



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR

Message
by the President of the Republic of Slovenia, Nataša Pirc Musar
on meeting young people attending the
European Youth Meeting 2023 in Ljubljana

Ljubljana, 30 December 2023

*Dear Brother Matthew,
Dear Young People,*

Your meeting in 2023 is taking place at a time of many tensions, divisions and armed conflicts. There are now more than 50 of such around the world. The war in Ukraine is still raging not far from us, and the Israeli-Palestinian war in the southern Mediterranean has no end in sight. Many civilians are suffering and leaving their hearths, homes, families, friends and relatives in despair. Deprived of dignity and basic human rights, they are leaving their cities and regions, where life is no longer decent for human beings – on the contrary, it is inhumane. I follow what is happening on a daily basis and I am saddened to see that the argument of power is overriding the power of argument. While many, many people are calling for peace, it is not yet on the horizon. The calls are not being heard by those who cause wars.

God means something unique to each individual, but I firmly believe that His primary message is clear. Peace! Our common mission is to ensure the conditions in which it is possible not only to live in peace, but to live in a safe environment that enables progress and joy for all, especially for children, who suffer the most in wars. They are deprived of a carefree childhood. Only peace will allow us to not dwell on the past, but to work together to ensure the conditions in which the real challenges of our time can be met. Technological progress and climate change are far and away at the forefront, the former also because it can have devastating consequences for individuals, for communities and for the world if it is not used for the good of humanity.

But we will only be able to do it together, on the basis of the acceptance of diversity and with tolerance, in a culture of dialogue and in a spirit of the acknowledgement of past mistakes and forgiveness, overcoming and accepting the sins of the past, and with our eyes and will fixed on the present and the future. We need to summon all the

energy we have. Each and every single one of us. We must create the conditions for peace, for the dignity of all, for the inclusion of the most marginalised and vulnerable, and for the return of those who have had to leave. War refugees and economic and climate migrants repeatedly say that they would prefer to stay at home, in their own countries, if only there were peace and the basic conditions for a decent life.

Dear young friends, I trust that you have the will and the strength to take a big, even decisive step towards cooperation, mutual understanding, the elimination of divisions, the acceptance of differences and diversity as an integral part of our societies and an understanding of an inclusive vision of the future.

My heartfelt wish to all of you is that 2024 will be a year of peace. That we share kindness, solidarity and humanity. Each of us will thus leave a mark that will make the world a better place and someone happier.

I hope that this year's gathering in Ljubljana will remain a lasting memory for you and that the friendships forged between you will remain in your hearts for a long time to come.