



“Europe live!” debates with schoolchildren in the Hanover region

Hanover, 21 April 2015. What does the young generation think of Europe? How much affinity do they feel with the original idea behind the European Union? The TUI Foundation is initiating a new series of debates offering young individuals the opportunity to question experts from politics, society and European institutions on the European Union.

At the kick-off event last week, around 120 schoolchildren from the Hanover region talked to Doris Schröder-Köpf, Member of the Lower Saxony Parliament and Regional Commissioner for Migration and Social Inclusion, about opportunities and challenges for young people in Europe.

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In her speech, Doris Schröder-Köpf emphasised the key role that the younger generation plays in Europe’s development: “If you believe in Europe, you have to be committed to improving it. To tackling problems and collectively resolving them. Above all, this is something that the younger generation should get involved in.” Doris Schröder-Köpf was attending the event in place of Lower Saxony’s Minister President, Stephan Weil, who had been called in to attend a Volkswagen supervisory board meeting in Salzburg at short notice.

The event was hosted by TV journalist Till Nassif (ARD Morgenmagazin presenter), who entertained the 150 or so guests with his humour and expert knowledge. A panel of six children from the IGS school in Roderbruch and the Albert Einstein school in Laatzen discussed the following issues with Doris Schröder-Köpf: “Europe as a homeland”, “our treatment of refugees”, “the emergence of right-wing populism in the EU”, “youth unemployment” and “the financial crisis”. Doris Schröder-Köpf, EU refugee policy expert, made a number of proposals; one of these being to integrate refugees into the German labour market more quickly to counteract the shortage of skilled labour.

Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the TUI Foundation’s Board of Trustees “It’s time to join forces for a stronger Europe - for democracy, freedom, diversity, tolerance and understanding. We have to focus on the opportunities for the European Union and the younger generation’s enthusiasm for a united Europe. This evening we took the first step in that direction.”

The pilot event was so successful that there will be four Europe Live! events every year in future.



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