

Safe & Responsible Togetherness



Declaration for a resilient convivial Europe that empowers its young adults and supports its hospitality sector promoting safe, responsible behavior and lifestyles throughout Europe.

Introduction & context: Why this declaration?

No group has been unaffected by the pandemic, but some have been hit especially hard, including young adults and wider learning mobility and hospitality sectors in Europe.

After more than a year of the COVID pandemic, the impact on young adults and particularly those who are undertaking or seeking to undertake a learning mobility abroad has been significant. Young adults have suffered psychologically from lack of human contact, new experiences and the anxiety of the unknown. In April 2020, 55% of young people were at risk of depression, a much larger share than the rest of the population (48%)*. This was also seen in a survey carried out by ESN in 2020* where they saw how student mobility had been restricted (in 25% cases it was cancelled) and impacted greatly their network and programmes (such as Erasmus+), especially with regard to finances or travel. Young adults have also suffered socially and economically. They have been unable to access the usual temporary or part-time jobs that they would have normally done, young people are overrepresented in the sectors hit hardest by the restrictions, such as retail, travel and hospitality. According to Eurofound's 'Living, working and COVID-19' survey of Europeans*, 11% of respondents aged 18–29 lost their jobs during the pandemic, compared to 8% of workers over 30.

As Belgian PM De Croo recognized “Almost 1.5 million people temporarily lost their jobs. Young people had to press the pause button during the best time of their lives,”. This ‘pause’ has led to young adults feeling vulnerable and depressed; no longer having access to activities and discoveries that would normally shape their youth. In a recent study by VMG* aimed at young adults, 72% of young adults identified that ‘what makes an experience ‘fun’ is the opportunity to share moments with others’ showing clearly this need for socializing.

What’s more, young adults often find themselves unfairly on the receiving end of blame for the propagation of the virus. The ‘blame game’ that we have witnessed over the past year has been unfairly directed at young adults, and there is an overall feeling of injustice to this – the desire to go out, socialize and meet others does not automatically mean that we are irresponsible or not making the right choices. This has also contributed to the frustration and desire of young adults to demonstrate that they are responsible and proactive actors committed to promote safe and responsible socializing.

“Young adults had to press the pause button during the best time of their lives”

The Declaration

We first and foremost wish to express our heartfelt sympathy to all those who have been personally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the extraordinary work and diligence of Europe’s health and frontline workers who have proven themselves true heroes. We do applaud the EU efforts to join forces to secure successful vaccines that gives us all hope for 2021 and to support financially the recovery.

Our society, in its recent history, has never faced a similar situation. The world has been put on hold and we all have been suffering for more than a year from being deprived of seeing our loved ones, of interacting physically with each other, of simply living. This pandemic has drastically changed dynamics in society, and we are not yet fully measuring the impact and consequences.

No group has been unaffected by the pandemic, but some have been hit especially hard, including young adults and wider mobility and hospitality sectors in Europe. Not only economically, but socially and psychologically. Furthermore, these effects will be long lasting.

As young adults we have been waiting for years to live what older generations presented as “the best time of our lives”, however such time has been put on hold, the prospects for decent jobs and living in the near future are severely darkened, and we have been often indiscriminately accused of being ‘spreaders’ of the virus, with moments of socialization being specially targeted. As human beings, we are social animals and thrive on sharing experiences and interaction with others, something that the mobility and hospitality sectors enable us to do – to meet up, to be together and share positive moments.

Erasmus Student Network, Responsible Party and the Hospitality sector are standing together to declare their willingness to move forward and to be responsible together as the situation improves by

- **Contributing to promote responsible cross-generation and cross-stakeholder collaborative efforts** to help overcoming the crisis,
- **Supporting public health objectives and the economic and social recovery of our groups** deeply touched by the crisis,
- **Developing good practice partnerships to promote safe,** responsible and convivial behavior and socialization throughout Europe.

Today, we stand united together as we firmly believe that YES, we are responsible.

As important players in society we, the European youth together with the mobility and hospitality sectors, stand together to demonstrate that responsibility and fun are not incompatible. **We will help each other to ensure that our move back to socializing and enjoying lives again is responsible and we feel empowered to make the right choices to ensure that everyone stays safe.** It is time to move forward, trust each other and make responsible choices.

*We are the young adults of Europe,
We are the bars, restaurants, hotels, nightclubs
We are united, We are together,
Today and tomorrow for safe and responsible togetherness*

We, [young adults from Europe and the European hospitality sector] are:

1) United and standing together

We are standing together with the willingness to demonstrate that WE CAN enjoy life and celebrate in a responsible and safe way.

2) Empowered to make good times unforgettable

We feel empowered and ask for your trust. We are empowered to collaborate and bring solutions to allow us to be all together safely and responsibly, and ask the EU authorities to promote and support these collaborations.

3) Improving the situation by addressing the question of how to gather people in a safe environment

We are ready to move forward safely and sustainably whether it be through ensuring the opening of safe venues which respect the measures in place and ensure the right conditions for everyone to enjoy themselves responsibly, in collaboration with our partners.

4) Responsible because there is no conviviality / no good unforgettable times in excess

We promote responsible settings and good practices that can contribute to prevent harmful behaviors, such as Responsible Party, and have a positive impact for the observance of the safety measures.

5) Building more solidarity in our societies today and tomorrow

The pandemic has brought a lot of movement of togetherness and solidarity, but has also impacted it by creating gaps between generations and preventing people from seeing each other and their loved ones. We, young adults and the hospitality sector, have sacrificed enough already and it's time to take action. Through this manifesto we have the sincere desire to help bring people back together again safely.

We really believe that through this approach we help to find freedom and empower others to respect the rules. It is our individual and collective responsibility that will make us free and happy to live together, in a safer and convivial way.

Notes:

* Living, working and COVID-19 survey

* ESN study: Student Exchanges in Times of Crisis Research report on the impact of COVID-19 (2020)

* VMG Study: MAKE CONTACT: THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY (Jan-Feb 2021)

*Eurofound: Youth in a time of COVID

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& JOIN THE ADVENTURE**



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