

Memo of the Europa-Forum in Turku
Focus on
Federalist gathering and UEF Building Capacity
(on the 29 and 30 of August 2024)

1. After some introductory remarks and an overview of UEF, our structure and the structure of sections it was discussed that the JEF groups who had appeared (Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Romania) are very active and strong in membership. Unfortunately, these JEF members hesitate to join their respective UEF section after they have to leave JEF for age reasons (28 years it was remarked). Afterwards many societal, political and life-style aspects of young people were discussed in search for the reasons.
2. I only want to report some of the reason which effect the work of UEF and I do not want to mention all societal, political or cultural aspects of the young generations.
3. One aspect was that UEF is very close to political parties even though we are non-partisan. The attractiveness of parties (or maybe to established parties) for young people is very low almost everywhere in the EU. The willingness to work in a political field or for political goals is still unchanged and very high with a certain number of young people. Basically, a non-partisan organisation like UEF is very much suited to provide the platform for the political-minded younger people. Maybe a special awareness campaign highlighting our non-partisanship could help to strengthen that image of UEF for young people.
4. A second aspect was that especially the Baltic countries have difficulties to get accustomed to the word "Federalism" because a lot of people associate "Federalism" with the Russian Federation and therefore do not see "Federalism" in a positive light.
5. A major third aspect was the cultural perception on Europe. Taking into account that the EU is still mostly seen as a

economic union on the way to become a political union. The need for treaty changes and a structural improvement of EU bodies to meet the expectation of EU citizen and other countries in the world as a strong political power is very visible to citizen. With these rational findings there is still an emotional side especially for small countries. They fear for their cultural heritage, their language and their "way of living". They fear that big countries in the EU could be overwhelming in their cultural presence in Europe and the associate "Federalism" also with a fear of cultural domination.

This is an aspect citizen of big member countries only see in single cases (in Germany concerning brewing beer and making sausage – no joke) but not as a general fear.

6. We, as UEF cannot do a lot to easy this fear but we can do something that the JEF people will get heard and respected and maybe encouraged to influence and convince others JEF members to join UEF in their country.
7. Hence, I propose to have a FC or PC and invite the participants of the Europe Forum and discuss the issues on our level. Listening is respecting and respecting an issue is a big step in solving it. Our issue is to find new members, young members, being attractive for young people by knowing their concerns. By this initiative the good work on the Finish Europe Forum would have a follow-up and increase the success.

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Treasurer

5.9.2024