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Press Release

## Presse release

# Young people discuss the challenges facing Europe with Michael Roth, Foreign Office Minister

(Embargo ends: Friday 8 April 2016, 3.30 p.m.)

Michael Roth MP, Minister for Europe at the Federal Foreign Office, attended an event at Hamburg City Hall on Friday (8.4.2016) to discuss current issues relating to Europe's future with young people. 150 young people participated in the event.

The subjects discussed by the minister and the schoolchildren included the possibility of a Brexit, the migrant crisis, terrorism in Europe and anti-European right-wing populism. Michael Roth and his young audience were both concerned about the effects of a lack of cohesion and solidarity in the EU on Europe. "Despite all the problems, we can't just stick our heads in the sand and look for simple answers - which is what the right-wing populist parties are doing," he commented.

At the end of the event, Michael Roth urged the young people to honour the name of Understanding Europe project by getting actively involved. "Europe urgently needs active participation from citizens like you. By all means be critical about Europe, but do get involved in the European processes and always make sure your criticisms are constructive." Elke Hlawatschek, Director of the TUI Foundation, added "We hope that our compact EU workshops will communicate a basic understanding of European politics to young people in an interactive way and empower them to get involved in Europe."

"The questions asked by the young people about Europe at our workshops are a very exciting starting point because many of them address the central value conflicts in European politics. We need a more expansive framework to answer the question of how we want to live in Europe. That's also one of the reasons why we'll be offering a more in-depth 'Asylum and Refugee Policy' module to schools in Hamburg from autumn onwards."

The discussion event is part of the Understanding Europe project that is being implemented by the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe in Hamburg and the TUI Foundation. The project's young trainers have been visiting Hamburg schools since September 2015 to give four-hour workshops communicating a basic knowledge of Europe to the young participants, and answer the schoolkids' questions about European integration and opportunities for participation.

The politically impartial Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe was founded in Hamburg by Pauline Schwarzkopf in 1971. The foundation's mission is to support the development of young people into politically-aware and responsible citizens by focussing on the strengthening of the European Idea and pan-European understanding.

To improve equality of opportunity for young people in the European Union, the TUI Foundation supports 'Young Europe'-related projects with the focus on education, training, personal and vocational development.

Over 750 schoolchildren in Hamburg have already attended the workshops including many of the more than 150 guests at the event, who all had the chance to put their aim of political participation into practice.

Press contact:

Schwarzkopf-Stiftung

Bernard Dröge

Phone 030 280 0951 46

E-Mail [b.droege@schwarzkopf-stiftung.de](mailto:b.droege@schwarzkopf-stiftung.de)

TUI Stiftung

Ines Spicker

Phone 0511 566 6022

E-Mail [ines.spicker@tui.com](mailto:ines.spicker@tui.com)