate the younger generations in fraternity. Seeing, however, how our world is being led by adults and elders, it seems that perhaps you should be the ones to educate adults in fraternity and peaceful coexistence!

Among the first commitments of the Educational Pact is to *listen to children, adolescents and young people*. So dear young people, make your voices heard! If they do not listen to you, shout even louder, make noise; you have every right to have your say on what concerns your future. I encourage you to be enterprising, creative and critical. You know that when a teacher has demanding, critical, attentive students in his class, he or she is stimulated to work harder and prepare better lessons...

Among the various proposals of the Global Compact on Education, I would like to recall two that I also noted in your Conference.

First, *be open to acceptance*, and hence to the value of *inclusion*. Don't let yourselves be drawn into short-sighted ideologies that want to show others, those who are different from ourselves, as enemies. Others are an asset. The experience of the millions of European students who have taken part in the Erasmus Project testifies to the fact that encounters between people from different peoples help to open eyes, minds and hearts. It is good to have “a broad outlook” in order to be open up to others, and not discriminating against anyone, for any reason. Be in solidarity with everyone, not only with those who look like us, or give off an image of success, but with those who suffer, whatever their nationality or social status. ...

The other proposal I would like to mention concerns *care for the common home*. Here too I was pleased to note that while previous generations talked a lot and concluded little, you on the other hand have been capable of concrete initiatives. That is why I say that this, more than ever, is the right time. If you do not succeed in turning this self-destructive trend around, it will be difficult for others to do so in the future. Don't let yourselves be seduced by the sirens that propose a life of luxury reserved for a small slice of the world. Instead, have that “broad outlook” that can take in all the rest of humanity, which is much bigger than our little continent. ..There is an urgent need to reduce the consumption not only of fossil fuels but also of so many superfluous things.

Dear young people, while you are holding your Conference, in Ukraine – which is not in the EU, but is Europe – a senseless war is being fought. Added to the numerous conflicts taking place in different regions of the world, it makes the need for an educational pact that educates everyone to fraternity all the more urgent.

Let me conclude with a wish. May you be *generative!* Young people capable of generating new ideas, new visions of the world, of the economy, of politics, of social coexistence, but above of new paths to be travelled together. And may you also be generous in generating new lives, always and only as the fruit of love! The love of husband and wife, the love of family and children, but also love of Europe, so that it can be for everyone a land of peace, freedom and dignity.