

No one should be left behind

The socio-economic presuppositions for a socio-ecological transformation in Europe

Agapé, 10th of June 2022

Propositions and Reflections

A Manifesto, a confession and a call for discussion and action



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Introduction

As a group of 21 people from Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Slovakia we met in Agape/Italy for a week to work on a Manifesto on the presuppositions of the socio-ecological transformation. The title of it is: "Nobody should be left behind". For us, this meeting was an opportunity to articulate our own convictions and perspectives on the socio-ecological transformation, and an opportunity to bring these into dialogue with other citizens of our country of residence and of other European countries, whom we barely meet in our everyday life. As a group, this process was in itself a valuable experience.

We are an intergenerational group from 17 to 70, mixed genders but all white. We are from different social and religious backgrounds, and most of us have so far not studied the topics around the socio-ecological transformation in more depth. We speak as ordinary citizen who are part of the political basis of Europe, and would like to invite you to a European discussion about the core points of our shared future.

We dealt with Democratic Values, Equality, Capitalism, Food Production, Transport and our own role in the system's transformation. We do this in order to give our voice power to be actors in the necessary change. We pass our results to you as a manifesto, a confession and a call for discussion and action. We do this in two parts. You get the core collected in propositions and the detailed outcome of our workshops in form of different reflections.

R. Freije Karolína S. Alena Solcova Daniela Svatkova
F. Gross Eva Riešard K. K. K. Anja
A. A. Leonardo Bortan Emya Mogenstern Hannah J. ~~Handwritten signature~~
J. K. Lorenz Blum V. Opuchel R. R. ~~Handwritten signature~~
J. K. K. K. K. ~~Handwritten signature~~

Propositions

As a group of 21 people from different European countries we met in the week after Pentecost 2022 at the Ecumenical Centre of Agape/Italy to reflect on the socio-economic presuppositions for a socio-ecological transformation in Europe.

In short we come to the following propositions:

Democratic Values

We acknowledge...

...that our societies follow, comparatively to other countries in the world quite a lot democratic values. To some extent, we have the right to demonstrate and to protest, and we can make use of the freedom of speech. To some extent, we can rely on basic civil rights, have good constitutions and can rely on the rule of law in our countries.

We recognize...

...the importance to do something against anti-democratic movements and structures in our countries, as well as the rising populism and radicalisation in our societies to prevent fascist tendencies in Europe.

...that some of the formal democratic mechanisms (i.e. referendums, votes) are not effectively giving us, the people, the possibility to enforce the change we want.

...the need of more possibilities to active participation in political processes, to encourage people not to retreat and resign from participation.

We demand...

...that the existing civil rights must be enforced and respected for everyone!

...to democratize the economy. We need to discuss socio-economic rights more extensively and ensure them. This means that private economic interest should not be dominating politics.

...more educational programs to give the possibility to develop self-determination and standpoints based on democratic values. Everyone should benefit from education about their own rights.

Capitalism

We acknowledge...

...that nowadays the dominant paradigm is neoliberalism, even if some propose alternatives like “green capitalism” or coming back to social market economy. We feel that we need to change this profit and private interest focused system into something more sustainable and just.

We recognize...

...our civilisation is based on cheap and non-sustainable energy. One of our greatest challenges is the ecological crisis. This crisis is manifested in pollution of the air and our nature (especially our sea), a dramatic loss of biodiversity and the destruction of natural habitats and climate change.

We demand...

...to promote economy without growth (e.g as conceptualized in the degrowth movement) and redistribute the wealth.

...to change educational system and curriculum. Especially the way how economics is presented is still dominated by neoliberal ideology and in education there is no space for alternative models. We want to promote education for sustainable development.

...to establish and implement strict and international regulation of pollution, biodiversity and climate conservation (mitigation) in production chains.

...to limit the size of companies and individual wealth as well.

...to change the concept of work: The wage has to ensure decent life.

My role in the transformation

We acknowledge...

...that in the current system, the weight of the responsibility is put on the shoulders of individuals instead of companies and government. People fear that the changes through regulations implicate the loss of their privilege. Individual choices and capabilities are always shaped by the structural and systemic conditions, they are never separated from the collective realities. The crisis of disinformation and polarization fragments society into hostile groups with experiences and beliefs so different to each other that dialogue and understanding is almost impossible.

We recognize...

...in a just world for everybody we will live a sustainable culture where people have affordable and available options to live sustainably and a quality life without harming the environment. This applies to all parts of human life for example food, housing, spending free time and holidays, mobility, work.

We demand...

...to change politics to be more open to participation and more available to people, reacknowledge democratic values and revitalise and strengthen democracy. For this, we also need to strengthen the reliability and independence of media.

...shifting responsibility from individuals to corporate and structural level

...education should develop people's knowledge and skills of how to organise: teach how to organise people with same interests against or for something, teach them how to start a cooperative or movement, how to decide collectively without hierarchies, showing them different forms of public engagement (direct action, activism, strikes, engaging in projects) and show existing good practices.

Equality

We acknowledge...

...although fundamental human rights are recognized by our constitutions, our society still suffers from profound socio-economic inequalities regarding gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social / economic differences, physical / mental health, citizenship, cultural background. People are being discriminated for their ethnicity, education, language, criminal Record, their physical appearance, mental health or gender. We live in a time, in which is normal to talk about illnesses but not about the mental ones.

We recognize...

to reach equality between men and women we need to destroy the patriarchy and all privileges associated with, such as the gender pay gap, better chances to get in higher position jobs and the overall social picture of women.

We demand...

...making laws and civil rights more applied, fulfilled and respected.

...to create safe spaces (policies, rules, institutions eg school) for those who are non-conforming and can be bullied, discriminated as a step in between until we have overcome discrimination.

...that all gender-related social norms should be destroyed so everyone could feel comfortable.

Food production

We acknowledge...

...our planet is facing the limits of its planetary boundaries. The way we produce and consume food causes social problems all over the world. We are wasting around 1/3 of the food we could consume. In Europe the food chain production is strictly regulated by laws concerning the quality of the products. But how are these regulations supposed to guarantee the health of consumers when the whole earth ecosystem is compromised by pollution, fine dust and microplastics. Food consumption and production reflect as well the capitalistic structures in our system.

We recognize...

...globalization of food production should be replaced by application of the system of food sovereignty

...the current state of affairs is critical, but there still is hope: last years of scientific research in agriculture and in the food chain gave us the tools for being potentially able to give enough food to up to 10 billion people.

...the culture of our society tends to incentivise meat consumption through advertisements and cheap meat-based products.

We demand...

...an alternative model of food production based on a “prosuming” model: this view yields a model in

which production and consumption happen at a more local and individual level, through auto-production of food and vegetable gardens.

- ...to adopt a different economic model based on a circular consumption model (compost, plant-treatment implant and biogas structures).
- ...support of alternatives forms of food production, such as permaculture, regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, vertical farming etc.
- ...support to small farmers, local fisheries and local/regional modes of food production and distribution (e.g. community supported agriculture) and promotion of short supply chains
- ...reduction of waste through for example zero-waste stores, alternative ways of packaging (e.g. bioplastic), recycling/downcycling and others
- ...reduction of meat consumption (e.g. through tax incentives of better alternatives)
- ...application of the principles of slow food
- ...consumers education
- ...building a global food sovereignty movement

Transport

We acknowledge...

...our mobility in cities and villages is quite limited. We depend on cars a lot in our everyday life, due to a bad and expensive public transport system.

We recognize...

...our mobility in the future will be much improved. There will be more travelling with bikes and less cars on the road.

We demand...

...to improve our public transport system, to let people see the benefits from it.

...less holiday travelling and less international plane travelling in general by plane.

Reflections

1 Democratic Values

Description of the situation

We speak as people living in different societies with different historic trajectories and cultures of democracy, Germany, Italy, Slovakia and Czech Republic. There are some aspects we would like to highlight here.

Germany

Democracy is established against the particular history of nazism and the second world war , which has led to establish structures that secure democracy – and which are in itself not democratic/ or have undemocratic aspects. And it is a country that is united out of two systems, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany. Today, we value that it is possible to express a variety of opinions and that there is the possibility of protests and demonstrations. But we also see the problem of people’s resignation or of their retreat from active use of democracy. We criticize the increasing votes for non-democratic parties, such as the party Alternative for Germany (AfD) and other populist movements that follow conspiracy theories.

Italy

Our democratic constitution was established against the fascism in our country, but it loses its value in society today. There are political movements, such as the *Lega* and *Fratelli d’Italia* who systematically promote hate speech, xenophobia, racism, conspiracy theories and homophobia. And there exists mafia as problematic non democratic organisation and structures in our society. We observe contradictions: In our country, we have referendums that give voice to the people, but the choices to vote for or against, they are often not good communicated, or make people feel they vote but do not have really power to change something to their wishes. Referendums are per se democratic mechanisms, but often are not effective, which is frustrating. One positive aspect about our democracy is, that we have welfare programs: the so-called Citizenship income for people who need it, but it is only for those who have the citizenship.

Czech Republic and Slovakia

Particular points in history that can be stressed for good democratic practices: In our country/region, there is a long tradition of cooperatives in many sectors of the economy and in society. It started in the 1850s! Also, we value the high level of secularization in our country/region, the power of especially the Catholic Church is limited, particularly in Czech Republic. Another important element of positive democratic values are the establishment of workplace/factory councils of workers in the 1968s in the context of the Prague Spring, as a way to enable the workers to participate in the decision-making in their workplace.

We see the post ‘89 development critical, as we observe many anti-democratic aspects: The split of Czechoslovakia was not the people’s decision, but was done top-down, similarly the economic

transformation into a capitalist system did not represent the people's wish, but was done top down, too. Today, European Union is an agent of democratization, but also an agent of patronizing policies.

When it comes to the respect of minority rights, women have gained the right to vote in 1920, which is quite progressive in that time period, and Czechoslovakia decriminalized homosexuality in 1961.

We, as united countries, from these different historic trajectories and challenges to democratic values, we can formulate points in common regarding democratic values:

- We see the importance to do something against anti-democratic movements and structures in our countries, as well as the rising populism and radicalisation in our societies to prevent fascist tendencies in Europe.
- We observe that some of the formal democratic mechanisms (i.e. referendums, votes) are not effectively giving us, the people, the possibility to enforce the change we want.
- We need more possibilities to active participation in political processes, to encourage people not to retreat and resign from participation.
- We criticize top-down approaches and instead, value decisions taken by the majority, not the governing élite.

Despite these critical points we acknowledge that our societies follow, comparatively to other countries in the world quite a lot democratic values. To some extent, we have the right to demonstrate and to protest, and we can make use of the freedom of speech. To some extent, we can rely on basic civil rights, have good constitutions and can rely on the rule of law in our countries.

Vision

We want to live in peace.

We want that everyone can build their own opinion and is informed about how they can participate in political processes and in decision-making.

We aim at consensus-oriented and participative decision-making, whenever possible.

Political participation must be broadened! We want to live in a society in which the people are no longer separated from the politics, in which the gap between a political elite and the people shrinks. Especially, we want to open the access to power and politics to young and female and marginalized groups. We envision effective possibilities to change and propose own ideas for change.

We envision a society in which those who are responsible of others use their responsibility in a way that respects the others and give them still a voice.

We particularly want to democratize the economy. We think that Economic democracy is possible. We need to discuss socio-economic rights more extensively and ensure them. This means that private economic interest should not be dominating politics.

The existing civil rights must be enforced and respected for everyone! Equal treatment of everyone – in theory and practice! The freedom of speech must be guaranteed and be as broad as possible, but within respectful limits, especially there must be openness to criticisms of political systems. But when it comes to actions, we need to prevent acts that do harm against others.

Aims and goals

We want more educational programs to give the possibility to develop self-determination and standpoints based on democratic values. Everyone should benefit from education about their own rights.

We want to broaden international cooperation and exchange.

We think the social system must be improved so that all people are protected in case of hardship, illness and neediness.

We want to introduce more mechanisms and procedures that allow participation in political processes and in decision-making processes AFTER the elections, or beyond the moment of voting.

To broaden participation we can use existing examples, such as participative budgeting, citizen assemblies and others.

A way to fight against the gap between political elite and the people is to undo corruption, and to put the public interest in the centre of decision-making.

2 Capitalism

Description of the situation

Today, profit orientation and exploitation of people and nature prevail on all continents. Usually, a system like this is called capitalism – even if we acknowledge that there are different types of capitalism. Nowadays the dominant paradigm is neoliberalism, even if some propose alternatives like “green capitalism” or coming back to social market economy. We feel that we need to change this profit and private interest focused system into something more sustainable and just. It is easier for wealthy people to get wealthier and these very people take profit from this, especially those with huge heritage or other forms of capital (i.e. financial assets, real estate etc). Often, this corresponds to those who have (inherited) a lot of power.

Capitalism is closely connected with patriarchy – it is the same system of domination (and as well with racism and colonialism). That way the system of privileges and inequality on a global, social and individual level is reproduced. All fights for emancipation are connected.. The challenge for a real transformation or change is that we need to be able to tackle the complexity of said problems: everything is connected.

Our civilisation is based on cheap and non-sustainable energy. One of our greatest challenges is the ecological crisis. This crisis is manifested in pollution of the air and our nature (especially our sea), a dramatic loss of biodiversity and the destruction of natural habitats and climate change; all this is endangers our future because biodiversity and natural habitats are ultimately essential to keep the earth a place in which life in its variety is possible.

We see that our world is driven by powerful companies and they influence politicians and politics in general in a way they should not. These companies destroy nature and lives of people for their own profit. When it comes to the problems related to capitalism, we also see that it is an economic system that is creating false needs, for example it promotes fast fashion.

Competition, as one of the features of capitalism, fuels this creation of false needs, as well as consumerism. Consumerism means that the economy is focused on constant growth and focused on selling more products instead of making sure their products last as long as they can.

Last but not least, a problem we want to point out are the current working conditions for the majority of people. A lot of workers do not get paid enough to make a decent living.

Vision

We want to live in a society in which the economy serves as a tool to cover the needs of people's sustainability while at the same time, the privileged countries (global North) and big companies have a higher responsibility of changing the current state of affairs. It means that (natural) resources and wealth are a common good that is accessible to everyone and is shared equally among everyone.

We support economic democracy which means shared decision-making about production. The circular economy already starts to reach more sustainability by reducing the waste and the consumption of the energy, which must be produced by renewable resources.

We envision a future world where the freedom of political choice goes along with the real freedom being not existentially endangered by poverty and exclusion.

Aims and goals

1/ General

We think the best way to transform the system is to promote economy without growth (e.g. as conceptualized in the degrowth movement) and redistribute the wealth. Full and worldwide realization of economic, social and cultural human rights should be included in international binding treaties. Let's try to implement the universal basic income as an in-between step. Highly progressive taxation is the main tool for redistribution of wealth and it is also necessary to secure the social safety system to compensate various externalities (etc...). We want to deepen the collaboration among countries in controlling financial flows and avoiding tax evasion. We think the idea of hyperstition is inspiring – the way how a prevailing idea can change society leads us to be more active in criticising the system and promoting different alternatives. Radical reforms of the international institutions like WTO and IMF (e.g. make easier the setting of customs on imported products) is necessary.

2/ Education

We need to change educational system and curriculum. Especially the way how economics is presented is still dominated by neoliberal ideology and in education there is no space for alternative models. We want to promote education for sustainable development.

3/ Economy in practice

We see various ways of supporting solidarity approach in economy such as cooperatives and other participative forms of organisations.

We want to establish and implement strict and international regulation of pollution, biodiversity and climate conservation (mitigation) in production chains. We want to limit the size of companies and individual wealth as well. We want transparent ownership of companies. We want to establish and implement strict and international regulation for the accessibility of sustainable goods. We want to establish and implement strict and international regulation to follow the principle of circularity including the rule that no goods go to waste just because it is not that profitable for companies to resell them.

4/ Work

We need to change the concept of work: people are forced to sell themselves for to survive, many jobs make no sense, people define themselves by job as status.

We need to reduce working hours, i.e. shorter working time but still getting the same wage; anyway, the wage has to ensure decent life (living wage).

3 My role in the transformation

Description of the situation

1/ Consumerism, individual choices, and fear of losing privilege

The capitalist narrative makes us believe in 'fake needs' that lead us to a non-sustainable consumerism. It is a system that works on profits rather than needs by using psychological manipulation taking advantage of behavioural issues. People trust this system and internalise specific habits, which are difficult to change due to their convenience and comfort. We can see this in the examples of following the fashion trends, consuming meat frequently, and always wanting what is new.

Individual choices are often linked to the trend that dictates our lives so we cannot blame the single individual, but we have to understand that choices we make are part of the trend. Even in our eco-friendly bubble, we realize that we have been brought up in the "culture of competition" which may lead us to judge each other instead of valuing that we are all contributing according to our capabilities at that specific moment. In the current system, the weight of the responsibility is put on the shoulders of individuals instead of companies and government, as in the case of the individual ecological footprint.

On the personal level, this impacts people's real happiness and life satisfaction. On the one hand, the pressure on the individual to perform as well as use and enjoy all the options causes stress and uncertainty. The fear of missing out is very present: we are flooded by the images of successful and happy people who portray their lives positively on social media, and we are pushed to do the same. On one hand, more and more people (mostly young people) do not know what to do with their life and lack meaning.

People fear that the changes through regulations implicate the loss of their privilege. So, they fear not being able to keep the same level of consumption and freedom of choice. For example, society is not ready to renounce the cheap plane tickets, to have our own car and travelling far away for short periods. All of this is possible thanks to the convenience and comfort for the few who benefit at the expense of others and capitalist structure but at the expense of the environment.

2/ Apathy and feeling of powerlessness towards politics and economics, lack of public participation

However, individual choices and capabilities are always shaped by the structural and systemic conditions, they are never separated from the collective realities. This collective reality is governed by politics, not only on the level of national governments, but governance in the more general sense: on the level of companies' decision-making, local authorities, city councils, international cooperation, etc.

The epidemics of powerlessness towards politics seems to spread around the world. Young and old people are apathic and hopeless towards politics. Often, they believe they have no power in the face of big politics and corporations. Politics seems to be so far away from people. Young people often portray it as something separated from the normal life, exclusive to competitive and assertive people in suits. Politicians are gaslighting people to serve the system. Convinced about their marginal role, they fall into indifference and no action. It is a comfortable and convenient option to stay passive

rather than to take action. Also, society is judgmental and sceptical towards people who try to change something and take action. The narrative of corrupt politics and repeating scandals makes people distrust politics and discourage them from participation, often even from voting in elections. Similarly to politics, economics is something that seems to be too complex to understand for people, designated only to experts, even though it is an important global force that shapes lives of everyone.

Hand in hand goes the crisis of disinformation and polarization, which fragments society into hostile groups with experiences and beliefs so different to each other that dialogue and understanding is almost impossible. The distrust to politics links to the distrust of the official information and invites for creation of misinformation and conspiracy theories.

Vision

Our society will be constituted of caring communities, where fair discussions, more consciousness of realities of the others, being more tolerant and empathetic, and more social cohesion lead us to a culture of cooperation and solidarity, instead of competition and individualism.

We will fight the fear of missing out and competitiveness amongst each other to find balance, learn to take our time and find the role that works for everyone. This can give a meaning and satisfaction to individuals while helping the community.

In a just world for everybody we will live a sustainable culture where people have affordable and available options to live sustainably and a quality life without harming the environment. This applies to all parts of human life for example food, housing, spending free time and holidays, mobility, work.

Politics will be changed so it is accessible to everyone and emphasises public participation. Good education will enable everyone to follow and take part in politics and have faith in their power to change things and believe that change is possible.

Aims and goals

We need to change politics to be more open to participation and more available to people, reacknowledge democratic values and revitalise and strengthen democracy. For this, we also need to strengthen the reliability and independence of media.

By shifting responsibility from individuals to corporate and structural level, we will make companies and politicians take responsibility for socio-ecological problems, and stop blaming each other as individuals.

It will be important to understand the fears that drive peoples' decision (of losing, of missing out, of not being enough) and their causes so that they can be expressed, addressed, and changed.

The key factor is education, both for young and adults that should be available to everyone. We propose education towards political participation: education about democracy (learning that

democracy is not self-evident), education about rights of people, and ability of being critical towards the leading rhetoric and system. Also, the education about politics and economics should be strengthened in order for people to understand that everything is political, and that individual and structural problems are connected. Furthermore, the education should develop people's knowledge and skills of how to organise: teach how to organise people with same interests against or for something, teach them how to start a cooperative or movement, how to decide collectively without hierarchies, showing them different forms of public engagement (direct action, activism, strikes, engaging in projects) and show existing good practices. Education should also teach how to discuss conflicting opinions in a respectful and constructive manner – for example nonviolent communication.

4 Equality

Description of the situation

Although fundamental human rights are recognized by our constitutions, our society still suffers from profound socio-economic inequalities regarding gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, social / economic differences, physical / mental health, citizenship, cultural background. These differences are not accidental but are foreseen and reiterated by a social system - heteropatriarchy - and an economic system - capitalism - based on privilege and discrimination.

1/ Sexism, lesbophobia, homophobia, transphobia

While talking about equality a lot of time the discussion lands on LGBTQIA+ and sexism. That's because there is a lot of inequality within these structures. Firstly the themes are to be defined. Sexism is officially defined as prejudice or discrimination based on sex and gender; especially discrimination against women. It describes furthermore behaviour, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex. So as a society at some point we decided that men are more worthy than women are. Of course this is not the reality and we have come far in our journey fighting for equal rights but there is still a long way to go. For example women still get paid less than men are. This is called the gender pay gap and is a common thing in most of the jobs. It seems like women's work is less worthy than men's. That women are weaker. In reality achievement and being rewarded for work should not be connected to gender in any form.

Another issue to talk about is the hate and inequality talking about LGBTQIA+. LGBTQIA+' is an evolving acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual. It is pretty much everyone who is not heterosexual or cis gender (a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.). There is a big stigma around the community of non-straight cis people because they "fail the norm". In Germany for example the donation blood for gay men is forbidden, because it is said that they are responsible for AIDS. It is proven that it is not related to sexuality but still this law exists.

2/ Women's rights

To reach equality between men and women we need to destroy the patriarchy and all privileges associated with, such as the gender pay gap, better chances to get in higher position jobs and the overall social picture of women. Another aspect of patriarchy that needs to be destroyed is the systematic violence and the culture of rape.

It's important to mention that it's required to improve women's rights for a better equality in the society. Improving that is a good start, but it's not enough. Especially the Patriarchy is a problem that contributes in a negative way to a toxic and harmful environments. Violence has to stop as well as unfair treatment. Women have to get a new political power and orientation. This helps improving the benefits of a feminist society.

3/ Racism and social Inequalities

We still live in a very divided society. People are being discriminated for their ethnicity, education, language, criminal Record, their physical appearance, mental health or gender. Even certain passports get differently valued or accepted, only based on the fact where the pass comes from. We are still stuck in stereotypical thinking and acting. We are allowing or even encouraging a division between the North and the South. Our privilege and consumption is on cost of the exploitation of other people and our planet.

4/ Social Classes

Another type of discrimination is linked to social classes: they do not only concern income but also influence access to education, the possibility of living in the city or province, access to work, in a sense that economic conditions affect many other aspects. It is also important to take into consideration the difference between the weight of inheritance in handing down and strengthening social classes but also the fact that the discrimination that social classes suffer makes the difference between classes even stronger as well as hinders transformation. Moreover, capitalism is a system that foresees and reiterates social classes. We see that there are different social positions in our society and we believe that we should change our attitude and the social system accordingly: from a competitive to collaborative form of being together. We should bridge social division and bubbles, understanding people realities of different classes (sceiving poverty, empathy, solidarity)
(consumerism be integretad into social classes)

5/ Mental Health

We live in a time, in which is normal to talk about illnesses but not about the mental ones. We make a secret about our mental problems. If we open up about these problems, we are confronted with shameful comments and pitiful glares. Another point is, that the waiting times for professional help are very long and not very useful, when not fast given. What we need is more open minded people, more openly conversation about the mental health and most importantly a faster and easier way to get help. It would be a benefit for all of us, because every one of us can be affected of a mental sickness. We have to share awareness from a young age, especially in school. So we have a proper base of open minded people.

6/ Habits

Our current society structure and institutions encourage competition of selfishness among individuals and this prevents achieving equality in our society, because everyone is thinking about themselves and not what impact your actions and decisions might have on other people's lives. Looking to your left and right and trying to help others, if help is needed, would contribute to having a more compassionate, empathetic and diverse society. Equality will not be reached if everyone is having difficulties to share the things, or thoughts which are needed to create an equal society. In order to overcome social inequalities (especially regarding the aspect of selfishness), one needs to be more open minded and willing to maybe make sacrifices for the benefit of humanity as a whole. It doesn't make sense to constantly compare, as well as project, your own life to the life of others because every human is individual and not everyone has got the same requirements or conditions. Stop being unfair and stop judging people that do not represent, what is portrayed as "the norm".

Vision and aims

So what is our vision and what has to change? Inequalities and such unbalanced power dynamics on cost of others and our planet are not necessary. In our vision in the future all of us are more aware of our surroundings and where problems like racism and racist thinking patterns are coming from. Regarding social inequalities, we should reduce our consumption and know how to make a difference through our shopping decisions. In our vision we want to live in a world without racism and social inequalities and in order to get there we need to openly criticise these patterns. We need to give room for victims of racism and discrimination and support them in their struggles for emancipation now. Everyone will have a voice.

So how do we achieve this? One approach is the education about the history of racism in schools and universities. Also the education about how we are supporting the exploitation of people from other countries, through our decisions, for a more conscious shopping experience. We have to hear people out who endured racism or any kind of discrimination. An open mind-set is important. It's not their Job to educate us but if they still choose to speak up it's our task to listen and understand. We should protect minorities but only until they're no longer discriminated (otherwise a victimization circle is created). To reach a concrete equality, we should making laws and civil rights more applied, fulfilled and respected.

Education

Most of the time people do not realize that they are discriminatory, they fail to recognize the concrete forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, age and so on. We need to improve education about what discrimination is, what are its aspects, impacts or consequences. We need to create safe spaces (policies, rules, institutions eg school) for those who are non-conforming and can be bullied, discriminated as a step in between until we have overcome discrimination.

Sexism

Some parts of the problem of sexism could be fixed through the compassion that is currently missing. If we would all be more empathetic and understand a lot of issues would kind of fix themselves. It also needs to be clear that there is no influence from outside. For example, certain religious institutions and conservative parts of our societies (including politicians) are having a big influence on a lot of non-straight and non-cis people. They are telling them that what they feel is wrong and "curable". This is why a lot of people are still stuck in the closed. They are afraid of being themselves. In a world where minorities are living in fear it is important to protect them so they don't suffer even more. But in an ideal world no one should have to fear to be whom they are. We should stop comparing between different individuals. There is no form of way to live better or worse. All gender-related social norms should be destroyed so everyone could feel comfortable.

5 Food production

Description of the situation

Our planet is facing the limits of its planetary boundaries. We already exceed the nitrogen and phosphorus loading by using chemical fertilizer. The amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is rising and has already crossed the limit of our carrying capacity. (<https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>)

One of the major contributors to climate change, nitrogen and phosphorus loading, land conversion and biodiversity loss is the way we are producing and consuming food. Food production and consumption are emitting at least 26% of all the global greenhouse gasses. The meat industry is responsible for more than 20% of global CO₂ emissions, and yet meat is often more affordable than plant-based alternatives (“Beyond Meat” is an instance of this phenomenon). The effect of our food on our ecosystem is caused by conventional farming, soil compression, the planting of monocultures (e.g. palm trees in South Asia, or soy in the amazonas), overfishing, and usage of chemical fertilizer.

The way we produce and consume food causes social problems all over the world. In 2020 2.37 billion people are suffering from famine, because they are without food or are unable to eat a healthy balanced diet. (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal2>). But we as a society are potentially able to feed every human on earth while ensuring the ecological limits of our planet.

We are wasting around 1/3 of the food we could consume. 1.3 gigatons of consumable food is thrown away every year (<https://querfeld.bio/food-waste>). These happen through over-supply of food and wasteful consumption in the global north and through inefficient transport, burocratic political regulations, wrong storage and refrigeration conditions and extreme weather conditions. (<https://toogoodtogo.de/de/movement/knowledge/where-is-food-wasted>)

Furthermore, the way we eat and drink affects our health. Overweight, antibiotic resistance and other diseases are caused by the way we produce and consume food. In addition, health issues are caused by polluted water with particular matter and microplastic.

In Europe the food chain production is strictly regulated by laws concerning the quality of the products. But how are these regulations supposed to guarantee the health of consumers when the whole earth ecosystem is compromised by pollution, fine dust and microplastics (just to name a few examples)?

Industrial products are bad for our health as well, and yet they are the means by which most of the world population is fed.

Food consumption and production reflect as well the capitalistic structures in our system. Most of the food production is in the hands of only a few large corporations (such as Nestle, Coca-Cola, Unilever, and others). This fact has large environmental and social consequences. It fuels inequalities through the value chain by exploiting workers, regions and whole countries in the global south, reproducing inequalities along the lines of race, gender, or social class, and creating further divisions between the Global South and the Global North. Additionally, there are also problems stemming from the Common

European Agricultural Policies that are based on monocultures, industrial agriculture and factory farming and it is still heavily based on fossil fuels.

To sustain our world we have to be aware of the consequences of our food and start to change the way we produce and consume food.

Vision

- elimination of capitalistic structures within the food production and consumption
- food production should not reproduce social inequalities
- application of the principles of circular economy
- globalization of food production should be replaced by application of the system of food sovereignty
- elimination of hunger and securing healthy nutrition for everyone
- food production is environmentally friendly
- food production respects the rights of non-human animals
- quality over quantity

Aims and goals

1/ Political sphere/economy

As we mentioned in the description of the situation The food industry is a complicated and entangled issue. It affects and depends on many other spheres of our socio-economical-ecological crisis: transportation, discriminations, CO2 emissions, diseases... And the more one gets to know the topic, the harder it seems to be solvable. The current state of affairs is critical, but there still is hope: last years of scientific research in agriculture and in the food chain gave us the tools for being potentially able to give enough food to up to 10 billion people. Solutions are available, but they need to be adopted quickly and in a systematic and effective way.

2/ Economy of waste

The systematic aspect of this transition is particularly important, because, as already written before, the responsibility of the giant food waste we are witnessing is still often addressed to the individuals. In order to make this shift possible, we need to address the right responsible for the crisis: food lobbies and corporations. Also, how are we individuals supposed to make right shopping choices when the information given on the food labels are often not clear or misleading? This issue needs a double way solution: i) labels need to be more informative about the origin of the products ii) people need to be more educated and informed about the products they are consuming. This is particularly true for what concerns the meat industry. Meat consumption is indeed a personal choice, but at the same time the culture of our society tends to incentivise meat consumption through advertisements and cheap meat-

based products. We address the adoption of a circular-economic model as a possible solution to this problem, in what follows we'll try to advance some proposals to make such a shift possible.

3/ Effects on humankind

For what concerns the presence of dangerous substances in our food, the solution must come from the sectors responsible for the presence of these substances in water and soil. The health of all of the world population should be one of our main concerns, that's why we need to change our diet-habits: mostly plant-based alimentation is good not only for our planet, but also for our physical well-being in reducing chronic diseases such as high blood pressure and obesity.

We propose an alternative model of food production based on a "prosuming" model: this view yields a model in which production and consumption happen at a more local and individual level, through auto-production of food and vegetable gardens. Today's technologies are able to help us in this task, with smart cultivation techniques such as vertical gardens, hydroponic cultivations and permaculture, which are adoptable also in cities. Last but not least, a prosuming plant-based diet would make less use of monoculture and through that help us in preventing higher levels of antibiotic resistance, which is instead extremely stimulated by monocultures and animal farming.

4/ Inequalities among the food chain

We already saw how the food chain production is also responsible for social discriminations. We must be able to guarantee equal quantity and quality of the products we consume for all humankind. This goal could be facilitated by the adoption of a different consuming model, focused on local production and countries' economic auto-determination. This won't be possible until we adopt a different economic model based on a circular consumption model (compost, plant-treatment implant and biogas structures). A local-centered production process would also have beneficial downfalls on the enslaved condition of millions of people - and also whole countries - which are exploited to cultivate and harvest the food we eat. This proposal would also make it possible for many people to save a lot of money during the buying process of groceries, letting the poorest people have access to healthy and high-quality products.

5/ Ecological crisis

The current food-production model is not even sustainable from an ecological point of view. We need to reconsider our eating habits not only for ethical and social reasons, but also for being able to guarantee a desirable future on this planet. Getting rid of monocultures by means of a plant-based circular-prosumption model would allow us to prevent the giant loss of biodiversity we are facing now, and it is by now sufficiently clear how fundamental the life of other species is in order to sustain our lives as well. In recent years we assisted the raising of a lot of start-ups, organizations and companies committed in assuring the quality and sustainability of the products they sell (the slow food movement is just one among many other instances). These proposals need to be more adopted and promoted, because they are a way to benefit from a high standard of quality in the food we eat without causing such irreversible ecological consequences.

Still, these initiatives are often able to offer their products at higher prices, becoming a luxury that most of the population cannot afford. We need to redefine our priorities and encourage such companies, in order to make such products affordable for everyone. In recent years a great development of our feeding capacity came by alternative ways of assumption of proteins, through insect-based products, algae cultivation and artificial meat production.

These proposals are still in a germinal and experimental phase, but we look at them as a valid candidate in fighting climate change and ensuring basic food necessities to all humankind. Furthermore we propose the following:

- support of alternatives forms of food production, such as permaculture, regenerative agriculture, agroforestry, vertical farming etc.
- support to small farmers, local fisheries and local/regional modes of food production and distribution (e.g. community supported agriculture) and promotion of short supply chains
- reduction of waste through for example zero-waste stores, alternative ways of packaging (e.g. bioplastic), recycling/downcycling and others
- reduction of meat consumption (e.g. through tax incentives of better alternatives)
- application of the principles of slow food
- consumers education
- building a global food sovereignty movement

6 Transport

Description of the situation

Currently, our mobility in cities and villages is quite limited. We depend on cars a lot in our everyday life, due to a bad and expensive public transport system. There are not enough bicycle roads existing in European cities (and villages). Poor developed train connections make it hard to get from a smaller town to a bigger city. Train tickets themselves are really expensive and not affordable for everyone. The journey by train takes also a lot of time, so a majority of people prefer to travel by plane. Even bus lines from cities to villages within cities are coming on an irregular basis and make it hard to travel even with small distances. At the moment a lot of money goes into the production of electric cars, as a climate friendly alternative to get to places. But as it turns out they are actually not that sustainable and their production and disposal produces a lot of greenhouse gasses.

Vision and aims

In our vision, our mobility in the future will be much improved. There will be more travelling with bikes and less cars on the road. Due to this change we will have less emissions in the air and cities will come cleaner. As well train and bus tickets will be affordable for everyone. Our public transport system will be well developed and you will get to places even by train quite fast. During the holidays people will consider to travel places that don't demand a long journey by plane. Through that we also support local businesses more. The big question is how do we get there? It is quite simple actually. We need more European bicycle roads to encourage people to cross small distances by bike. We can't have as many cars using as we do at the moment. The emissions produced by cars are too high. A speed limit will be necessary. Roads will be safer that way. Also supporting the idea of car sharing more, since electric cars are not a real alternative yet. It is mandatory to improve our public transport system, to let people see the benefits from it. So a development of train and bus routes is needed. A possible way to achieve less holiday travelling and international in general by plane might be a higher plane ticket price. Regarding domestic traveling we aim to regulate it. It would get people to start thinking if maybe there are better alternatives to travel.

Our public space should be more inclusive so that children and people with disabilities can move freely.

Conclusion

We the participants acknowledge that the next step to take is action. Aiming for a better world, visualizing alternative methods but finally giving a proper focus on change and hope for us to be active.