



President of the Republic of Slovenia

**NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR**

**Speech of the President of the Republic of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar  
at the 9th National Conference of European Youth Parliament**

Ljubljana, 26 August 2023

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*Distinguished delegates, dear guests, assembled youth thinkers and doers,*

*I am profoundly honoured to stand before you today at the 9th National Conference of European Youth Parliament Slovenia, a gathering that embodies the spirit of engagement, empowerment and solidarity among our youth, our future.*

*This very principle drove me, as President of the Republic of Slovenia, to establish the Youth Advisory Committee as an expert body that advises me on shaping positions, particularly in the priority areas of climate change and ecosystems, ensuring comprehensive security, participation in international relations, and intergenerational solidarity. It consists of four young individuals who have already demonstrated their expertise in these highly important areas through their work to date. And I am very proud of them.*

*This year's theme of International Youth Day is "Green Skills for Youth: Pathway to a Sustainable World". This resonates deeply in a world where the urgency of the green transition meets the need for greater awareness and action. This year's theme serves as a call to arms. It urges us to foster heightened awareness about various aspects of the green transition and the pivotal role that you, young people, play in it.*

*And Slovenia today is a case in point. Severe floods, sweeping everything in their path, have struck Slovenia this summer. We have experienced the greatest catastrophe in the recent*

*history of Slovenia, but through solidarity, cooperation, and consideration of environmental and other expertise, we will do everything to promptly restore what has been destroyed and ensure the safety that people need.*

*Climate change, inequality, poverty and conflicts disproportionately affect many, especially the young. With each passing generation, the consequences of the systems we inherit become more evident and challenging to address. Yet it is precisely the youth who will shoulder the responsibility of rectifying these issues in the future. We must ensure that your informed, substantiated and socially responsible opinions are valued. It is imperative that you, young individuals, are actively integrated into communities and decision-making processes, allowing them to contribute to the creation of a more just and equitable society.*

*We all need to step up our combined efforts against the escalating climate crisis.*

*We know that the forests are shrinking, that animal and plant species are becoming extinct. This year's July has been globally the warmest on record. We feel climate change at our very doorstep, in agriculture, in the economy. Weather extremes, like the floods that we have just witnessed, will become more and more frequent. In the last 60 years, the atmosphere in Slovenia has warmed by over two degrees, climatologists warn, which is twice the global average. We know there is no Planet B. We will either stand united in the face of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change or we shall fall together. I am a firm believer in our need for solidarity, in particularly with those that have contributed the least to the climate crisis but are threatened existentially by it.*

*This autumn, world leaders will come together to review the progress or lack thereof in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, the SDGs. Next year the UN Secretary-General is convening a UN Summit for the Future to seek answers to the growing social disparities, the rise of violence and armed conflicts, the unsustainability of our habits against the climate breakdown and loss of biodiversity.*

*In this context and on a very positive note, Slovenia's strong attachment to the multilateral way has been validated by our recent election in June as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the term 2024–2025. I believe this election is a recognition by a vast majority of the UN membership in support of multilateral diplomacy and at the same time a rejection of the block mentality. This is good news.*

*We want to use our membership to contribute to the work of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security on behalf and for the benefit of the wider UN membership. As such, we would like to continue work on climate security. Climate change is not only aggravating existing armed conflicts but is increasingly becoming a security threat in and of itself to many states, such as Small Island States threatened to be drowned by the ocean or certain African states threatened to be overcome by the desert. Water is the lifeblood of our planet, an essential element that sustains ecosystems, communities and economies. Yet the specter of water insecurity looms large, threatening the very foundations of our existence.*

*As we deliberate on the complexities of water insecurity, let us remember that we possess the knowledge, creativity and resolve to effect change. By envisioning a future where water is not a source of strife but a beacon of sustainability and prosperity, we can inspire the change we wish to see.*

*We know that a lot of factors, including conflicts and climate change, drive individuals and families to seek refuge in foreign lands. Yet even in the face of adversity, the journey towards safety is often met with barriers, suspicion and intolerance. The harsh reality is that anti-immigrant sentiments persist, fueled by fear and misinformation. We stand at a crossroads where we must choose between closing our doors to those in need or opening our hearts and fostering true integration.*

*As we discuss the integration of refugees and the battles they face, it is essential to acknowledge that their journeys are not just physical, but also deeply emotional and psychological. The EU's response to this crisis should embody compassion, cooperation and a commitment to uphold the dignity of every individual seeking refuge on our shores. By fostering a culture of empathy, dialogue and collaboration, we can create a future where diversity is celebrated, intolerance is challenged, and refugees find the safety and opportunities they deserve.*

*It is you, today's young people, that will be most affected in your everyday lives by the ever-evolving new technologies, such as artificial intelligence. These need to work for the benefit of humanity and should not be used to foster disparities and divisions among us. I believe it*

*is vital we step up international efforts for the regulation of AI and that you, the young, should have a say in that too.*

*Our focus rests on a cluster of interconnected issues that lie at the heart of building a more just and inclusive world. The rights of children, minorities, indigenous people, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, migrants and refugees deserve unwavering protection. These vulnerable groups often face systemic marginalisation, leaving them without a voice in shaping their own destinies. Through intensified dialogue and cooperation, we must collaborate on legal frameworks, policies and initiatives that safeguard the rights and dignity of these communities. By standing together – and here your role is particularly important –, we can create environments where diversity is celebrated and everyone can live free from discrimination and fear.*

*Dear friends, as we gather in this hall, united by a common vision and shared purpose, let us carry forward the spirit of cooperation, understanding and action. Let us recognise the profound significance of our role in shaping the world we inherit. By championing green skills, advocating for sustainable practices and climate justice, while promoting dialogue among generations, we can create a world where our aspirations are realised and our planet thrives. Let us seize this moment to stand united in our commitment to justice, equality and human rights. Our actions today will ripple through time, shaping a world where every individual's dignity and rights are upheld, celebrated and protected.*

*Thank you.*