

A youthful vision of Europe

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Opinion

With the European elections approaching, a fresh crop of young candidates, who are poised to take Europe by storm, share their views.



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With European elections starting today and Eurosceptic parties expected to make big gains. Svenja Hahn, board member of the European Liberal Youth (LYMEC), told *The Parliament Magazine* that the EU is facing “many challenges.”

Hahn, who is also standing as a candidate in Germany for the liberal Free Democratic Party, believes that political campaigns should not simply focus on whether a party is pro- or anti-EU, but should also present visions and concepts about shaping the future.

Hahn was one of many young candidates from across Europe, who met in Brussels in March to discuss and exchange ideas on how to campaign in the upcoming European Elections. The event was organised by EU40, a grouping of young MEPs.

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Hahn said her vision of Europe is one that will open that will open up more and more opportunities for future generations.

"This will include individual opportunities through access to education and the labour market, as well as better transnational recognition of educational achievements."

She said she wants to see a deepening of the Single Market and a strengthening of free trade, as well as the EU playing a bigger role on the global stage.

"I want to see a Europe where people of different backgrounds meet with curiosity instead of hatred and contempt" **Said Abdu, Swedish MEP candidate**

"I expect the EU to take responsibility for our planet, for values such as democracy, human rights the environment and climate protection."

Fellow liberal candidate, Said Abdu, is also a proponent of a more proactive election campaign that highlights the positive aspects of the EU.

Abdu will be standing in Sweden as one of the few non-white candidates seeking to be elected to the European Parliament. He came to Sweden as a young child when his parents fled from war-torn Eritrea.

Already experienced in the world of politics, having been a member of the Swedish Parliament and Liberal Party spokesman for industry, trade, and labour market issues, Abdu said "I want to see a Europe where people of different backgrounds meet with curiosity instead of hatred and contempt."

Martin Bohmert, general delegate for Les Jeunes avec Macron (JAM) described the EU40 event as a "gathering of dynamic and forward-looking people who will be able to learn from each other."

Along with seeking greater cooperation on security and fighting terrorism, one of Bohmert's key campaign priorities is the fight against climate change.

"I expect the EU to take responsibility for our planet, for values such as democracy, human rights the environment and climate protection" **Svenja Hahn, German MEP candidate**

“Parliament will have a key role in making sure that as Europeans we respect our commitments to the Paris Agreement and create the necessary mechanisms so that every country can transition to a low-carbon economy.”

He said he wanted to see greater assistance given to countries like Poland so they can move away from using coal, using the knowledge and technology of other Member States with more sustainable energy sources.

Bohmert also wants to see the EU do more to tackle wage discrepancies. “On social protection I believe that we need to have a safety net for all Europeans, to make sure no one is left behind.

I propose having a minimum wage in each country, to be reviewed each year.” Recognising how politically divisive the issue of migration was, he said, “We are letting people die in the Mediterranean Sea.

We need a common asylum policy to implement the value of solidarity across Europe and make sure that each country is responsible in defending external borders.

That is why we are proposing a European Asylum Office to implement a common asylum policy, as well as proposing the expansion of Frontex.”

Tilman Kuban, who is standing for the centre-right CDU party in Germany, explained that he was running for election because of the direct threat from both right-wing and left-wing populist parties.

“Parliament will have a key role in making sure that as Europeans we respect our commitments to the Paris Agreement” **Martin Bohmert, French MEP candidate**

"Populists might form a majority in the European Parliament, significant enough to block our European project of freedom, peace and prosperity."

He said that the EU needs reform from the inside, adding that the number of Commissioners should be cut and that all Parliament operations should take place solely in Brussels.

Like Bohmert, Kuban said he also wants to see greater protection for the EU’s external borders, through the establishment of a European border police.

The other major priority on his “wish list” is to ensure that Europe’s younger generation, from Portugal to the Baltic states, from cities or the countryside be well connected.

About the author

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