

A Vision for Europe

A Friedrich Foundation competition for students in cooperation with Saarland University / Please contribute a concept sketch, an essay, a literary work, or a graphic short story about your vision of Europe / The best entries will be published / Prizes of up to 2,500 euros / Deadline 31 March 2024.

In his latest book, “Homelands. A Personal History of Europe,” British historian Timothy Garton Ash described the different generations of founders of Europe. The first were the “14ers,” who still vividly recalled the horrors of the First World War. They were followed by the “39ers” who were shaped by traumas of war, gulag, occupation, and the Holocaust. Next were the “68ers” who revolted against the war-scarred generation of their parents; some also had first-hand knowledge of dictatorships in southern and eastern Europe. Then came the “89ers,” people who were in their late teens or early twenties when they witnessed the end of communism in central and eastern Europe.

“When you look at how the argument for European integration was advanced in various countries, from the 1940s to the 1990s, each national story seems at first glance very different,” Garton Ash wrote. “But dig a little deeper and find the same underlying thought: We have been in a bad place, we want to be in a better place, and that better place is called Europe.”

But by now, even 1989 belongs to the past. The reality of the European Union is sometimes more likely to disillusion its citizens than to inspire them to grow together. At the same time, the experience of Brexit shows the problems inherent in a return to nation-statehood.

Where is the spark that can kindle young people’s enthusiasm for Europe today? What experience, what insight, what argument will prove so compelling that it gives Europe the strength to renew and complete itself? The Friedrich Foundation invites students of all disciplines to take part in its competition “A Vision for Europe” and provide answers to these questions.

Entrants can freely choose the form of their contribution: a concept sketch, an essay, a literary work (each about 3-5 pages of text) or a graphic short story (about 10-15 pages). For longer contributions, entrants should contact the Friedrich Foundation. The papers can be written in English, German, or French.

The deadline for entries is 31 March 2024. Entries should be sent to the following email address: vision-fuer-europa@outlook.de

The Friedrich Foundation will award prizes (first prize 2,500 euros, second prize 1,500 euros, third prize 1,000 euros) for the most convincing entries, with the winners selected by a judging panel. The judging panel includes historian Professor Timothy Garton Ash, futurologist Dr Florence Gaub, Reinhard Bütikofer, Member of the European Parliament, Professor Tiziana Chiusi, Chair of the Cluster for European Research and Professor of Civil Law, Roman Law and Comparative European Law at Saarland University, and members of the Friedrich Stiftung's Board of Trustees, Professor Christina Weiss, former Minister of State for Culture, and Professor Jan-Hendrik Olbertz, former President of Humboldt University Berlin. The Foundation will publicise the best contributions to European politicians and EU representatives; they will also be published on the Foundation's website.

The Friedrich Foundation, in line with the convictions of its founder Erhard Friedrich, is committed to promoting a cosmopolitan and democratic Europe. Finding new ways to rally young people around the European idea is one of the foundation's chief concerns. The Friedrich Foundation does not pursue any commercial or party-political goals.

Saarland University has an explicit focus on Europe in research and teaching. Its Cluster for European Research (CEUS) is a cross-faculty competence center linking and coordinating the university's activities in the field of Europe. In the education of young Europeans, the European idea is embodied and promoted through "European University - Transform4Europe" and "University of the Greater Region (UniGR)," two cross-border networks between universities.

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