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Committee N°.1 Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Security and Defense (AFET/SEDE)

Topic: The question of the internal and external security of the European Union.

The EU's external and internal security are increasingly intertwined, and it is expected to increase further in the coming years. Although the situation in Europe has been stable and secure for decades, the continent is facing increasing security challenges as mentioned hereunder:

- **We are dealing with an increasingly assertive (military) attitude from Russia and China. How should we respond to this? What is the relation of the EU concerning NATO and defense? Should the European Union head for building its own military structures, or should it opt for the umbrella of the NATO?**
- **Many migrants and refugees still want to enter the EU? How can the EU establish refugee and asylum policies that address the diverse and conflicting attitudes in the member states? How should the issue of border control be handled? How can the EU assure that the burden-sharing of refugee and asylum seekers amongst Member States is guaranteed? How could the European Union keep the numbers of asylum applications in its countries manageable, without violating the human rights of incoming refugees?**
- **To avoid further terrorist attacks or the increasing cyber and hybrid threats, what actions should we take?**

In short, how can the EU ensure its security at the EU borders and at the same time for all EU citizens? What actions should be taken to cope with this wide range of threats?

Committee N°2 Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Topic: The issue of discrimination based on gender identity and sexuality.

American cleric Steven Anderson has been preaching the death penalty for gays and lesbians for years. According to him, the abbreviation LG(H)BT stands for “Led God Burn Them”. This is a very extreme view, but tolerance towards the LGBT+ community is not self-evident in the European Union either.

In many EU Member States, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people run the risk of discrimination and harassment on a daily basis. Prejudices and misconceptions about homosexuality and transgender people further fuel intolerant attitudes and behaviour towards this community.

- **How should the European Union react to the growing awareness of sexual harassment?**
- **Should any measures be taken to enhance the acceptance of the LGBT community? Which measures?**
- **Should education follow this line of thought? Is it preferable or dangerous to teach about LGBT?**
- **Should signs indicating sex and gender be ‘neutralized’?**
- **What can be done to promote a common European point of view?**
- **Should European countries that do not embrace LGBT policies be condemned or even penalized? Could a European country have its own policy towards LGBT?**
- **What is the role of the media concerning this issue?**

Committee No. 3 Culture and Education.

Topic: The Prevention of Radicalisation.

The European Union has recently expressed concern regarding radicalisation. It is necessary to prevent this phenomenon and its various forms in European society. The specific role of education and the intercultural dialogue in paving the way to mutual understanding should be emphasized.

- **Who is affected by radicalisation? What is the risk of radicalisation? What contributes to radicalisation? How can radicalisation be prevented by the European Union? Why is it important to prevent radicalisation? Which legislation should be implemented to prevent radicalisation?**

- **What role should schools play regarding radicalisation? Which strategies should be implemented by the schools? How can governments support schools and teachers in preventing/countering violent extremism?**
- **What should be the role of Media and the Internet in countering hate speech and promoting intercultural dialogue?**
- **In the light of unprecedented migration rates, what should be done to prevent cultural and territorial separation?**
- **In the fight against terrorism, how could the underlying factors of radicalisation be addressed; how should the culture of inclusion and tolerance be promoted through education?**

Committee No.4 – Environment, Public Health, Food Safety

Topic: Mental Health

Already prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state of the population's mental health was a cause for concern. Mental health is influenced by many factors, including genetic predisposition, socio-economic background, adverse childhood experiences, chronic medical conditions or abuse of alcohol or drugs. Therefore, mental health and well-being are interlinked issues that are affected by policies and actions in a range of sectors, including education, health, employment, social inclusion, and efforts to tackle poverty. This relationship is reciprocal: without adequate mental health prevention, support and treatment, the risks of poorer education or unemployment increase. To be mentally healthy means being capable of self-realisation, being at ease when forming the relationships with other people, to contribute to life in the community and being productive at work. A mentally healthy individual is also able to overcome normal tensions, sorrows, and life setbacks. The total costs of mental ill health are estimated at more than 4% of GDP (more than EUR 600 billion) across the 28 EU countries.

- **Who is affected by mental health problems? What contributes to it? How has the pandemic situation affected mental health disorders?**
- **What actions can be taken by e.g., schools, universities, businesses, cultural organizations, scientific communities and families to make information accessible about proper nutrition, and to increase awareness within the European population?**
- **Considering the European Union's power related to health issues, could it do more to ensure that progress is being made in combating the problem? Are the European Institutions approaching it in an effective way? What policies, instruments and initiatives at EU level are urgently needed to support mental health problems?**
- **Which European country has the best mental health? Why? How do European countries treat depression and anxiety problems? Which are the main barriers in accessing mental health treatment? Do the public healthcare systems of the different European countries even cover psychological treatment?**
- **How can governments support schools and teachers in preventing mental health problems?**

Committee N°5 Employment and Social Affairs

Topic: Young unemployment in Europe.

During the aftermath of the global 2008 financial crisis, youth unemployment went up from 16.0% in 2008 to a peak of 24.4% in 2013. The figures went down dramatically with record lows of 14.9% just before the COVID-19 pandemic hit. However, youth unemployment always remained more than twice as high as general unemployment. A stable labour market integration started to take longer, with many job-to-job transitions and spells of precarious work.

Vulnerable groups, such as youth of racial and ethnic minorities or young people with disabilities, continued to be disadvantaged throughout this period. Youth inactivity did not decrease nearly as much as youth unemployment. If the new economic downturn triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic is to be overturned, youth employment should be stepped up.

- **Why is youth unemployment so high and different across countries? Why is youth unemployment a problem?**
- **What are the main causes and consequences of youth unemployment?**
- **What measures should the EU take to prevent youth unemployment? Why is it so important to address youth employment specifically? How can we solve the problem of unemployment?**
- **What policies, instruments and initiatives at the EU level are necessary to support employment? Which main actions must be taken to end this problem? How should the European Union react to the rise of this situation?**
- **How effective are the policy measures adopted by the European countries? Are they working?**
- **Should the EU create a common legislation to face this problem? Are the European Institutions approaching it in an effective way?**

Committee N°6 Commission Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)

Topic: The question on the Future of the European Project.

After Brexit, the EU is set on finding a new course. The European Commission tries to bring the EU closer to its citizens. A lot of citizens think the EU is far removed from their own personal lives. This brings about feelings of Euroscepticism. The EU faces a challenging future where growing nationalism may pose a threat to European integration. Current Commission president Ursula von der Leyen presided the *Conference on the Future of Europe*, held upon March 10, 2021, where the democratic functioning of the EU and its European priorities were to be focused upon.

President **von der Leyen** said: *"Today we are inviting all Europeans to speak up. To say what Europe, they want to live in, to shape it and join forces to help us build it. Citizens' expectations are clear: they want to have their say on the future of Europe, on matters which affect their lives. Our promise today is equally clear: we will listen. And then, we will act."*

President Sassoli said: *"Today marks a new start for the European Union and for all European citizens. The Conference on the future of Europe will be a unique opportunity for all European*

citizens and our civil society to shape Europe's future, a common project for a functioning European democracy. We call on all of you to come forward to participate with your voice to building what will be tomorrow's Europe, what will be YOUR Europe."

- **Where do you see possibilities for a Future of Europe? More specifically a better Europe for the young people?**
- **Which issues/problems should be tackled first? Which matters affect your life and should be dealt with primarily on a European level?**
- **Which Europe would you like to live in? What is your tomorrow's Europe?**
- **How should European democracy evolve? In which way should the European Union adapt or re-design itself to overcome the gap between European decision-making and its citizens? In other words, how can the European Union regain its legitimacy?**
- **Are the institutions of the EU themselves subject to change?**

Committee N°7 Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

Topic: The issue on the circulation of recyclable waste.

Since 1950, the use of plastic in the global production chain has grown exponentially for both the products themselves and their packaging. About 30% of the total plastic production in the EU is recycled; half of this is exported outside the EU for recycling. Yet less and less can be counted on other countries when it comes to processing waste. Commonly used measures to recycle plastic as effectively as possible are, for example, an internal market for secondary raw materials and lowering VAT on products made of recyclable plastic.

- **How is waste management organised in your state? Is there a global European initiative?**
- **How can manufacturers and Member States, among others, be encouraged to recycle, so that exports for waste processing are minimized, thus not only limiting the environmental impact but also stimulating circular economy?**
- **What can the EU do through international trade policy to improve waste management?**

Committee N°8 Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)

Topic: The issue of nuclear energy as an alternative in the energy transition.

The European Union has set ambitious climate targets. These targets have a major impact on the energy production of the EU Member States. The use of oil and coal will decrease, so other forms of energy production must be sought. Nuclear energy is a controversial alternative; nuclear power plants are expensive to construct and produce radioactive waste. In addition, uranium, an important raw material for nuclear energy production, must be imported. Accidents such as Chernobyl and Fukushima can have disastrous consequences. However, there are also major advantages, such as low CO₂ emissions and a stable, high-energy yield. In 2011,

Germany closed all its nuclear power stations, and in several countries, there are critical voices about this form of energy production. But even climate activists are divided. There are also very positive voices: some experts say that nuclear energy is the future. After all, nuclear energy has a substantially higher yield than all wind farms that have been built to date.

- **Should nuclear energy be promoted in the EU or not? Should nuclear power be banned from European soil?**
- **Do the EU Member States want to avoid any risk of a nuclear disaster, or do they consider the risk low enough?**
- **To what extent should Member States be able to call on European financial support for building expensive nuclear reactors?**
- **What can we do to promote sustainable development? Is it possible to pursue economic development without endangering the planet? How can the EU help low-income economies and fast-growing countries with their climate policy?**
- **What policy should the European Union adopt on the environment and renewable energy? What are the consequences of a changing climate for EU citizens?**
- **Should the EU subsidize the development, production, and retail of green technologies?**
- **What can we do to change people's attitudes for a better climate? Is climate change an individual (i.e., changing people's attitudes) or a collective (i.e., strong European policy) problem?**