

Interrail meets politics

2024

# EUROPE ON TRACK

THEME: SECURITY

Youth improving security in Europe

Co-funded by  
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## THE PROJECT

“Europe on Track” invited and encouraged young citizens to think and learn about Security in Europe with a focus on military security, mental health, cyber security and civil protection. Young Europeans literally got on a train with stops in Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Hungary.

Through study visits and public events, participants researched good examples and challenges on the subject. They discussed and deliberated with experts and policy makers during their trip. As a result, participants deliver a catalogue of proposals to improve Security in Europe to the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in Budapest.

Participants not only discussed various topics concerning the Security of Europe, but used European railway lines - from Eurocity to local trains - transforming them into a communication network and connected different stations for this adventurous trip.

## OUR AIM

In an increasingly interconnected world, security encompasses a multitude of dimensions that are critical for the stability and well-being of societies.

These proposals address various dimensions of security, ranging from military and cyber security to mental health and civil safety.

Within this project, we have collaboratively developed proposals and actionable measures to enhance safety across these dimensions.

Our aim is to make a contribution to further improve Europe’s security at all levels, integrating the voices and concerns of the youth to shape a safer future for all.

## FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

### Proposal 1

### Common Guideline

In terms of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, we recommend implementing a guideline on feminist approaches in EU foreign and security policy.

Since Sweden announced the “feminist foreign policy and diplomacy” and “feminist development cooperation” approaches in 2014, more and more European countries have followed suit, including France (2018), Luxembourg (2019), Spain (2021) and Germany (2021). It is a necessary step to establish an EU-wide guideline. In terms of content, this guideline should emphasize the importance of feminist influence on foreign policy and focus on the issue of intersectionality.

### Proposal 2

### Establishing a Subcommittee

We recommend the establishment of a subcommittee to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defense Policy, which will work under the umbrella of the Feminist Foreign Policy perspective and put a gender critical perspective on foreign affairs and human rights.

We believe that a guideline on feminist foreign policy will enhance EU and global security as research has shown that agreements made with women at the negotiating table are more durable, more inclusive, and less likely to break down.

## MILITARY SECURITY

### Proposal 3

European  
Strategic  
Autonomy

Improve coordination and institutionalisation of European defence architecture and enhance the European defence industry.

Due to the changing geopolitical environment, the EU must become a prominent actor on the international stage if it wants to pursue its interests of security and stability in Europe and its neighbourhood. Furthermore, reliance on non-EU arms suppliers exposes the EU to vulnerabilities. For instance, geopolitical shifts, trade restrictions, or changes in foreign policy can interrupt supply chains and delay access to critical technology. Therefore, it is crucial that the EU seeks strategic autonomy, including by developing its military technology and the production of arms. Despite this necessity, the long-term goal should be to strive for global demilitarisation.

### Proposal 4

Nuclear Umbrella

Upgrade and institutionalise consultations on nuclear policy, further involve France in NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), and hold nuclear exercises between France and NATO.

Europe has long relied on the U.S. nuclear deterrent under NATO's strategic framework. However, given shifting U.S. geopolitical priorities, and internal U.S. political volatility, Europe could benefit from diversifying its security guarantees. A French nuclear guarantee could reduce this dependency and serve as a hedge against any potential decline in U.S. commitment to obligations under Article 5 of the NATO treaty. However, this must be done with adherence to international law. An expansion and diversification of the current French nuclear arsenal would not be possible without violating the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

## MILITARY SECURITY

### Proposal 5

#### Reform Institutions

Reform and improve institutions such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The institutions that are meant to maintain peace and security in Europe have failed in their purpose and need to be reformed. After the end of the war in Ukraine, in order to maintain security and peace both in Europe and globally, these institutions need to be enhanced in their conflict prevention and crisis response capabilities. Additionally, member states sometimes use these institutions to pursue narrow political agendas, undermining their credibility. Reforming the appointment processes for leadership positions to ensure greater independence and non-partisanship would bolster the integrity of both organisations.

### Proposal 6

#### Rapprochement Efforts

Reopening of diplomatic channels with Russia. After the end of the war in Ukraine restart youth exchange programmes with Russia and reestablish economic relations without recreating dependencies.

To end the war in Ukraine and also to ensure peace and security after it, the reopening of diplomatic channels with Russia is unavoidable. After the war in Ukraine has ended, reestablishing economic relations with Russia could contribute to the stability of Europe. Here, it is paramount to not recreate pre-war dependencies, particularly on Russian fossil fuels. Restarting youth exchange programmes, especially focused on conflict prevention and resolution, could offer another layer of stability in future EU-Russian relations.

## The Process

## CYBER SECURITY

Vulnerability  
Disclosure

### Proposal 7



Making the prompt disclosure of critical security vulnerabilities to software and hardware vendors mandatory.

In today's digital environment, the interconnectedness of information systems presents a common danger if a vulnerability is discovered and not reported, as was the case with "EternalBlue". Therefore, we propose an addition to Directive 2022/2555 that obligates government entities to make significant vulnerabilities (especially concerning critical infrastructure) known to software and hardware vendors whenever they are discovered in order to prevent abuse by malicious actors. The information sharing could be coordinated by the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) and Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT).

## CYBER SECURITY

### Proposal 8

### Cyber Treaty

Developing a comprehensive international treaty on cyber attacks and cyberwarfare.

Because of cyberspace's uniqueness is so unique in its characteristics, current international law is not adequately equipped to respond to cyber attacks and cyberwarfare. Existing rules need to be adapted to the cyber context, and an emphasis needs to be put on the protection of critical infrastructure. Consequently, we recommend that the EU starts developing a new international treaty on cyber attacks and cyberwarfare, taking into account the already existing expert opinions as articulated in the Tallinn Manuals. This treaty should clarify the definitions of the terms (including, but not limited to) "cyber attack", "cyberwarfare", and "critical infrastructure" as there is currently no common definition of these terms.

## CIVIL SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY

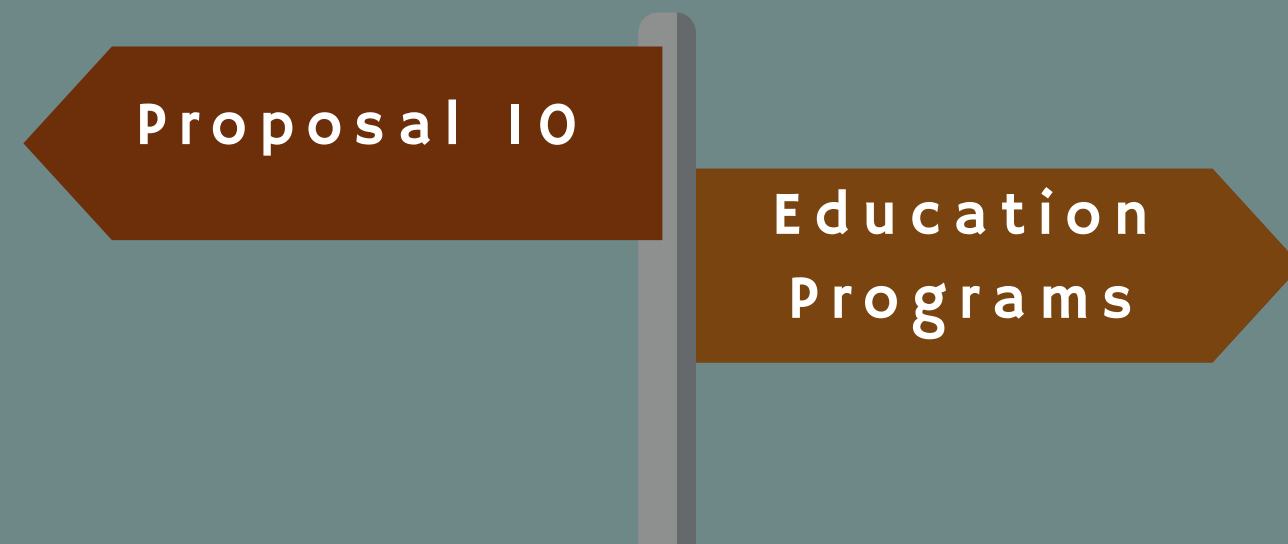
### Proposal 9

### Funding Volunteers

We ask for the establishment of an EU-fund, to which NGOs, associations and organizations that belong to voluntary civil protection can apply to.

Especially in rural areas, EU citizens are dependent on volunteer security forces, such as volunteer fire departments and rescue workers. The fund will be used to provide grants for materials, further training and youth work. With financial support to which associations can apply, more security can be guaranteed, especially in rural regions with a weaker infrastructure. With financial support, civil protection NGOs can buy better equipment and engage more in youth work, which also makes a positive contribution to the social safety and mental security of young people in rural areas.

## CIVIL SECURITY AND DEMOCRACY



**We aim to have NGOs visit schools to demonstrate ways for students to become active citizens.**

Understanding democracy and active citizenship is essential for children, emphasizing equality, participation, and social responsibility. Non-formal learning methods promote practical engagement, fostering skills like critical thinking and collaboration.

Since the European Union cannot have a say in how individual member states handle their education, we propose the idea of having NGOs come to schools to show the students how they can become active civilians in a form of an irregular lesson. This would take place within the following system: each secondary school grade has implemented an annual project day tailored to the specific developmental needs of students at that grade level.



**Developing a gamified online learning platform designed to enhance the understanding of active citizenship among secondary school students.**

This platform aims to equip students with essential knowledge about civic engagement, democracy, and human rights, fostering their development into informed and active citizens. It should draw inspiration from successful models like EENJOY ELTE and Duolingo. EENJOY ELTE, for instance, allows university students to participate in challenges and earn in-game currency for contributions, which can be exchanged for various rewards. While participation in the platform would be voluntary, the incentive system would effectively motivate engagement and enrich the learning experience.



## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

### Proposal 12

### Mental Health Experts

We propose the creation of a fund dedicated to enabling schools to hire mental health professionals who can provide essential support for students' well-being.

This initiative would ensure that every school has the resources to address the growing mental health challenges among youth, thereby fostering a healthier and more supportive learning environment. The aim is to address rising mental health issues among youth by ensuring access to professional support in schools. Studies show a significant decline in mental well-being across EU member states, particularly due to increased stress, isolation, and uncertainty in recent years, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted intervention.

### Proposal 13

### Femicides

As an addition to the EU Directive on “combating violations against women and domestic violence” from 2024, we suggest a joint data collection program of the Member States on femicides, as well as a classification for femicides.

The EU must implement standardized methods of data collection and categorization for violent crimes. We advocate for a common classification for femicides, like Spain has established in 2022. The classification should include: femicide committed by a partner or ex-partner, family femicide, sexual femicide, social femicide, and vicarious femicide. We believe that this could lead to more safety in the EU, because the joint data collection would make femicides more visible in the society and would simplify further legislation.

## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

### Proposal 14

### Youth Advocacy

**Establishing independent children's and youth advocacy organizations in every EU member state.**

Establishing independent, state-funded, expert-led youth advocacy organizations is vital to ensure representation of young people's interests. These bodies address systemic issues by amplifying young voices, offering support, and promoting transparency. Kinder- und Jugendanwaltschaft (KiJA) is an Austrian association dedicated to advocating for children's rights and well-being. It offers legal advice, psychological support, and mediation services. The structure of these advocacies would be similar to KiJA. However, they would be authorized on an EU level. These organisations can be either supporters or critics of the child protection care system, which provides a greater degree of external security.

# Thinking of Security in Europe





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