



# Political Programme of the Young European Federalists Germany (JEF)

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## 1. Principles and Objectives [short version]

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Europe without borders – a democratic and transparent Union everyone understands. This has been the objective of the Young European Federalists ever since 1949. We call for the completion of the European peace project as the **United States of Europe**, which we will describe in this programme. We are highly unsatisfied that many important decisions are still not taken by the European Parliament in public debate, but behind closed doors by representatives of member state governments (intergovernmental decision-making). We want to give European citizens the opportunity to take action for their future by ensuring that the European elections have a direct impact on the political direction of the Union.

As JEF, we understand **democracy** within the United States of Europe as a real choice: between different lists of European parties (transnational lists) with European front-runners willing to be elected head of government and a political agenda for Europe as a whole. European democracy is complemented by elements of direct political participation of the citizens (European Citizens' Initiative).

Those political parties that win the European elections decide on revenues and spending, European laws and elect the government. Citizens mainly cast their vote based on substantial arguments rather than national background. Political decision-makers can be clearly identified and they can be voted out of office if necessary. There will be no legislative procedure that does not involve parliaments.

For JEF, **federalism** is the principle according to which the separation of powers is realized on different political levels and according to fair rules (vertical separation of powers). European integration started by conferring control over steel and coal production – instruments of power and warfare at the time – and gave us peace.

Today, we call for a separation of sovereignty between the Union, the member states and other political levels. The institutions and basic rules of the Union should be laid down in a comprehensible and concise **Constitution**. It provides the legal framework to protect fundamental values in times of globalization. We call for a Constitution based on the subsidiarity principle, i.e. competences are allocated in a way that problems are tackled by those political levels that can most effectively solve them. This means that foreign policy would be a competence of the Union, while education would be located on a lower political level, potentially on the regional level. The separation of powers must guarantee the rule of law. The Constitution protects fundamental and human rights.

In the long run, **prosperity and a self-determined life can only be guaranteed** within the United States of Europe, because democratic decisions which set an effective legal framework to globalized markets can only be taken at the European level. We believe that the United States of Europe is the best democratic alternative to the illusionary sovereignty of single nation states. Problems that need to be tackled politically are often beyond the reach of national influence. Therefore, these problems need to be tackled on the supranational level.

The Union has to provide a clear-cut framework for the member states with regard to economic, financial and budgetary policies. Financing of its own tasks is provided for by the Union's own tax revenues. The creation and the on-going integration of the European single market has led to great prosperity in the Union and has increased interdependencies. Therefore, adjusting the different standards of living within the Union is a prerequisite for maintaining the Union's stability. To achieve this goal, both, states with strong and states with weak economies lend support according to their respective means.



The United States of Europe speaks with one voice. Doing so enables it to better promote its interests and to better live up to its responsibility in the world. Its foreign policy mission comprises the promotion of peace, sustainable political action as well as protecting and spreading its fundamental values.

**World Federalism:** Currently, the world faces a redistribution of power – a period characterized by injustice and risks, but also by many new opportunities for millions of people. We believe that federalism is the best way to prevent wars and to effectively subject the execution of power to civilian rules. Europe has learned its historic lessons; therefore the United States of Europe may serve as an example and inspire integration processes in other regions of the world. On a global scale, the United States of Europe can help find non-military and fair answers to global challenges.

## **2. The role of JEF in the European integration process**

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As Young European Federalists we see ourselves as **Ambassadors for the European Idea** and since 1949, we have been promoting European awareness in our societies and especially among young people.

As a political, nonpartisan and non-confessional youth organization, we try to constantly stimulate the integration process and to develop concepts for the future. In line with our motto “a generation ahead”, we have repeatedly come up with ideas that have been realized later on. For example, JEF representatives have called for open borders within Europe and a common European currency as early as in the 1950s.

European integration has brought us peace and prosperity. It enables us to find political solutions to problems that have outgrown the national context. As critical observers to the integration process, however, we have also noticed erroneous developments, which we believe need corrections. We believe it is our duty to highlight these erroneous developments and to demand corrections where necessary. We do not want to be seen as an organization of “cheering Europeans” unable to voice criticism, but we rather want to help create a democratic and federal Europe through constructive criticism.

We pursue our objectives through public actions, political debates in workshops and seminars, study trips and youth exchanges as well as in committee meetings in which we decide on our positions and working programs, and also through publications.

As an organization with a well-established network, we make use of our contacts to other political and youth organizations to promote our idea of a united Europe and to win and train young people who can act as multipliers of our ideas. As a personally, financially and legally independent youth organization of the **Europa-Union Deutschland** (the German section of the Union of European Federalists) we closely cooperate with our ‘mother organization’ to achieve our objectives.

As a pro-European youth organization, we are present not only on the local, regional and national but also on the European level. JEF Europe, our European umbrella organization, also comprises member sections from outside the European Union and all member sections of JEF Europe are also members of the World Federalist Movement.

The organizational structure of our organization follows federal and subsidiarity principles. Activities in the different local and regional sections and also different national sections sometimes vary greatly because the members’ priorities and their areas of interest shape the respective programs. This means

that we are a very diverse organization that is united by its principles and objectives, which offers numerous opportunities for participation as well as a broad network.

JEF is characterized by a friendly atmosphere of constructive political debate which is shaped by mutual respect and consideration. We are the meeting point for young people from various political and ideological backgrounds who often have different views on a certain topic but who all share a basic conviction. Controversial debates are never a taboo for us.

Thus, we are living a political culture that we also cherish in 'real' politics: "United in diversity" – despite all our differences, we always know what keeps us together. Undifferentiated animosity between political camps does not stand a chance with us. We are convinced that our political culture is a good example and we hope to inspire others to follow our lead. – Not only when it comes to building our Europe.

### **3. Constitution of the United States of Europe**

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Today, globalization calls for **a shared representation of the citizens' interests** in order to achieve fundamental European values like peace, liberty and solidarity. Climate change, the current financial crisis and other challenges can no longer be resolved by nation states on their own. We need the United States of Europe – a **democratic federal state governed by the rule of law**.

The United States of Europe needs **a concise and comprehensible Constitution** that protects citizens' fundamental rights, that defines European federal institutions and their respective powers, that describes the legal procedures and lays down the distribution of competences within the federal system. The Constitution should be drafted by a **public convention** with the broad participation of civil society.

#### **3.1. LIST OF COMPETENCES**

The Constitution comprises a list of competences dividing responsibilities between the Union and the member states according to the **vertical separation of powers** as a means to regulate sovereignty. The distribution of competences follows the subsidiarity principle according to which competences are allocated in a way that problems are tackled by those political levels that can most effectively solve them. Changes to the Constitution – including the list of competences – require a federal law passed with a qualified majority both in Parliament and the Chamber of States. Thus, **the competence to allocate competences**, i.e. the authority to decide whether the European federal state level or the national level should have a certain competence, is located at the federal European level. The subsidiarity principle must always be adhered to.

The federal level of the United States of Europe – as any other political level – has to be equipped with **the necessary means** to fulfill its tasks.

In the long run, we want to overcome the sovereignty under international law of European nation states in a way that they cannot act internationally as sovereign states. As JEF, we propose the following list of competences as a comprehensible and concise list of Union competences as a basis for discussion:

**Exclusive Union competences:**

- foreign affairs; border protection and development assistance
- defense; intervention within collective security systems
- trade in goods, services and capital; customs
- common currency and base rate
- competition; financial markets and consumer protection
- taxation regarding the more deeply integrated areas
- environment and – as far as it is cross-border – energy supply
- trans-European networks of transportation; energy and information
- adjustment to standards of living
- migration; asylum; passports

**Union Framework for Member State Policies:**

- member states' taxation and budget
- social affairs and labor markets
- education and support for more mobility

### 3.2. CITIZENS

We, the citizens, are at the centre of the Constitution of the United States of Europe. We have at least two identities: as **citizens of the Union** and as citizens of the member states. Therefore, the Constitution grants equal rights to the citizens' representatives (Parliament) and the member states' representatives (Chamber of States).

Union citizenship will replace national citizenship and will not only guarantees classic civil rights but also includes **Union Civil Rights**, e.g. free movement, prohibition of discrimination, and the right to vote at the place of residence and in European elections. We call for **an expansion of the right to vote** so that Union citizens may participate in any parliamentary election and may also vote for other bodies of representation at their place of residence whose decisions affect their lives (instead of casting votes in national elections of their countries of origin).

### 3.3. DEMOCRACY

Constitutional guarantees alone do not suffice to protect democracy. It needs citizens' active participation through elections, referenda and other forms of participation, e.g. membership in political parties and other civil society organizations. Citizens have to 'live' democracy.

In order to allow for broad participation, the institutions should follow a simple and transparent make-up. Transparent institutions and the ability to understand them are prerequisites for any form of participation by a large number of citizens. The opportunity to participate, in turn, serves as a legitimizing factor and maintains long-term acceptance of the political system. Citizens need to know where political responsibility is located in order to make informed political decisions.

The current Union lacks simplicity! Therefore, it is mandatory to reduce its complexity whenever the opportunity to do so arises.

In **European elections** citizens decide on the central political issues of the United States of Europe. The political parties draw up **transnational lists** for parliamentary elections, present leading candi-

dates for the government positions and propose European political programs. A *coherent electoral law* should provide for a compromise between transnational lists and directly elected candidates.

Parliamentary decision-making should be complemented by instruments of direct democracy. Citizens should be given the opportunity to carry out citizens' initiatives in order to put issues of political importance onto the institutions' agenda. Obstacles to initiate citizens' initiatives should not be overly restrictive. Our stance on referenda on a European level, however, is rather critical, as they usually need larger, well-organized bodies to be initiated and carried out, and, therefore, may favor particular interests. As JEF, we strongly support a representative parliamentary system.

**Opinions** expressed by society, social partners and individual citizens **are considered in the usual legislative procedure.**

### 3.4. PARLIAMENT

As a directly elected body, **Parliament** will become the central institution in the political system of the United States of Europe. Equipped with the right of initiative (currently an exclusive right of the European Commission), Parliament decides on an equal footing with the Chamber of States on revenues, spending and European laws (currently known as 'regulations', immediately binding European laws) and framework laws (currently known as 'directives', in which the Union lays down certain criteria that need to be met but where it is up to the member states to transform these directives into national law). The two bodies also ratify international treaties.

The parliamentary system is best suited to mirror Europe's rich diversity and to carry political debates everywhere in the European federal state. Since the direct election of the European Parliament was introduced in 1979, European parties have proven to be a positive influence and to lead discussions on European policies **on the basis of different political convictions, and not along national lines.**

Allocation of seats in Parliament should be changed in order to **more proportionally** reflect the number of citizens represented (currently: degressive proportionality). It will be possible to create cross-border constituencies.

### 3.5. GOVERNMENT

The head of government is elected by a parliamentary majority, usually based on the faction or coalition willing to form a government (currently: approval of a proposition by the heads of states and governments). Consequently, European elections will decide a government's fate (currently: personnel approved by a major grand coalition, often reflecting the majority of political parties in national governments). This makes the government independent of particular member states' interest and allows it to act in the European interest.

The head of government appoints the other ministers who then need to be approved by Parliament. The number of ministers is not based on the number of member states but on factual requirements. (Currently: every member state appoints one Commissioner, the President of the European Commission allocates portfolios.)

### 3.6. CHAMBER OF STATES

The **Chamber of States** is the second chamber of Parliament. It is equipped with equal powers except when electing the government. It will replace the Council of Ministers. Decisions taken by the Chamber of States require a majority (currently: no majority voting on taxation, social and foreign affairs as well as security policy). Differences in the weighting of votes among member states should be reduced. States may decide for themselves how to appoint their representatives in the Chamber of States. In the long run, the states' representatives could be **elected directly** instead of being appointed by national governments.

### 3.7. JUDICIARY

The **rule of law** has replaced the rule of the powerful, and must, therefore, be guaranteed. **The Supreme Court** of the United States of Europe ensures that citizens' rights are protected. Moreover, it legally controls both the European Parliament and the European Government. It serves as the guardian of the Constitution and guarantees the individual's rights chartered in the Constitution.

As a prerequisite for the transfer of competences to the Supreme Court, there should be a guaranteed protection of fundamental rights equivalent to the protection the German Constitutional Court currently provides.

## 4. Policies of the United States of Europe

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### 4.1. EDUCATION AND JOB TRAINING

Education is the foundation for **equal opportunity** and the **participation in social and political life** within a society. It starts in the crib and continues throughout life. The Union and its member states guarantee that states, regions and municipalities provide young generations with good educational options. It is a central task for the Union to allow education mobility, e.g. by sponsoring foreign exchanges or by accepting diplomas and certificates regardless of where those were obtained.

We believe it is important that educational policies of the Union and its member states do not only focus on formal education, because **non-formal** education plays an important role, too. Skills obtained through non-formal education need to be more broadly acknowledged.

### 4.2. ECONOMY AND CURRENCY

The **single market** served as the starting point for European integration and to this day remains its strongest drive. As **our single currency**, the Euro is not only a symbol of this integration. It is also a logical consequence of the single market.

The Euro put an end to currency volatility among member states and therefore led to further integration of the single market. National economies and their economic cycles are strongly interdependent to the extent that correctional and constructive measures can only be carried out in a joint approach. Joint action taken by the United States of Europe therefore provides the opportunity to create prosperity for all citizens and to enable them to live in self-determination. To do so the Union will provide the states with a binding framework with regard to economic, financial and budgetary policies, and the Union will have extensive financial means of its own. Stronger cooperation of the Eurozone members in these areas will ensure stability within the core-European community as long as there are member

states in the Union that have not yet adopted the Euro as their currency. This cooperation includes the Union's institutions and Union interests always come first.

As the world's largest economy, the United States of Europe can use its influence to promote fair rules for global competition, to call for sustainable use of resources, to stimulate consumer protection, to provide stable currencies and to push for regulation of financial markets as service providers to households and enterprises.

### 4.3. BUDGET AND TAXATION

The United States of Europe will have its own revenues from **taxation** in order to fulfill its tasks. The Union provides fair limits to the member states' competitive federalism in order to provide the prerequisites necessary for shared prosperity through sound budgetary policies and solidarity among member states.

Taxation and budget decisions are at the core of democratic decision-making and they are also the most controversial. Therefore, these decisions may only be taken by Parliaments with direct responsibility to the citizens; they must not be circumvented by deals struck amongst governments (intergovernmental approach). As JEF, we see democratic decisions that effectively limit the markets at a European level as the best democratic alternative to nation states that only appear to have the power to shape events.

Especially a sound management of public finances is an indispensable prerequisite for a common future. Strongly diverging developments in individual member states pose a threat to the process of European integration. As JEF, we strongly support binding mechanisms to jointly reduce public debts.

### 4.4. LABOR MARKET AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

To gain citizens' trust, the United States of Europe has to implement a solidarity-based European social model for all people in Europe. This calls for a careful but steady adjustment in standards of living as a prerequisite for further sustainable integration. States with weaker economies have to be supported by states with stronger economies, so that the weaker economies can achieve those standards of living their stronger partners already have. Wherever necessary, the Union steadily aligns the diverse social policies of member states currently in place.

Just like European integration brought peace to the member states, the United States of Europe will bring social peace to its citizens while fighting poverty and unemployment. To do so, the Union sets binding minimum standards for the states' social policies and extends current Structural and Cohesion Funds.

### 4.5. ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Environmental policy is an area that requires the most regulation on a supranational level. This is especially true when it comes to fighting climate change and also increasingly with regard to energy policy. These policy areas should be under competence of the Union. This includes the possibility to impose tangible sanctions.



## 4.6. FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

Securing peace within Europe is surely the greatest success of European integration. By forming a supranational entity, states that considered each other enemies replaced the principle that might is right for the rule of law. It is this unique transition that is acknowledged throughout the world. A common European foreign policy should work towards achieving a just, federal order on a global level. Ultimately, only world federalism will lead to sustained peace.

Currently, the intergovernmental approach in the Common Foreign and Security Policy prevents timely action due to the unanimity principle. Compared to Russia, China or the US, single member states lack political weight to be considered as equal partners on the world stage. Member states need a truly communitarised foreign and security policy as an exclusive Union competence if they want to meet challenges in timely and effective manner. The common security policy is shaped by foreign policy strategies and decisions.

The Union also needs appropriate capabilities. Therefore, we call for the creation of European instead of national armed forces; the Union's security policy must continue to excel through non-military instruments. It must be guaranteed that Parliament democratically controls the security policy and ensures the protection of fundamental values of the Union, especially when it comes to the inviolability of human dignity.

## 4.7. NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY

The Union has common interests with its neighbors; since 2004, this has been acknowledged in the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). ENP's main target is to create a 'circle of friends' in order to enable cooperation in certain areas and allowing closer ties between neighboring countries and the Union without necessarily offering the perspective of future membership. It is in the interest of the Union to not only pursue stability, security and prosperity in neighboring countries, but to also advocate democracy, liberty and human rights.

Against this background, we call for an expansion of the ENP and the allocation of sufficient financial means. Civil society in particular needs to play a bigger role in the ENP. For instance, we are convinced that youth exchange programs will, in the long run, yield better results than the cumbersome and often fruitless negotiations between states.

## 4.8. ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

The United States of Europe needs a common policy for asylum and migration.

When it comes to **asylum policy**, the Union's fundamental values, especially the inviolability of human dignity, must be guaranteed. It is on this basis that the Union grants asylum. Asylum policy is a Union competence. An asylum authority will be created at the federal level. The current practice that the country of entrance into the Union is responsible for dealing with the asylum seeker (Dublin Regulation) must be discontinued.

Whereas asylum policy acts on the assumption that migration happens involuntarily, **migration policy** deals with voluntary migration. European migration policy should therefore be shaped according to the Union's interests. This means helping skilled workers and their families move when the European labor market is unable to satisfy the demand for skilled workers. It also entails easier recognition of foreign diploma and training certificates.

## 5. Civil Society

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### 5.1. UNITED IN DIVERSITY – OR: WHAT KEEPS THE UNION TOGETHER

European integration and maintaining Europe's **cultural diversity** do not contradict each other. We call for political solutions to common political challenges. It is not our goal to abandon cultural differences.

Nonetheless, as Europeans we also have to answer the question what it is that keeps our union together beyond a common political and economic system. The question is how do we turn an existence next to each other into an existence with each other.

We are strongly convinced that Europe needs a **European public**. Therefore, European politics need clearer messages. We need stronger, more polarizing political debates. In the future, these debates must focus less on the conflicting interests of member states. It is necessary to provide alternative political agendas and to communicate them to citizens in a clear way. The European Parliament and the European Government must become more politicized. We also need a European *media landscape* that makes use of one working language in order to reach a majority of EU citizens.

The Union is a rather complex political entity and, unfortunately, its functioning is far from intuitive. This makes the EU a challenging subject for **political education**. European topics and especially political topics of European importance must, therefore, be covered in schools. Europe has to become a mandatory subject on all general education curricula!

### 5.2. CIVIC COMMITMENT

JEF promotes voluntary civic and political commitment, because it is a necessary prerequisite for vibrant, democratic societies; it also serves the general welfare and social cohesion.

Civic commitment is what we expect of ourselves, but we also encourage other young people to follow our lead. Certain prerequisites are necessary to enable citizens' commitment; the Union and the member states have to provide and guarantee them. This includes a harmonization of national association laws **to enable the creation of transnational associations** and **to provide financial support for civil society organizations**.

Calling for more civic engagement should not serve as an excuse to cut public services or for government to escape from its social responsibilities.

### 5.3. LANGUAGE

Every member state's official language is an official Union language, and every Union citizen may address European institutions in any official language. This principle needs to be maintained.

Nonetheless we are convinced that **one working language** is necessary. Without such a working language, there will always be Europeans unable to communicate with other Union citizens because they cannot understand each other. We believe that the *English language*, which is becoming established as the world's lingua franca, can fulfill this role. Therefore, we want the English language to become a subject for all Union citizens starting in primary schools regardless of what kind of education

they pursue. This will enable people of all educational backgrounds to communicate with each other. The final political objective is to ensure that everyone is fluent in this working language.

The Union's **diverse culture and its variety of languages** need to be protected. Learning additional languages next to their mother tongue and the (European) working language is desirable for every Union citizen.

## 6. Federalism and Europe's Global Role

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### 6.1. ENLARGEMENT

The main reason for supranational integration is to find solutions to challenges that transcend local, regional or national influence. Through supranational integration we regain room for maneuver in an increasingly globalized world.

It is difficult to define exact borders for Europe's integration, because these criteria are always *arbitrary* to some extent. For us, a political Europe cannot be defined by geography! We also believe that culture and religion cannot serve as demarcating factors. The only useful criterion is the proper functioning of the political system.

With the Union's Eastern enlargement, the political system's proper functioning has become the subject of controversial political discussions. It has become increasingly evident that deeper integration becomes all the more difficult to achieve, if the number of member states – already quite high at the moment – continues to rise without abandoning the unanimity principle for treaty changes.

Although we generally favor EU enlargement, we are also convinced that additional states can only be admitted to the Union after we have given extensive thought to the Union's future shape.

We also believe that the EU should not serve as the starting point for a future world union. Instead it should be seen as a prototype for other regional organizations, confederations or federal states. Once the Union's external frontier borders an external frontier of a neighboring supranational entity, the Union's borders will only change marginally. The Union should lend support to the creation of other regional integration projects wherever the opportunity to do so arises.

Assuming no further barriers to the Union's proper functioning, we believe that Union membership should be an option to all members of the Council of Europe that meet the criteria for accession and that are not yet members of other regional integration projects.

### 6.2. WORLD FEDERALISM

Federalism, properly understood, is a useful political system on all political levels. As Young European Federalists, we have been committed to world federalism ever since our association was founded. On a global scale, however, there needs to be constant and rigorous scrutiny so as to ensure adherence to the subsidiarity principle. Only the most important global challenges need global solutions. These include peace policy, environmental protection, or necessary global rules for financial markets and the economy.

One of Europe's core political projects should be to shape globalization! For JEF, an indispensable ingredient of a global federal order is the respectful interaction between cultures and their values on an equal footing.

### 6.3. DEMOCRATIZATION

Institutions that deal with the most urgent global challenges have to be democratized as soon as possible. The myriad of international organizations along with arbitrary summit conventions like the G8 and G20, and the highly opaque policy-making practiced by national governments at the international level must give way to a more democratic and more transparent system. As a first step, we call for establishing a parliamentary assembly at the United Nations.

The United Nations' monopoly on the use of force must be maintained in all circumstances. **The Security Council**, however, urgently needs to be reformed. Veto rights currently granted to a few states have to be abandoned while representation needs to reflect the global situation more justly. An allocation of seats according to continents and population numbers may be a suitable model. Europe should be represented with one voice. Seats for individual European nations will no longer be necessary.

In the long run, we call for supranational institutions like a **World Parliament** to take over these tasks. We do not question the fact that federal structures on a global scale take different shapes than those at a local level.

### 6.4. THE RULE OF LAW

A democratically legitimized parliament on a global level is not enough. The rule of law must also be guaranteed on a global scale, and appropriate judiciary bodies have to be established. The world must be able to adequately react to crimes without the Security Council taking arbitrary political decisions driven by particular interests (as has happened so often in the past).

The creation of the International Criminal Court is a positive development, however, its competences are still far too limited. We therefore call for the Court to have universal jurisdiction and for all nation states to recognize the Court.

Norms like the Responsibility to Protect, according to which a state has the responsibility to protect its citizens, need (further) development and acknowledgment. Should states be unable or unwilling to put an end to gross and systematic violation of human rights, the international community has to take action and intervene in order to provide all humans with the basis for a life in dignity.