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# **YOUTH DIALOGUE**

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**ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	2
About the Youth Dialogue.....	2
Opening of the Event .....	2
Questions and Answers .....	3
Sustainable production and economic system change .....	3
Food .....	5
Fashion.....	7
Governance, Communication and next steps.....	8
Final remark from EVP Timmermans .....	10
Final remark from European Youth Forum .....	10
Information on Follow Up.....	11
Annex 1 Biographies of Participants .....	12

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarises the discussions held at the occasion of the European Climate Pact Youth Dialogue on Sustainable Consumption held on May 7, 2022 between Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, and 14 young European Climate Pact Ambassadors.

## ABOUT THE YOUTH DIALOGUE

The European Climate Pact was launched by the European Commission in December 2020. The Climate Pact is a lively online space to share information, debate and act on the climate crisis. It is a space for citizens, businesses, civil society organisations and local governments to connect and work together on the threats of climate change and opportunities for climate action. The Climate Pact builds on the principle that it should be shaped by people. A broad societal engagement on climate and the environment is key to a sustainable Europe and the success of the European Green Deal.

The Climate Pact Youth Dialogue was held in the context of the European Year of Youth - an opportunity to bring the needs and fears of young people to the forefront of European policy. 14 young Climate Pact Ambassadors and one representative from the [European Youth Forum](#) participated in the dialogue with the EVP Timmermans. The event was moderated by Biliana Sirakova, Coordinator of the European Year of Youth (see full list of attendees in Annex 1). The event was also livestreamed, allowing for participants across Europe to participate and ask questions virtually.

The topics and the agenda for the meeting were jointly created by the young Climate Pact Ambassadors, the Youth task Force of the European Climate Pact and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA):

- Sustainable production and economic system change
- Energy
- Food
- Fashion
- Governance, Communication and Next Steps

There was a two-day programme in Brussels organised for the participants of the youth policy dialogue during which the participants met with staff from DG CLIMA to learn about and discuss EU climate policy. In addition, they were invited to the European Commission Visitors' Centre.

## OPENING OF THE EVENT

**Biliana Sirakova** welcomed the participants and shared information about the European Year of Youth and that this is one of several youth dialogues being held this year. As a part of the European Year of Youth, all European Commissioners are to host at least one youth dialogue during 2022.

**EVP Timmermans** kick-started the conversation by emphasising that there is a need to rediscover the beauty of not wasting and using things longer. He pointed out that there is a lot to learn from older generations, who bought things for a lifetime. With this mentality, sustainable consumption will not necessarily mean to consume less or have a negative impact on one's life.

The event then turned to the topical segments, where each young Climate Pact Ambassador got to ask a question to EVP Timmermans and to hear his reply. In addition, questions from the online audience were answered under each topic segment.

# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

## SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM CHANGE

**Maria Teresa Parreira** from Portugal pointed out that the European Commission's Circular Economy Action Plan (2020) states that "Scaling up the circular economy from front-runners to the mainstream economic players will make a decisive contribution to achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and decoupling economic growth from resource use, while ensuring the long-term competitiveness of the EU and leaving no one behind". Building on this, she asked how the EU is planning to reach circularity without trading-off competitiveness, in a market that is ultimately tailored towards linearity in economics and consumption? How can the EU "swim against the tide" of linearity while staying afloat, and perhaps even pushing other big economic players towards circularity practices?

**Zuzanna Borowska** from Poland shared that she deeply believes that in order to achieve a true economic system change, we need all voices and all persons on board. She stated that it is easy to notice that European people are very creative - there are plenty of innovative initiatives developed by citizens, communities, organisations, and especially young people that could revolutionise the system. However, in her view they are not implemented on a larger scale, and often don't receive enough institutional support or recognition. She therefore asked the question to EVP Timmermans on how the EU can support such initiatives more effectively, and how the EU can improve stakeholder engagement specifically in dealing with the issues of sustainable consumption and production.

**Lidia Martin** from Spain wanted to see that inclusivity should always be a guiding principle of sustainability. She highlighted that this is something we clearly see on the tagline of the UN's SDGs (leave no one behind), and that of the EU's own Just Transition Mechanism (making sure no one is left behind). She pointed out that products marketed as sustainable do tend to be more expensive than other goods. Thus, she asked EVP Timmermans: how do we transfer this principle of inclusivity in an effective way into the area of consumer goods to make sure that everyone can participate in the green transition, and vulnerable socio-economic groups are never left behind? How do we make sure to leave no-one behind when obliging companies to be greener and more ethical?

**Yohana Fontenla** from Portugal focused her question on waste. She stated that in the EU, around 88 million tonnes of food waste are generated annually, with associated costs estimated at 143 billion euros. While an estimated 20% of the total food produced is lost or wasted, 33 million people cannot afford a quality meal every second day. She argued that waste is clearly key in terms of sustainable production, that there are so many types of waste, and that we keep creating surplus and producing more than we need. Thus, she asked what the EU does in terms of policies, so we are able to shift from waste management to waste prevention, and how industries and consumers can help this shift.

**EVP Timmermans** started off by condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and clearly stated that the EU stands in solidarity with Ukraine. He highlighted that the war clearly shows us the need to stand up for our values, as well as the need to accelerate the clean energy transition to strengthen the energy sovereignty of the EU. He argued that renewable energy is good for the climate, geopolitics and for our wallets. He also pointed out that being more energy efficient in everyday life will reduce our dependency on Russian oil and gas.

EVP Timmermans then moved on to the topic of plastic, saying that it's a common task to make industry more interested in sustainable options, but also to convince consumers to choose less and more sustainable plastic. He stated that the EU can set the rules and support innovation to enable the circular economy and especially highlighted the [second phase of the circular action](#) plan that was recently announced.

He then pointed out the need to change the culture, not to think of things as status symbols and move towards services instead of buying. He argued this is also a way to leave no one behind. He took the example of an electric car: if you buy one, it will be expensive and probably outdated within a short timeframe. However, if you lease a car, this gives incentives for the companies to offer more lasting, and in the end, also more affordable services.

Continuing on the topic of leaving no one behind, he argued that it is key to bring the cost of energy and food down. He also clearly stated that there is no lack of food in Europe, however, a lot of land in the EU is used to produce animal feed instead of food for people. He also argued food production should be moved closer to where people live to reduce transportation costs and the environmental footprint. He stated that the way we do agriculture today is causing biodiversity loss.

**Maria Teresa Parreira** asked why EVP Timmermans is putting so much responsibility on citizens and asked if Corporate Sustainable Responsibility was not more important. To this, **EVP Timmermans** answered that the responsibility is on all our shoulders, and that each citizen has a responsibility. However, he agreed that there is also a need to put pressure on companies. He pointed to new EU regulation that demands that companies produce repairable products as an example of how the EU is doing this. He concluded by emphasising the power of cultural change and that it happens because people like the participants in the dialogue lead that change.

## ENERGY

**Hlib Mikhno** from Ukraine started by sharing how his life has dramatically changed in the 43 days since he became a European Climate Pact Ambassador in Ukraine in early February, and was elaborating ideas with regard to sustainable consumption until the day this dialogue took place. He explained that he personally survived a Russian missile strike near his home in the north of Kyiv and became one of millions of Ukrainian refugees forced to flee their homes, cities and country. He reminded all that Russia started the war eight years ago and took the lives of thousands of Europeans, not only Ukrainians, but also at least 211 Dutch, British, Germans, Belgians and 87 representatives of other nations who were killed during the flight MH17 by Russian missile. He underscored that inhuman and reckless military aggression of Russia continues right now with bombings all across his country and total destruction of Mariupol, Kharkiv and other cities and villages in eastern and southern Ukraine. He argued that it is obvious that the European Commission and EVP Timmermans personally are doing a lot to support innocent Ukrainian people and to cut dependency on Russian fossil fuels, the export of which corresponds to the majority of the aggressor's budget revenues for its war machine. However, he stated that it is not enough. As a youth representative, he urged all EU Member States not to put business interests above human lives, and to make a real decision on the full package of sanctions against Russia, including oil, gas and coal immediately. He put it very clearly and stated that the consumption of energy resources from the aggressor is not sustainable at all, as it does not just compromise the ability of future generations, but literally threatens the existence of nations. Furthermore, he emphasised that it is undoubtedly high time to massively deploy renewable energy internationally to enhance energy

security, decentralise energy supply, empower citizens and local communities, as well as prevent the use of fossil fuel revenues in hurting human rights and freedom worldwide. He therefore asked if all EU Member States were ready to ban Russian fossil fuel imports today, and if the EU was ready to lead the process of energy transition in such a new geopolitical reality.

**Anar Ahmad-Zaha** from Slovakia and Azerbaijan referred to the recent decision by the EU to reduce the EU's dependency on Russian gas and accelerate its clean energy transition. He therefore asked if the EU was planning to speed up private businesses' transition to more sustainable consumption, and if the Commission planned to engage private business investments in renewable energy technologies.

**EVP Timmermans** shared his experience from living in both Russia, and his concerns about the developments in Russia during the past years. He also pointed out that Russia has been investing in disruption in the EU for a long time by spreading misinformation. He argued that Russian leadership is threatened by the EU and the world's commitment to becoming more sustainable, as this would threaten the Russian economy which is very invested in fossil fuels. He argued that it is key that we stick to our commitment to phase out fossil fuels. He answered Hlib Mikhno's question by explaining that not all EU MS are ready to ban Russian fossil fuel imports at this stage. He shared that he hoped that there would be an agreement in the 5<sup>th</sup> round of sanctions that at least bans the import of coal.

EVP Timmermans also referred to the need to decrease the use of fossil fuels, and the collaboration between the EU and the US on this. He also referred to 11 EU Member States who wrote a letter arguing for the need to speed up the work on the European Green Deal. However, some member states argue for the opposite. He also referred to a recent meeting with the Ukrainian Minister for Foreign Affairs on energy collaboration, from which there was an agreement to speed up the thinking on how to better integrate Ukraine into the future of EU energy. He pointed to the potential for biogas, solar and offshore wind in Ukraine. He argued that this was to be seen as a first step of what the EU means when we say Ukraine belongs to the European family.

The **online audience** asked what the biggest hurdles were that the Commission faced to support more sustainable consumption.

To this, **EVP Timmermans** answered: being able to balance short term and long-term perspectives and conveying the message that it is in the long-term interest of everyone to transition towards sustainability. This is not least true when it comes to energy prices, there is a need for short term solutions to ensure EU citizens can pay their energy bills. However there is crucially also a need for a long-term transition towards sustainable energy. In this regard, redistribution and respecting planetary boundaries is key.

## FOOD

**Nadia Paleari** from Italy Explained that she works to mobilise youth to foster awareness and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She highlighted the need to acknowledge that sustainability is a complex concept, that encompasses not only an environmental dimension, but also the social sphere and the economic sector. She argued that the food industry needs systemic change, and that the aim of the transition should be to convert the agri-food system so that those products that optimise their production footprint and promote a balanced, sustainable nutrition become the most appealing and convenient choice for consumers. She pointed out that

this is not the case currently. She asked if the EU can support this transition, either through informative labelling regulations, or food education initiatives, also taking also into consideration the current need for recovery after the pandemic's impact and the latest global issues.

**Morgan Janowicz Janowicz** from Poland started her intervention by highlighting that she believes it is ridiculous how far away we are from sustainability when we speak about agriculture, and that there is a need to transition to plant-based diets. Furthermore, she expressed solidarity with Ukraine and applauded Hlib Mikhno for being at the dialogue despite the ongoing war in his country. She then turned to express her disappointment to decision-makers for not taking more action on climate. She referred to an open letter she delivered before the dialogue, signed by over 80 civil society organisations and representatives from the scientific community, calling for the EU to adopt a carbon dioxide emission reduction target of 65 percent, instead of 55 percent. She then turned to argue that livestock production was lethal to the environment and asked when the EU would ban new factory farms and, ultimately, also ban existing factory farms that are the source of animal based products such as meat, dairy and eggs. She then asked when we would start concrete measures to educate and promote the transition towards ethical, just, and plant-based agriculture.

**Giacomo Pieretti** from Italy started off by thanking the European Climate Pact for convening the Dialogue and for creating an active community of more than 70 members that act as multipliers of EU Climate Pact principles. He then highlighted the need to overcome the dichotomy between consumer and producer, shortening the distance between the two. He argued that citizens should be fully aware of the quality and nutritional aspects of food, and the value that is behind the price is not the parameter that should be used to choose foodstuff. He then asked what was going on at EU level to support Community Supported Agriculture and the food system. And in terms of the transition to such a food system, what the role of youth associations can be to support change.

**Nuno M. Barracha Gaspar** from Portugal started by thanking EVP Timmermans and his team for the dialogue, stating that the participants were honoured to take part in the change that starts in the room of the dialogue, but that hopefully will spread across Europe. Then turning to the question, Nuno asked how the European Union was guaranteeing that fisheries are sustainable, and how this information reaches consumers.

**EVP Timmermans** agreed with Nadia Paleari that sustainability is a complex concept, which has to be simplified to allow for consumers to make informed decisions. He argued that energy labels have been successful in informing citizens in a simple way. However, he also highlighted that there is a risk of greenwashing and false labelling. He argued it is key to create labelling that can be certified and easily understood.

EVP Timmermans argued that at the heart of the issue is the income of farmers. He underlined that it was key to ensure that farmers have a decent income and economic security, that does not rely on them selling more consumer food products. He argued this would allow for them to work with more sustainable ways of farming. He argued that we all need to take responsibility for farmers being able to preserve nature. Furthermore, he explained that by producing closer to the consumer, it becomes easier to trace back the food to the production. He argued that we are not currently paying a fair price for food. He did not see striving for cheaper food production as the solution, but rather making sure that people can afford to pay the price of food. He argued this could be done by compensating some consumer groups and removing taxes from certain food types.

EVP Timmermans highlighted the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) as a key tool. He then argued he would like to see much more being done from the EU in terms of making agriculture more sustainable and promised the participants that he would continue to push this agenda as much as he could. However, he noted that the decision is not his, but lies with the European Member States.

EVP Timmermans turned to Giacomo and argued that the current transition to sustainability was comparable with the first industrial revolution. Building on this, he argued that it was key to learn from history and not make the same mistakes again, meaning that it was key to ensure an inclusive transition that does not lead to revolutions or wars. He stated that the young people of today would live in the middle of this transition.

He then turned to Morgan Janowicz and argued that the best way to allow change to happen is not by telling people what to eat, but to inform them about the consequences of their choices. Furthermore, he argued that food choices were a very intimate question, and must thus be dealt with carefully.

Turning to Nuno he argued that fish stock recovers very quickly, so if we have the political will a real change can be done to turn fisheries more sustainable. However, he argued that the political will is not there currently. Furthermore, he argued that just like agriculture, fisheries is yet another sector that there are some big actors making a huge amount of money while the fishermen are usually relatively poor.

**Nadia Paleari** from Italy asked a follow up question. She argued that regulation is key, but we also must empower consumers with tools to propel the change. She underscored that this is not only communication, but also education and information. **EVP Timmermans** agreed with Nadia Paleari, he argued that behavioural change is powerful when it comes through children. For example, through schools. However, he regretted that some would argue that educating children about sustainability is imposing an ideology on children. He argued that this is one major fight of our time, to clarify the difference between science and ideology and strengthen critical thinking.

**Morgan Janowicz** from Poland clarified that her intervention was not about telling people what to eat, but to critique the billions in subsidies going from the European Commission to the agricultural sector. To this, **EVP Timmermans** agreed with her fundamental analysis. He stated that we were using more and more land, not least for animal production, with the argument of increasing food security. However, he argued that he understood people were worried, but reassured her that the European food security was not threatened.

The **online audience** argued that EU Member states keep privatising and de-subsidizing green transport, like trains, and asked if there were any plans to encourage them to invest more in these modes of transport. **EVP Timmermans** replied that there were such plans. He argued that most EU Member states did invest public money into train infrastructure. Furthermore, he argued that there was a need to better coordinate trains at EU level and to bring back night trains. Furthermore, he argued there was a need to make flight tickets have a price that also reflects their cost for the planet.

## FASHION

**Dunja Trifunović** from Serbia started by expressing appreciation for the co-creation process being conducted ahead of the dialogue and explained that it had made her learn about different new topics, which had led her to ask about fashion, which she did not know much about before the co-



creation process. Furthermore, she shared that the process had made her realise that the green transition wasn't just a transition to the circular economy, but firstly a transition in our values and how we decide to live our lives. She hoped the dialogue would bring change in the lives of the participants. Furthermore, she expressed her hopes of Serbia joining the European Union. She then underscored that the EU Green Deal includes sustainable textiles as an objective, she stated that currently 55% of the cotton we use is imported from outside of the borders of the European Union. Taking into account that the transition is global, she asked, how can we ensure that sustainable breeding and production practices are also being implemented outside of the European Union and transparency in raw material imports data?

**EVP Timmermans** answered that the European Commission was working very closely with the garment industry, and agreed that it was key to truthfully understand where fabrics are made and what chemicals are used. He agreed with Dunja Trifunović that cotton should be traceable from the very origin. He then turned to another part of the problem, that only 10 percent of garments are being recycled. He argued that we have to recycle and reuse garments to a high extent and that the fashion industry has to work more with this. Dunja Trifunović agreed with the comment from EVP Timmermans, and added that it was also key to produce clothes that are more recyclable from the start.

The **online audience** asked if we could not have an import tax on fast fashion from abroad, to make the sustainable option cheaper.

**EVP Timmermans** stated that he does not think a tax would be the way forward. He instead argued that the EU should demand more from all producers. Furthermore, he argued that trade policy needs to change, in order to not only put requirements on the end products, but also on the production source.

## GOVERNANCE, COMMUNICATION AND NEXT STEPS

**Jelena Mugosa** from Montenegro and Slovenia pointed out that the EU digital advertising market was projected to reach around 90 billion euros in 2022. She argued that while advertising plays a vital role in raising awareness, informing and educating consumers, it appears to drive overconsumption and unsustainable practices. She argued it was built on tools and techniques to attract, manipulate and maintain consumer engagement and encourage unsustainable behaviour patterns. She asked if the EU could utilize digital marketing to support sustainable consumption and if yes, how? Further, she asked if it was possible through collaboration with the platforms where digital advertising is growing. She then asked if measures could be expected from the EU that aim to affect consumer choice and ultimately reduce the consumption of unsustainable products. As examples, she pointed to a ban on digital advertising for car, flight, and ocean vacations, or measures to include sustainability scores/labels in digital advertising

**Suzanne Groenewoud** from the Netherlands stressed the need for and importance of European youth to be included in EU decision-making. She argued that it was crucial for youth to be included because they are more and more involved in climate change, they have the power to facilitate the green transition and to come up with innovative solutions. Moreover, she pointed out that youth also use their voices to lobby and advocate for greener and environmentally friendly solutions and policies at regional, national, and EU-level. She shared that only 9% of youth are very confident the

world will act quickly enough to address climate change. She also underscored that youth is already growing up with increasing environmental challenges that impact their lives and will continue to influence future generations. Building on this, she asked how European youth could be included in the EU decision-making process in a more meaningful and more long-lasting way. She shared the views of Generation Climate Europe, which are that youth engagement in EU decision-making should be meaningful, in three ways:

1. Diverse –there is a need for different young people, particularly from marginalised and disadvantaged communities to be included, but also youth from candidate countries.
2. Structured –it should be embedded into decision-making processes, not be dependent on political will or friendly stakeholders, but become a standard practice when making decisions on e.g. climate and environmental issues.
3. Regular –it should not be a one-time thing, it should happen on a regular basis, and it is important to build further upon what has been done. In this way, she argued that the efforts to include youth should not just be a one-time public event, but it should be regular, meaningful and everything should be done in consultation with youth.

**Fotios Kotzakioulafis** from Greece asked how EVP Timmermans thought that the EU could support better communication to ensure that citizens, and young people, are more aware of the environmental impact of their consumer choices and what he could do to strengthen the role of Climate Pact Ambassadors to achieve that. He also expressed a will to keep working with everyone participating in the dialogue.

EVP Timmermans replied by agreeing that advertising is a sector that billions have been spent on, a lot of psychological research goes into the topic, and it is not always promoting sustainable choices. He referred to when smoking was banned in restaurants and the huge critique it got at that point, and how no one seems to miss it anymore. He argued that this gives us hope for sustainability as well. He argued that the best way to communicate is to never change your key message, but to adapt it to the audience without underestimating the audience.

He then turned to argue that it is a challenge to reach all EU citizens on the topic of climate change, to reach those that are not already engaged in the topic or EU policy. He pointed out that he often engages in citizens' dialogues, however, he was concerned that it was always the same type of people who attended those dialogues. He argued there was a need to reach out of the bubble of people already interested in climate change and EU policy. He took the example of a collaboration between the EU and UEFA on the European Green Deal as one way of reaching people outside of this bubble.

EVP Timmermans shared that he was worried that people tend to shy away from dialogues with people of different opinions. He argued that it was key to listen and discuss with each other. He shared one principle which is key to him – never to dismiss someone, argue against but never dismiss. He also argued that in a democracy it is not only about following the opinion of the majority, but also to listen to and care for minorities. He called to the participants to promote critical thinking as much as possible. He argued that this was the only way to advance society.

He turned to Suzanne Groenewoud and argued that the voice of youth does not only have to be heard, but also have an impact. He argued that decision-makers must have the courage to listen to youth and act upon the things suggested by citizens, even if they might not like it themselves. He

suggested that a list of policy preferences might be a good way to influence policymakers, then the policymakers can act upon some of the proposals and explain why they do not act upon others.

## FINAL REMARK FROM EVP TIMMERMANS

**EVP Timmermans** explained that he had made a promise to speak to youth organisations every day at the COP26 climate conference, and that he intended to keep that promise also at COP27. He suggested that a next step would be to get youth representatives into the negotiation rooms and not only involved in the margins. However, he shared that he was not sure how we would get there.

EVP Timmermans stated that what he could offer the participants in terms of follow up is that he would report back on what he has done with the comments that were shared. He shared his hope to be able to use the format of this dialogue regularly, and that he could then report what has changed and what hasn't since the last dialogue, as well as what he himself has been able to influence and what he has not. The participants could do the same in return.

He also underscored the value of being engaged on a national level. He pointed to the opportunity to join political parties to influence policy. He pointed to the Fridays for future movement, as an example of the change that can happen if you get collectively organised.

## FINAL REMARK FROM EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM

**Silja Markkula** from the European Youth Forum explained that the Forum is the largest platform of youth organisation across the world and that their task is to bring the voice of young people to the table, regardless of policy area.

She referred to the intervention from Suzanne Groenewoud on youth engagement, and from EVP Timmermans on the need for the policy making discussion to change.

She pointed out that youth organisations speaking from the margins were hoping to be heard and actions to follow up. She also shared the harassment that youth were facing as a consequence of speaking up.

She pointed to a good practice that some EU member states were doing: a youth impact assessment on policy. By bringing youth to the table and talking about improving youth consequences, or to minimise the bad consequences a policy might have on youth. She argued that would be a way to decolonise the future of youth.

She pointed out that the EU's material footprint is twice as much as what can be considered sustainable, and argued that this is not addressed sufficiently in the European Green Deal. She called for limits and binding targets and for the inclusion of a limit of the EU's material footprint.

In the end, she asked EVP Timmermans to share how the dialogue would be followed up.

## INFORMATION ON FOLLOW UP

This dialogue was the first of a series of dialogues with European Commissioners under the umbrella of the [European Year of Youth](#). The dialogues will be on different topics and with other participants, however they will all strive to put youth at the heart and centre of EU Policy.

The objectives of this dialogue were to open and hold **space for discussion** between young EU citizens and the European Commission. Listen to the ideas and proposals from young European Climate Pact Ambassadors. Furthermore, it aimed to **create and reinforce connections** between youth activists at an EU level and **raise awareness of laws and activities on the EU level** through the Climate Pact and how they promote sustainable consumption.

One follow-up to the dialogue is this report summarising views expressed, questions asked and answers provided. The report is being shared with all participants of the dialogue, on the European Climate Pact website, as well as with those working on topics related to sustainable consumption within the European Commission.

Another follow-up of the event was an evaluation meeting held with the participants straight after the dialogue. In addition to this meeting, DG CLIMA is planning to organise a virtual meeting for the participants of the dialogue in June to hear what actions the dialogue has inspired among them.

The method used to organise this dialogue is also being shared to inspire other similar initiatives from the European Commission and others. To enable this, a template of the method is to be published on the website of the European Climate Pact.

Another Youth Policy Dialogue with EVP Frans Timmermans is being planned for autumn 2022. The future dialogue will invite other participants in order to reach more young people across Europe. However, the dialogue will build on lessons learnt and views expressed during this dialogue.

## ANNEX 1 BIOGRAPHIES OF PARTICIPANTS



**Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans.** He is leading the European Commission's work on the European Green Deal as well as the climate portfolio.

**Maria Teresa Parreira** here! I am from Portugal where I graduated with a MScs in Biomedical Engineering (IST). Currently, I am a research engineer on Social Robotics at KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden). I am a member of Reboot (Associação Reboot), a Portuguese NGO focused on empowering individuals with reliable and accessible information. I have been an Ambassador since May 2021. I believe in the power of our generation as paradigm shifters. Let us be bold, assertive, but also better - tolerant, open-minded, and brave enough to discuss new ideas.



My name is **Fotios Kotzakioulafis** and I am from Thessaloniki, Greece. I am involved in several European and international think tanks and youth organisations, engaged in local politics and European lobbying, while also working in the public relations, human resources and communications sectors. Furthermore, I am a huge supporter of the European Union, which is why I really believe in diversity and unity, and the reason I want to connect with like-minded people with similar interests. I

have also participated in 3 Erasmus+ projects and 2 European Solidarity Corps programs, and in fact, the last one ended a few months ago when I was located in Iceland.

**Morgan Janowicz** is an advocate, Partnership Coordinator at Green REV Institute and Coordinator of Future Food 4 Climate coalition. She is an Activist for food system transition with a focus on connecting the dots between human rights, animal rights, and climate. Currently, she is a Student of Computer Science at the University of Portsmouth and Business Administration, International Business at TURKU AMK. Morgan is a Feminist and vegan from Poland.





I am **Yohana Fontenla**, raised in the Canary Islands, Spain, but now living in Lisbon, Portugal. Currently studying Economics and Politics and LSE and Business Leadership at Forward College. My studies in Business Leadership are based on a sustainable transition for business, as well as a more sustainable economy and society. I am a passionate advocate for climate change, who believes its impact on health, food security, safety, and education should be central to political action. I am a European Climate Pact Ambassador, and I have been collaborating with several social organisations in Spain and Portugal.

My name is **Hlib Mikhno**. I am from Kyiv, Ukraine. I am passionate about sustainable energy solutions that could accelerate the decarbonization process. I possess experiences in policy analysis, coordination of international cooperation, and project management in both public and private sectors. I strongly believe that renewable energies could enhance energy security, decentralise the energy supply, empower citizens and local communities, as well as prevent the use of fossil fuel revenues in hurting democracies worldwide.



I am **Lidia Martin**, Climate Pact Ambassador from Spain based in Sofia, Bulgaria. I am the founder of the blog Pretty Green Lily, which aims at raising awareness about issues such as sustainable fashion, responsible consumption, green politics and circularity in an accessible and light-hearted way. I also am part of the team of Youth 4 the Future, one of the winning projects of the Climate Pact Youth Challenge in the category of youth involvement in policy making. Currently, we are

working on our project and trying to make it a reality. I will soon graduate with my BA in International Politics while I work as a sustainability consultant.

My name is **Suzanne Groenewoud**, 23 years old, and from the Netherlands. I am currently based in Barcelona where I follow the second year of the Erasmus Mundus Master in European Politics and Society. I am representing Generation Climate Europe, the largest coalition of youth-led networks on climate and environmental issues at the European level. Within GCE, I am part of the Circular Economy working group focusing on textiles. Apart from GCE, I am also an active member of European Guanxi, a youth-led organisation with the objective to discuss and analyse EU-China relations. Looking forward to working together!





My name is **Zuzanna Borowska** (20 years old) and I come from Poland, but I'm currently studying Political Science at the University of Amsterdam. I'm the President of the Open Dialogues International Foundation and Founder of the Open Dialogues on Climate Change - a project aimed at organising inclusive dialogues on climate between different stakeholder groups in various countries of the world. If you want to learn, I've been active in the youth climate movement for more than 3 years

now and participated in many different local, national and international initiatives, I've also been representing youth in the UNFCCC process, for example during the COP25 & 26. Advocacy on the EU level is quite new for me, but I'm very happy and excited to join this community and work on meaningful youth engagement with all of you!

My name is **Giacomo Pieretti**. I am a 30 year old environmental engineer. I have joined the EU Climate Pact initiative on behalf of the Italian Youth Association for UNESCO (AIGU - Associazione Italiana Giovani per L'Unesco) since the starting date. In Italy, EU Climate Pact Ambassadors are organised in the EuCliPa.Italy community (please discover more: Chi siamo - EuCliPa Italy ) and in one year several joint projects have started. I like to exit from my comfort zone and face challenges, as climate change is one for all of us.



I'm **Nadia Paleari**, 27 years old, from Milan (Italy). I have a B.A and M.A in International Relations and Cultural Diplomacy and I have two major fields of interest: Branding & Digital Marketing, as well as International Relations & Sustainable Development. For these reasons I combined the two fields and in the last 5 years I focused my activity on Sustainable Development and Youth Empowerment, thus I worked closely with United Nations Youth entities (e.g. UNCTAD Youth and UNFCCC YOUNGO) and I

became Global Partnerships and Events Project Officer for the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth (SDSN Youth). I aim to bring young professionals to discuss and collaborate with institutions to find solutions for the challenges of our time (i.e. Climate action, equality and inclusion), with the ambition to further strengthen the role of Youth as the Leaders of tomorrow. My motto? The world needs dreamers, and the world needs doers. But above all, the world needs dreamers who do.



I am **Jelena Mugosa** and I am 26 years old. Born and raised in Montenegro, I continued my education in Turkey, completing my bachelor's degree in Communication Sciences. Afterwards, I moved to Slovenia and enrolled in the International Master's Programme in Business and Administration (IMB). Currently, I am completing my master's thesis on Sustainability Communication and working as a project manager in a sustainability communication agency. Last year,

I was certified as Sustainable Business Transformation Manager. I am interested in sustainable development, particularly corporate sustainability, and sustainable marketing. My career hopes are focused on supporting brands on their path toward sustainability transformation and driving change for a better society. I am thrilled to be a part of this initiative!

I am **Anar Ahmad-zada**. I am from Azerbaijan and currently living in Slovakia. I am working as a brand manager in the IT industry. Last ten years of my life I was lucky to experience a life in different countries and continents. I was working in many UN projects as for Climate Change as well as for Conflict Management projects. All this year's Sustainable Energy was an interest point for me on a personal basis. I was and still am always making research about the latest technology in that field and am in constant contact with companies around the globe that offer a better future.



I'm **Nuno M. Barracha Gaspar** and I'm from Portugal. I'm a European Climate Pact Ambassador since 2020 and I've been participating in many environmental related projects such as being a speaker in the student conference on adaptations to climate change, and participating in a youth assembly with the main topic being "Sustainable development: and now? What to do?" I participated in the youth parliament on the topic "SOS climate change – save the oceans". I also took

volunteering actions in my city related to climate change, such as enrolling in a project by the Sea Science Centre whose objective was to clean the coastal garbage. I'm highly motivated to participate in this dialogue because I really want to make a difference in EU policies to this huge topic, Sustainable Consumption.



My name is **Dunja Trifunović** , I am 18 years old, and I come from Belgrade, Serbia. It was the pollution of my city that led me to initiate action in my community and then beyond. My area of expertise is Agriculture, and I am currently Chair of the GCSAYN CYA program. Last year I represented Serbia at the Pre-COP26 summit, and this year I found myself in the role of a WWF educator. I also deal with the topic of environmental protection through journalism. I am currently working on an application project that encourages responsible and sustainable consumption through eco gaming. I look forward to future meetings!



**Silja Markkula**, president of the European Youth Forum. She is a passionate advocate for youth rights and supporting youth civil society to thrive across Europe, and has for the past decade engaged in various youth organisations to advance the rights of young people both in the EU, Council of Europe as well as the UN. She has a background in the Finnish National Youth Council Allianssi and the World Organization of the Scout Movement. She has a master's degree in social and cultural anthropology

from the University of Helsinki.

**Biliana Sirakova** is the EU Youth Coordinator, she has been appointed in order to reinforce the cross-sectorial cooperation and knowledge sharing in the field of youth amongst the European Commission services.

