



# Memorandum for the European Elections 2019

**European Humanist Federation**

**February 2019**

## Introduction

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 70th anniversary of which was celebrated in 2018, recalls in Article 1 what the basis of humanism is: 'All human beings are born free and equal in rights and dignity'. The universality of these rights is of crucial importance, wherever one is born in the world and whether one is rich or poor. But between the equality of the human condition and the very different opportunities for everyone, there is a gap. The responsibility for realizing these universal rights and addressing existing inequalities rests with the States signatories to the Declaration.

From the outset, the European Union (EU) introduced respect for human rights into the admission conditions of the States applying for membership, and any severe and persistent infringement can lead to sanctions. Similarly, any citizen who considers himself or herself a victim of a violation of his or her rights by a State may lodge a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Nevertheless, keeping the spirit of the 1948 Declaration alive and applying it to the 21st century, in a different context, requires the vigilance of those European citizens and civil society organisations who keep the flame of humanism alive.

For the European Humanist Federation (EHF), the UDHR constitutes a moral and political framework as well as a source of inspiration for their viewpoints and actions, as do its basic values: freedom, equality, solidarity and human dignity.

The European Humanist Federation also promotes the principle of secularism. This principle is needed more than ever in order to maintain cohesion in a diverse Europe that must remain united. Secularism is first and foremost a principle of State organization which guarantees fundamental rights to everyone, without discrimination. It is based on the separation of State and churches, in order to ensure freedom of thought and expression for everyone and to allow everyone to be equal before the law. This principle is also and above all a humanist posture: open, based on the emancipation of the individual, respect for people, the free encounter of ideas and the pursuit of greater equality through education. The corollary of the principle of secularism is to guarantee dignity for all in their life choices, including dignity in death.

The European Humanist Federation is concerned about the current context in which global tensions are intensifying and humanist values are under increasing pressure. Without these values, any democracy would only be a front democracy. In the context of increasing inequalities, unresolved migration issues, urgent climate challenges, rising populism and religious radicalism, the EU must find solutions to overcome the growing gap between the values of the Union as stated in its Treaties and the policies it pursues. Facing populists exploiting these trends, as well as increasing conservatism and particularly extremely reactionary religious lobbies, the EU should strongly stand up for secular institutions and

legislation, as it is the only democratic principle that guarantees to everyone the full exercise of their rights.

This is why the European Humanist Federation wishes to reiterate these values and principles forcefully before the European elections.

The European Humanist Federation recognizes and supports the profoundly secular nature of the European Union. In its policies, resulting from its successive treaties, the EU has always confirmed its commitment to neutrality towards religions and churches. It has repeatedly reaffirmed the existence of the right to believe or not to believe and supported freedom of conscience and expression. It also reiterated its commitment to fundamental rights. These are at the heart of its internal and external policies. The European Humanist Federation therefore asks Europe to take a strong position on the points developed in this Manifesto. This Manifesto, addressed to European authorities will be the line defended by the EHF's national member organisations.

## I. PRESERVE THE RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY

In recent years, the rule of law has declined in a significant number of European states. For the European Humanist Federation, preserving the rule of law and democracy is a primary concern: we will no longer be able to promote humanist values, secularism, human rights and fundamental freedoms if democracy is weakened.

Concretely, the EHF calls on the European institutions to implement the following measures.

### 1) ESTABLISH A PERMANENT MECHANISM FOR MONITORING DEMOCRACY IN MEMBER STATES.

Such monitoring could be carried out by existing bodies such as the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, the European Fundamental Rights Agency or by a panel of experts set up for this purpose. This mechanism would focus on essential elements of democracy such as the respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, the respect for the rule of law or the separation of powers.

The results of this monitoring could be discussed within both national Parliaments and the European Parliament. Following that, they could be reviewed by the Council as part of its annual dialogue on the rule of law. As such, it would serve as a legally sound and politically legitimate basis for the adoption of sanctions of gradually escalating impact, including but not limited to the full activation of Article 7.

### 2) MAKE EUROPEAN FUNDS CONDITIONAL ON THE RESPECT FOR DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW

As part of its proposals for a Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF), the Commission took a first step in linking the disbursement of structural funds and the respect for the rule of law. The European Parliament provided its support to the proposal.

The EHF proposes to extend this conditionality to the whole of European spending, not only to payments related to Structural Funds. The MFF should clearly indicate that the first objective of the Union budget is to uphold EU values. This would form a useful legal basis for sanctioning a state that violates them and should cater for sanctioning net donors as well.

### 3) MAKE BETTER USE OF JUDICIAL REVIEW

At present, judicial review of Member States' respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights is complicated since Member States are bound by the Charter of Fundamental Rights only when they apply European law. This restrictive view of the European Union's judicial powers raises questions. The EHF calls on European decision-makers to examine all the legal possibilities for bringing States that violate the rule of law and fundamental rights before the Court and to intervene systematically in order to create useful case law.

## II. STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society, in all its diversity, greatly contributes to the realization of European values. Alongside the media, it acts as a counter-power, increasing the quality of the democratic fabric of a country. No political institution is legitimate if it is not supported by citizens. However, today, European citizens doubt that they will have any influence on European decisions. Strengthening civil society and giving it a strong voice is therefore becoming essential for the very future of the European Union. In several European countries, however, civil society is under pressure. Budgetary policies have led to a weakening of public funding. Sometimes civil society is directly attacked, especially when it is critical of government policies. The EHF formulates several proposals in this regard.

### 1) IMPROVING FUNDING FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

For civil society to be able to fully play its role as a promoter of European values, the EU has to invest more in the development and operations of both national grassroots Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as well as EU networks acting as multipliers of experience, advocacy and capacity building. The EHF therefore urges EU institutions to drastically increase funding for civil society with specific focus on operational funding for both EU networks and national secular organisations that focus their work on promoting democracy and the rule of law.

### 2) IMPROVING DIALOGUE WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

Article 11 of the Treaty on the European Union provides the legal basis for a dialogue between the EU on the one hand and citizens and representative associations on the other.

The European Humanist Federation supports the proposals contained in the plan elaborated by the Liaison group set up by the European Economic and Social Committee. The Action Plan recommends a series of measures to improve the civil dialogue, including the publication of an annual report on the evolution of this dialogue in Member States or the appointment of a Commissioner specifically responsible for coordinating the dialogue with civil society.

### 3) IMPROVING THE MECHANISM OF EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

The European Citizens' Initiative, introduced by the Lisbon Treaty allows citizens, under certain conditions and if they collect 1 million signatures, to ask the European Commission to submit a proposal on a subject within its competence. The Commission has made proposals to simplify the mechanism and the European Parliament adopted a position on these proposals. The EHF supports a more ambitious revision of this EU-level agenda-setting instrument. Such a revision implies not only simplifying the administrative management but also supporting the initiators of an ECI in a constructive rather than a defensive way. This

also means that the scope of European Citizens Initiatives should be extended beyond the currently extremely restrictive one given to it by the European Commission.

#### 4) MAKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP MORE CONCRETE

Strengthening the trust of citizens in the European Union also means strengthening support for the European Union as a political project. Too often, citizens feel that they have no influence over European decisions. Levers however do exist. These include questioning MEPs, launching a European Citizens' Initiative, meeting European officials, organizing protests, calling the attention of the media on a cause.

In light of this, the EHF calls on the EU institutions to implement the following actions:

- Fostering the transparency of European decision-making and reinforcing the possibilities for citizens' involvement at all stages of on-going discussions;
- Making even more accessible and transparent information on EU legislative debates and actions taken by the EU for the benefit of citizens and the communities to which they belong,
- Making the results of the evaluation of European institutions' action more visible, particularly in view of the commitments made at the beginning of each legislature.

### III. PROTECT FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

As a secular project, Europe must pay attention to the growing interference of religion into politics. As a community of democratic values, it must step up its action to defend a number of key freedoms such as freedom of religion or belief, including freedom from believing, freedom of speech, freedom of the media, and freedom of research. The European Humanist Federation therefore urges the European institutions to take action in the following domains.

#### 1) PROTECT THE SECULARITY OF THE EU AND PROMOTE A SECULAR AND HUMANIST VISION OF SOCIETY

For a decade, religious lobbies have been increasingly reaching out to European decision-makers. They mainly focus on sexual and reproductive rights as well as LGBTI's rights and have been successful in promoting initiatives aiming at "protecting the embryo" and the "traditional family" in Europe.

In light of this increasing religious pressure on politics, the EHF urges the future European leaders to:

- Firmly commit to defending the impartiality of European institutions. Such impartiality is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to guarantee the quality of European democratic processes and the fair treatment of all citizens by European law;
- Oppose attempts by some to involve even more religious organizations in the European decision-making process;
- Request more transparency regarding interest groups and their funding sources.

## 2) DEFEND FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF AND THE RIGHTS OF NON-BELIEVERS

Freedom of religion or belief (FoRB), sometimes referred to as freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, is a fundamental right recognized at the international and European levels. It protects the freedom of everyone to embrace the beliefs, religious or not, of their choice. As stated by the UN Human Rights Committee, it also protects the freedom not to believe, the freedom to change or abandon a religion or belief and the freedom not to be compelled to convert against one's will.

In recent years, Freedom of Religion or Belief has gradually found its place on the European agenda. It was however used to reinforce religions and conservative religious groups.

The EHF therefore urges the European authorities to:

- Promote and defend Freedom of Religion or Belief as a fundamental right protected by the EU;
- Recall in all circumstances that this freedom includes the freedom not to believe, to change and to abandon one's religion and that this freedom also belongs to minors who are "capable of forming their own views" as stated in the New York Convention of 1989 On the Rights of the Child, however different their opinions may be from those of their families or communities;
- Foster the uptake by EU institutions of the situation of non-believers in Europe and worldwide;
- Emphasize that FoRB can never be used to restrict, limit or threaten the fundamental rights and freedoms of others, as mentioned in the EU Guidelines on FoRB;
- Request effective implementation of these Guidelines. This implies reinforcing the training of European diplomatic delegations and EU professionals on issues related to FoRB and to ensure that this training is non-biased, i.e., that secular and humanist organisations are included in the process as partners alongside religious organisations;
- Request a regular evaluation of these Guidelines and make the results available to the public.
- Ensure that the mandate of the Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion and Belief explicitly includes the dimension of non-believers (atheists, agnostics, apostates, etc...) and that it is carried out in a way that respects this inclusiveness.

## 3) DEFEND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression is strongly connected to freedom of thought and conscience. It covers the right to express an opinion on a religion or belief. Except in cases of incitement to hatred, to discrimination or to violence, it is allowed to criticize a religion, a religious organization, its representatives or its followers.

The European Humanist Federation urges European authorities to take a strong stand in favour of freedom of expression. This includes calling for the abolishment of the criminalization of blasphemy and of "insult to religious feeling" in the world, including within the European Union.

#### 4) DEFENDING FREEDOM AND PLURALISM OF THE MEDIA

Freedom of the media is part of the foundations of democracy. Indeed, it allows the development of a diverse public debate stirring a wide variety of facts, data and opinions. This free debate is an essential component of European citizenship. Indeed, media pluralism enables access to diversified information. This in turn allows citizens to confront various opinions and build their own.

However, it is clear that these democratic foundations are nowadays threatened, let alone impacted by a number of technological, political and economic developments.

Therefore, the EHF urges European authorities to:

- Establish a systematic and independent monitoring of the freedom of the press and media pluralism in each EU member state.
- Ensure that each Member State guarantees a fair media space and takes the necessary measures to fight media concentration and monopoly or quasi-monopoly situations;
- Urgently address the issue of the safety of journalists to ensure that they can work in good conditions without fear of threats, harassment and financial, economic and political pressure;
- Strengthen European cooperation in media education and media literacy in order to enable citizens to reap the benefits of new forms of media while minimizing the associated risks.
- Strengthen EU action related to disinformation. The recent Communication of the Commission “Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach” is a good basis for further action. The EHF also supports the recent proposal by 12 Heads of State to work towards the adoption of a global pact for information and democracy.
- Adopt and implement the Directive on whistle-blowers. They have to be offered protection.

#### 5) GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The question of autonomy and freedom of choice is intrinsically linked to the dignity of the human being. Irrespective of religions or beliefs, everyone must be able, if they so wish, to make choices during their lives: choices about their health, education, career, personal life, sexuality as well as decisions about the end of their life.

Two aspects related to freedom of choice are particularly relevant to humanists: sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the right to die in dignity. The EHF denounces and rejects attempts by churches and their representatives to impose their dogmatic views and restrict the choices that European citizens should be allowed to make based on their own convictions and world views.

##### *a. Promote sexual and reproductive health and rights.*

Since the mid-1990s, the international community recognizes sexual and reproductive rights as fundamental human rights that protect some of the most important and intimate aspects of our lives.

Nevertheless, there is a series of stagnations and setbacks. These concern access to modern contraception, abortion or Comprehensive Sexuality Education. Some rights once thought to be guaranteed are now under attack, while securing new rights remains very difficult. Conservative and

reactionary movements are gaining ground in Europe and share a common agenda. They strive to limit women's choices towards their bodies and prevent their emancipation, limit the rights of LGBTI people and reinforce patriarchal stereotypes.

In this context, the EHF urges European authorities to:

- Actively promote sexual rights in Europe and act in favour of the legalization of abortion rights in all Member States;
- Track persistent obstacles to access abortion in European countries including the refusal to provide certain types of care by health professionals which jeopardizes women's timely access to sexual and reproductive care, particularly contraception and abortion;
- Encourage each Member State to offer access to affordable modern contraception;
- Respect and protect the rights of women during childbirth and ensure access for all women to quality maternal health care;
- Combat obstetric violence in all its forms;
- Encourage Member States to give all women access to effective remedies against violations of their sexual and reproductive rights;
- Encourage the implementation of high-quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education in public schools. This implies encouraging and monitoring the implementation of this type of education by all Member States according to the international standards recommended by UNESCO. It also involves supporting civil society organizations that work to provide such education.

*b. Promote the right to die in dignity*

The issue of end-of-life self-determination and assisted suicide strongly divides EU Member States. Only Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg have legalized it under certain conditions, usually in case of incurable disease or intolerable suffering. A number of other states allow different forms of assistance to die.

The right to die in dignity forms however integral part of our human dignity. Especially, in particularly difficult situations, the issue lies in recognizing that a person has a right to determine the modalities of his/her own end. The EHF calls on the European authorities to:

- Encourage Member states that allow passive euthanasia to legalize end-of-life self-determination so that everybody can decide freely how and when he or she wants to die.
- Due to rising conservatism and extremist religious activism, call on Member States that already allow active euthanasia to remain vigilant and secure this right in law and in practice.

**6) PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY**

Gender equality is a reliable measure of a country's democracy. There is still much to do to achieve full parity. Violence against women, the gender pay gap and the unequal sharing of unpaid work remain key persistent issues in our societies. Public life reflects the inequalities between men and women since the latter continue to be underrepresented in politics.

The EHF urges the European authorities to:

- Act decisively to defend and promote women's rights and gender equality in all EU policies;
- Encourage the participation of women at all levels of EU institutions, including senior positions;
- Strengthen EU and national strategic action plans for gender equality in and outside the EU;
- Encourage the concerned Member States to ratify the Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;
- Pay particular attention to women who suffer from multiple discriminations and promote an intersectional approach to take into account their specific needs (including those of black and migrant women, lesbian and bisexual women, transgender women and women with disabilities).

#### 7) FIGHT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LGBTI PEOPLE

Compared to the rest of the world, the European Union appears to be relatively protective of the rights of LGBTI people. In recent years, positive changes have happened in many Member States and the European Union has been active in protecting these rights.

However, many issues remain and a strong, ambitious political response is needed. The EHF calls on European institutions to step up their action in favour of LGBTI rights and, in particular, to:

- Adopt the horizontal anti-discrimination directive proposed by the Commission in 2008 to at last have a comprehensive equality legislation in all aspects of daily life, including the legal recognition of LGBTI couples in all the Member states,
- Strengthen the list of actions put in place by the Commission in 2015 to advance the equal rights of LGBTI people in the EU, in particular its action against online harassment;
- Promote a safe schooling environment for young LGBTI people and children of LGBTI couples and encourage education programmes about the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity in school curricula;
- Strengthen action against discrimination related to gender identity and gender expression, including against transgender and intersex persons. This includes closely monitoring the transposition of directives which indirectly protect these rights and modifying legislation to respect the dignity and physical integrity of these people. It also implies removing medical and psychological procedures including forced sterilization and mutilation related to the legal recognition of the gender identity of transgender people and intersex persons.

## IV. EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

### 1) PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST TO FIGHT INEQUALITIES

There can be no human dignity if a large part of the population continues to live in precarious conditions. Achieving a higher degree of social justice and fairness in Europe is therefore more crucial than ever. In this context, the European Humanist Federation welcomes the adoption in 2017 by the European institutions of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The fact that a growing number of people who perceive themselves as victims of globalization fall into the populist trap should also act as a wake-up call for democracy. In concrete terms, the EHF calls on the European authorities to:

- Allow budget flexibility in order to cater for more public and social investment; Take into account the imperatives related to the fight against inequalities in the priorities of the future European Multiannual Financial Framework;
- Implement the 20 principles contained in the European Pillar of Social Rights. This means that monitoring indicators should be developed and integrated into economic governance mechanisms such as the European Semester;
- Establish a minimum wage in each EU country;
- Intensify support for the European Youth Employment Initiative;
- Accelerate the implementation of the inclusive growth component of the Europe 2020 strategy, and in particular the poverty reduction objective.
- Strengthen the legislative framework to combat social dumping. This includes revising the Posted Workers Directive to ensure, amongst other things, the payment of social security contributions in the country where workers work and to better monitor compliance with social, environmental and occupational safety standards for posted workers;
- Strengthening European social dialogue, which is a necessary tool for collective negotiations and the balance of power in the socio-economic decision-making process.

High-quality public services that are accessible to all are an essential element in the fight against inequalities and in the strengthening of social cohesion. The EHF therefore urges EU authorities to make sure the Member States can ensure appropriate funding to their public services and guarantee their ability to carry out their missions in accordance with the principles of universality and equal access.

## 2) PROMOTE SECULAR AND PUBLIC EDUCATION AS A CONDITION OF EQUALITY

While each EU country is responsible for its own education and training system, EU policy works to support the development of common objectives and the dissemination of good practices. Therefore, the EHF calls on the European institutions and Member States to:

- Pursue their efforts to establish common principles and objectives in the field of citizenship education (in particular with regard to the functioning of the Union and European values), and to make the understanding and experiencing of freedom of thought a fundamental objective of citizenship education;
- Encourage the implementation of high-quality comprehensive sexuality education;
- Urgently take action to educate and empower citizens with regard to the spread of fake news and other ethical issues triggered by new technologies including artificial intelligence.
- Promote correct medical and health-related information among adults, aiming to lower non-vaccination beliefs and giving correct information of efficacy of alternative medicine practices.

The European Humanist Federation recognizes the essential contribution that sport, culture and civic activities bring to personal development: they are often the only way for vulnerable people to flourish, to integrate into society and find a place in it.

The EHF therefore invites the European authorities to strengthen their action on the validation of skills acquired in informal or non-formal education environments.

Finally, because of its proximity to fieldwork and its expertise, civil society is able to support teachers' work. The EHF invites the European institutions and the Member States to facilitate multidisciplinary work between civil society and teachers in the preparation and provision of teaching material.

## V. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CONTROL

### 1) PROTECT FREEDOM OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

For the humanists, freedom of research is fundamental and scientific research must be able to operate in the spirit of free inquiry and the scientific method. The only vectors of research should be reason, experimentation and demonstration embedded in a clear framework of ethical rules, based on democratically determined principles and values derived from a pluralistic public debate.

The EHF urges the European authorities to implement the following guidelines for research policy:

- Keep religious dogma out of stem cells research. This implies allowing EU funding not only for research using existing human embryonic stem cells but also for stem cell procurement;
- Follow the Commission's proposal more effectively include civil society into the development of research and innovation policies, the implementation of projects and the dissemination of results. This means increasing flexibility and minimizing administrative burdens so as to encourage participation of civil society, especially of small organizations with limited means;
- Strengthen the "Inclusive and Secure Society" part of the program, through which research will be funded in various fields related to history, democratic life, cultural heritage or safety and cyber security. Should the budget for this priority be too small, it is to be feared that a growing part of funding will be dedicated to innovation in safety and security, to the detriment of e.g. research needed to better understand current political and societal trends;
- Strengthen the role of social sciences and research on ethical issues in the other parts of the program that focus on technological development. Examples include very promising areas of research that carry an important ethical dimension such as artificial intelligence, nanotechnologies or the use of data in health and environment research.

### 2) PROMOTE TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT METHODS AND SOCIAL CONTROL OF TECHNOLOGY

Despite the fact that the development of science should be unimpeded, its technological applications must be socially controlled. Because they have an influence on all aspects of society: ethical, socio-economic, security, medical, psychological, etc. Two fast-developing technological fields are now the focus of public opinion. These are on the one hand transhumanism, and on the other hand artificial intelligence (AI). New technological developments could be misused or simply violate fundamental rights.

The European Humanist Federation calls on the European authorities to:

- promote and organize the control of the technologies in question. These must be the subject of consultations, evaluations, negotiations and corrections by panels representing the various social actors, including those from the world of work.
- Set up a European agency to monitor the concrete impact of AI applications on the society;
- evaluate the ethical aspect of these technologies by committees where believers and non-believers would be on an equal footing.
- assess the socio-economic impact of these technologies ex ante and post hoc with pluralist committees of social workers.
- involve workers' representatives in the development of the design cycle of AI technologies based on their own experience.
- ensure, in areas at risk, where a decision by an AI instrument can lead to human losses, that the last word on control over an AI tool remains with man: human responsibility must remain engaged and cannot be delegated to an AI tool.
- prohibit any commodification of the human body or its indirect production - sale of organs, trafficking in personal data, hacking into professional experience -, and ensure that voluntary donations remain ethically and legally regulated.

## VI. SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORLD

The world today faces major challenges in which Europe must be more active player. It must help resolve these challenges while upholding its humanist values. These challenges are at least of three kinds: migration, climate change and sustainable development, peacekeeping. None of these challenges is Europe's sole responsibility. However, having one of the most powerful economies in the world, Europe remains a key actor.

### 1) PROMOTE A COMMON IMMIGRATION POLICY, BASED ON SOLIDARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Migration remains a global phenomenon and is predicted to increase. Whether migration is of economic or climatic origin, linked to wars or dictatorial regimes, it is structural and not cyclical. It will not disappear. It must therefore be anticipated and addressed with a twofold solidarity: solidarity between Member States and solidarity with migrants as human beings. Humanists know that the answers are diverse and depend on the nature of migration. Nevertheless, the EHF is shocked by Europe's lack of solidarity and its tearing apart on the refugee issue. It hence strongly urges the EU and its Member States to:

- establish a common immigration policy, already called for at the Tampere Council in 1999. This call was never translated into policy, which is irresponsible and unacceptable in terms of respect for human rights.
- develop new immigration channels towards the European Union for people who are not in a situation of special protection. It is partly because economic immigration is almost impossible outside of particular categories of workers that migrants try to reach Europe as refugees.

In the field of asylum, the EHF urges EU authorities and more specifically the Council:

- To open safe and legal access routes for asylum seekers,
- To set up guidance and reception centres for asylum seekers in Europe,
- To revise the Dublin Regulations by, inter alia, removing the rule that refugees must apply for asylum in the country through which they have entered European territory,
- To confirm the outright prohibition of the confinement of children,
- To ensure equitable distribution and solidarity among Member States of the Union, including through resettlement programmes,
- To promote the integration of persons who have been granted asylum.
- Ensure that Member States consider asylum applications by discriminated atheists, agnostics, free-tinkers, as well as LGBTI asylum applications fairly and transparently and with the help of trained personnel. Provide protection and asylum to LGBTI persons who are persecuted or at risk of discrimination because of their sexual orientation or gender identity;
- Ensure that the European Asylum Support Office supports Member States by providing them with relevant expertise on these issues as well as information on countries of origin.

In terms of migration policy in the broad sense, the EHF asks European institutions to contribute to the development of global governance concerning migration (in its multiple dimensions). The premises of such governance are included in the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regulated migration, recently adopted by the United Nations.

## 2) PROMOTE PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The construction of Europe is based on the strong idea that the more States collaborate with each other, the more the risk of war vanishes. The search for mutual interest and solidarity between states have guaranteed peace for over 70 years.

At global level, the same idea prevailed when international institutions, and in particular the UN, were created. Multilateralism and the legal rules that govern its functioning are essential elements for guaranteeing peace in the world, preventing conflicts, easing tensions, and for establishing balanced and partnership-based relations between States. In order to avoid the failure of this system, the European Union must increase its involvement and influence. This requires, in particular, that the Union be irreproachable in terms of human rights and international public law in general because it is not acceptable for the Union or its Member States to advocate globally for these rights if they can be criticised in the conduct of their domestic policies.

Furthermore, the EHF therefore calls on European institutions to:

- Abolish unanimity voting in European decisions on foreign policy by using the bridging clauses provided for by the Lisbon Treaty.
- Democratize the European Union's external policy by further involving the European Parliament, particularly in the preparation and ratification of international agreements.

- Strengthen the European diplomatic network and enhance Europe's capacity to speak with one voice and act together in international fora.
- Make human rights the backbone of the European Union's foreign policy and a condition for signing international agreements in which the European Union is a party.
- Enhance efforts to disarm and combat the proliferation of weapons.
- Guarantee respect for international law and in particular for the United Nations Charter in all circumstances.

### 3) FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Global warming is now reaching an extent that is becoming irreversible. Its disastrous effects on the world economy, on global transformations, on migration, on coastal cities, on flora and fauna are now known and quantified. Despite the evidence, answers do not match the ever-increasing risk. Short-term global competitiveness and the persistence of an economic model that is unsustainable on global scale and destructive of the planet's resources obliterate major environmental issues threatening everyone, especially the least developed countries.

Europe has been active, even pioneering in this field and the EHF urges it to step up its efforts by:

- Fully implementing the Paris Agreement. This implies taking on more ambitious EU commitments to achieve complete decarbonization by 2050 and a stronger implementation plan (including investments in renewables, improving energy efficiency, pushing for a socially just transition to avoid increasing energy poverty, nuclear safety, etc.),
- Develop common standards to improve air and water quality and to ensure the availability healthy and quality food,
- Implement biodiversity commitments (including halting biodiversity loss, overfishing and deforestation by 2020) and, in general, stop the unsustainable use of natural resources,
- Make Europe a role model area for sustainable mobility by strengthening public transport, investing heavily in clean mobility and adopting legislation to eliminate pollutants, noise and CO2 emissions in transport,
- Promote the circular economy, develop recycling channels and develop coherent European policies to reduce waste. Promote the use of durable and repairable goods.
- Reform the Common Agricultural Policy to support rational and human-scale agriculture and stop unfair competition against developing countries.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015 illustrate the extent to which there can be no sustainable development if economic, social and environmental issues are not dealt with together. Their ultimate goals are the eradication of poverty and the preservation of our planet. All EU Member States have subscribed to them. The EU has competence in a range of policy areas, which enable it to contribute to these objectives.

For humanists, the EU must take full responsibility for the implementation of this international agenda. It is inconceivable that more than a billion people live in poverty in the world and that the development of

some continues to be done at the detriment of others. The EU must resolutely show solidarity in this collective quest and align its policies to the imperatives of sustainable development. Today's European budgetary priorities or international trade policies point in a different direction.

The EHF therefore calls on the European authorities to:

- Mobilize more resources for the achievement of SDGs. The UN estimates that the public and private sector together should invest between 5 and 7 trillion dollars annually by 2030. Should the aspiration to have the private sector contribute to this financing, it is essential that such private investment genuinely contributes to SDGs and that public money to support investment does not serve interests that run counter to sustainable development.
- Seek new sources of financing for development by intensifying the fight against tax evasion and fiscal fraud or by applying the “polluters pay” principle.
- Ensure that trade agreements respect fundamental rights and SDGs, that they do not weaken the legislative capacity of states or their protective labour, consumer or environmental laws and that they preserve public jurisdictions’ role for settling disputes between States and investors.
- Ensure consistency between the achievement of SDGs and the policies of other international institutions such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund.
- Contribute to the development by the UN of a legally binding international instrument on transnational corporations, business and human rights.