



**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN  
FOUNDATION** For Freedom.  
European Dialogue

szabadpiac  
ALAPÍTVÁNY

# POEMS OF LIBERTY

## Project Europe 2050!



### **Publisher**

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom  
Truman-Haus  
Karl-Marx-Straße 2  
14482 Potsdam-Babelsberg

✉/freiheit.org/eu

🌐/fnf.europe

📺/fnfeurope

/fnf\_europe

### **Authors**

Máté Hajba, Director, Free Market Foundation  
Jana Sproul, Senior Human Rights & EU Funding Manager, FNF Europe  
Dr. Nele Fabian, EU Affairs Manager, FNF Europe

### **Editing**

European Dialogue Programme,  
Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

### **Contact**

Tel +32 2 282 09 35

Fax +32 471 86 93 83

E-mail brussels@freiheit.org

### **Last updated**

May 2023

### **Note on the use of this publication**

This publication is part of the information service of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. The publication is available free of charge and is not intended for sale. It may not be used by political parties or electoral workers during an election campaign for campaigning purposes (federal, state and local elections as well as elections to the European Parliament).

# Content

|   |    |
|---|----|
| FOREWORD .....  | 4  |
| <b>EUROPE OF ITS CITIZENS</b>                                       |    |
| INTRO by Jana Sproul .....  | 5  |
| COMIC by Paul Rietzl .....  | 6  |
| AT THE GATEWAY OF PARTICIPATION by Oliver Fahn .....                | 7  |
| 12 PINK STARS by Henrieke Jarosch .....                             | 8  |
| FNF ENTRY: TWELVE STARS IN 2050 by Daniela Matoušová .....          | 9  |
| <b>SUSTAINABLE EUROPE</b>   |    |
| INTRO by Dr. Nele Fabian .....                                      | 10 |
| COMIC by Paul Rietzl .....  | 11 |
| A WORLD FULL OF LIFE by Niklas Pienemann .....                      | 12 |
| WE WILL STAND BY THE SEA by Petra Zeil .....                        | 14 |
| <b>FNF ENTRY: EUROPEAN DREAM: THE SUSTAINABLE RENAISSANCE</b>       |    |
| by Maximilian Luz Reinhardt .....                                   | 16 |
| <b>GLOBAL EUROPE</b>  |    |
| INTRO by Máté Hajba .....   | 17 |
| COMIC by Paul Rietzl .....  | 18 |
| LIBERTY'S DANCE, EUROPE'S MARKET OF DREAMS by Lorenz Schmidt .....  | 19 |
| DREAMING OF PEACE: THE EU'S VISION FOR 2050 by Daniel Ilkevič ..... | 20 |
| REMEMBER FORTRESS EUROPE? by Jana Sproul .....                      | 21 |
| COMIC by Torben Siebert .....                                       | 22 |

## Foreword

The EU lives and breathes through its millions of citizens. We move freely, whether for leisure, education or employment, and enjoy the benefits the EU adds to our daily lives. More and more people celebrate a European identity while cherishing and sharing their national heritage. But what does it mean to be European? Amongst other things, it is the history we share. The EU was built in the aftermath of war and hate on the continent and was initially mainly intended for commercial and economic prosperity. Although the cooperation already set sail in 1952, with the founding of the European Coal and Steel Community by six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), it was not until the signature of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 that the EU as we know it today came to be. This landmark stage of European integration called for a shared European citizenship and paved the way for the introduction of a single currency, as well as common foreign and security policies, against the background of the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union.

Today, EU history is taught in schools across all 27 Member States and while many EU citizens have had their own personal journey to define their relationship with the EU, we are now increasingly seeing young generations that have never known a life without also feeling somewhat European (in addition to their national, regional and local sentiment of belonging). Who would have thought in 1952 that neighbors that once fought each other could truly become friends and family; that 27 States could overcome their differences to create policies and regulations that would benefit their citizens and establish the EU as the global player it is today?

No, the EU is not perfect and just like any family, it encounters challenges, be it externally or from within, that need to be addressed. The crisis of the past decade have surely put our social, political and economic cohesion and solidarity to the test. Still, the EU has prevailed and taken its seat at the table of global players. While we do need to be realistic, we are always in need of dreamers, if we want the EU to continue to prosper.

One cannot help but wonder what kind of Europe its citizens imagined back in 1993 and if they would be satisfied with where we are today. Equally, now is the time to think about what kind of Europe we would like to live in in the future so that we can take action to day and build Europe 2050 together.

That is why in this edition of *Poems of Liberty*, we have asked poets from all over Europe to reflect on three aspects of this question and put their policy visions into poems. *“Europe of its Citizens”* looks at the very core of our European society and explores what EU citizenship and democracy means in the future. Meanwhile, *“Sustainable Europe”* explores one of the most pressing issues of our time. Our authors take us on a journey beyond the European Green Deal and into a future in which societies, politicians as well as the industry take responsibility and action to secure a prosperous future for generations to come. Finally, *“Global Europe”* takes a step back into the international sphere and elaborates on the EU’s role in the world. Each chapter will be accompanied by a brief introduction and analysis into the topic, reflecting on the input given by the winning entries, as well as a comic illustration by our Animate Europe artist Paul Rietzl.

We would like to once again thank all poets who shared their colorful and thought-provoking work with us. It is encouraging to see that so many of you are actively thinking about ways in which the EU could become a better version of itself in the future and what role we all can play in it.

We hope you enjoy the read!



**Máté Hajba**

Director  
Free Market Foundation



**Jana Sproul**

Senior Human Rights & EU Funding  
European Dialogue of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation

# Europe of its Citizens

Jana Sproul

Our parents and grandparents tell us about a time, when people could not freely move across the EU; where they could not simply choose where to live, work, or study. A time in which university degrees and professional certificates were not accepted across state borders and in which their freedoms and Human rights when not safeguarded. The following chapter will explore the future of citizenship and democracy in the EU and leads us on a journey to find out what truly unites us as Europeans.

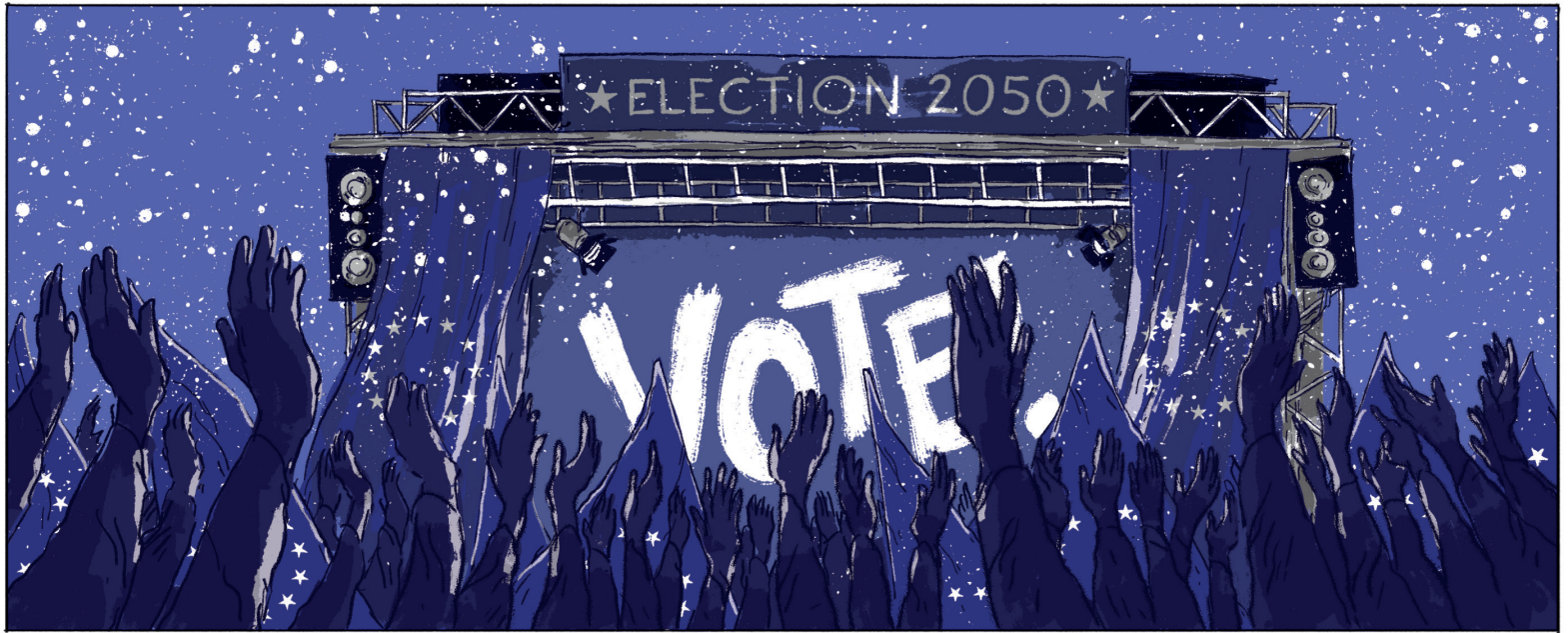
The poem „*Twelve Stars in 2050*“ addresses the current challenge of the EU to educate all its citizens about not only the role of the institutions but also the power that each and every one of us wields by voicing our opinions, ideas and concerns, be it through active political involvement or voting. In the future, citizens in rural and urban areas alike are empowered and active in shaping the Union. This goal is by no means utopian. The EU has a variety of programs and campaigns in place to spread the word, but a challenge that remains is how to reach rural areas and citizens of those countries that have seen a search in populist parties and governments in recent years. Yet, against the backdrop of these concerning developments there is hope. While for some years, it seemed like young people had become disenfranchised with politics, they are now at the forefront of many social and environmental rights movements and are reflecting their views in the polls, demanding more political accountability, representation and a future that thinks of them. It is the more important then, that the EU in the coming years renews its Maastricht commitment to EU citizenship and everything this entails. This also includes the reform of existing electoral rights, as many mobile citizens across the EU do not have the right to vote or stand in elections, even if they have been living, working and contributing in their country of choice.

The poem „*At the Gateway of Participation*“ picks up on the sentiment of social change and calls for inclusion. It paints a picture of an EU in which nobody feels like an outsider, in which we have overcome prejudice and embraced the different cultures, backgrounds and abilities of each citizen. Children today are already growing up in increasingly multicultural settings, making them more equipped to be part of an international society and promoting inclusion naturally. However, the EU still has a way to go when it comes to the inclusion and fight of discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, immigrants as well as people with disabilities (especially in rural areas) as the poet describes. Nevertheless, we are on a good path. The EU is showing continuous efforts through actions like the establishment of equality bodies in its EU Member States, to provide independent assistance to victims of discrimination, publishing reports and policy recommendations. More action is needed, however, to raise awareness among citizens about their rights and support mechanisms. In 2021, the European Commission also adopted the “Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030”. People with disabili-

ties still face considerable barriers and have a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion. The new strategy takes an intersectional approach, in line with the UN SDGs mentioned by the author, by looking at the risks of multiple disadvantage faced by women, children, older persons, refugees with disabilities, and those with socioeconomic difficulties. Flagship initiatives include projects like a European Disability Card, which will ensure proper support throughout the EU, a framework for social services of excellence and a platform for exchange with national implementing actors.

Finally, „*12 Pink Stars*“ dives deeper into a future in which gender equality has been achieved and women in power have contributed to a more peaceful and impactful EU in the world. Our societies are diverse in their gender, age, socio-economic status, background and lived experience. This translates into a complex web of needs and challenges which political parties and elected officials should keep in mind when proposing legislation and setting up budgets and services. That is why representation of women and minorities is so important. They add their unique points of views and experiences to the democratic discourse and lead to more comprehensive political approaches to finding solutions for all citizens. It is no secret that the promotion of gender-equality and empowerment of women leads to healthier, economically stronger and safer societies. While female representation is moving at a slow pace, gendered aspects of foreign and security policies have increasingly found their way into policies and institutions in the adoption of gender-just foreign policies (also often referred to as “feminist foreign policy”). Although much progress has been made already, it is important to keep looking ahead for new pathways towards more inclusive policies. This includes the need for a broader inclusivity agenda, collection of empirical evidence on the effects of gender equality on (security and defense) policies, as well as empowerment programs that give female decision-makers the tools to challenge those norms. A good example from our work is the *The Alliance of Her*, a program run by FNF and the ALDE Party. Over the past years, it has empowered more than 130 women with the skills, network and confidence to break gender barriers, occupy the space and be heard in politics. More programs like this are needed, to give women in politics the capacity to realize their full potential and, thereby, unlock the full potential of our societies.

We set out to explore what the future of democracy and citizenship holds in Europe 2050 and the verdict is clear. It is an unapologetic and genuine call for awareness, inclusion and equality. It is a future that is built on the very values that the EU is founded in and which it has been trying to promote at the global stage. This vision of Europe 2050 is by no means utopian, but it is also going to be hard work. Governments, civil society and citizens alike will have to stand up to populist forces within the EU and continue to embrace our diversity, for our strength and the future of the EU lies within it.



# At the Gateway of Participation

Oliver Fahn

The UN Convention on Human Rights is being implemented,  
 it is high time for humanity to network,  
 at multicultural schools one should see,  
 Migration can take place without prejudice,  
 Integration is by no means a crude word,  
 It is an issue that cuts across all layers of society,  
 it is an opportunity to learn from a very young age,  
 solidarity of the people is not written in the stars,  
 it is never too late to break new ground,  
 the consequences of the past still lie heavy in our stomachs,  
 The gateway to participation is ajar,  
 A beginning has been made, and more is to be hoped for.  
 Let us not regard democracy as a mere word,  
 we will be strong everywhere,  
 our planet will be a pleasant place.

## About the Poem

„Behind this plea is my professional collaboration with people with disabilities. It is about people being able to participate in general life regardless of their physical and mental condition. Why impose barriers on them through our blindness? Shouldn't a conflict hotspot like the Ukraine crisis be a signal that humanity's understanding only works collectively? When conditions are at their worst, there is also the greatest possibility of creating a spirit of optimism and overturning previous injustices. The morality of a society is measured by its treatment of the weakest. Why not approach each other here and now, unprejudiced like the children in schools, for whom it is increasingly becoming normal to accept people, regardless of where they come from, with whatever limitations, as equals? Is it not our unconditional duty to recognise brothers and sisters in our neighbours and treat them accordingly? The broad concept of charity resides in all of us, partly buried under layers of jadedness, just waiting to be awakened from its slumber to spark.“

# An der Pforte zur Teilhabe

(German Original)

Die UN-Menschenrechtskonvention wird umgesetzt,  
 es ist höchste Zeit, dass Menschheit sich vernetzt,  
 an multikulturellen Schulen soll man sehen,  
 Migration kann unvoreingenommen gehen,  
 Integration ist keinesfalls ein plumpes Wort,  
 sie ist eine Thematik,  
 die durch sämtliche soziale Schichten bohrt,  
 es ist eine Chance, von Kindesbeinen an zu lernen,  
 die Solidarität des Volkes liegt nicht in den Sternen,  
 es ist nie zu spät, neue Pfade einzuschlagen,  
 die Folgen alter, lagern schwer verdaulich noch im Magen,  
 das Tor zur Partizipation steht einen Spaltbreit offen,  
 ein Anfang ist gemacht, auf mehr bleibt überdies zu hoffen.  
 betrachten wir Demokratie nicht als bloßes Wort,  
 werden wir flächendeckend stark sein,  
 unser Planet ein angenehmer Ort.



**Oliver Fahn** \*1980, Pfaffenhofen an der Ilm, regularly writes short stories for cultural magazines and anthologies. Fahn has also published three books together with Polina Jäger: „Wohin die Fahrten führen“, „Absturz“ and „Lebewohl“.

# 12 Pink Stars

Henrieke Jarosch

Once Europa came along, Brave,  
beautiful and strong.

First she gave the continent its name,  
Now divine values change the game.

As resistant as a bull,  
The goddess energy is full.

12 stars on the big blue flag,  
They celebrate a pink comeback.

Women are in power,  
They don't discuss an hour.

Seeing problems as they are,  
No need for ego trips and mar.

Sparkle in their eyes,  
No more drama, no more lies.

It leads to passion, profit and peace,  
Men marvel in their seats.

Together they build a new foundation,  
Based on trust and a strong relation.

Europe rises higher while it flashes,  
Just like the phoenix from the ashes.

Others are inspired,  
Europe's secret is enquired.

At least it's simple, the main thing is so clear:  
Love guides us instead of hate and fear.

We don't fight and we don't humble,  
Cold, hard hearts they crumble.

We refused to give up hope.  
That now has an impact on the globe.

## About the Poem

"The poem „12 pink stars“ is based on the idea of a balanced ratio of women and men in power. My vision for a Europe in 27 years is big. And pink. Not only because the colour has an impact on the human psyche by enhancing positive feelings and calming aggression and violence. It also embodies femininity and is symbolic of a Europe governed by more women. Europe 2050 is loyal, beautiful and strong. It lives up to its role model function and inspires other states to peaceful coexistence. Feminine qualities have a decisive influence on politics and the economy. Is my poem feminist? Perhaps. My intention is by no means to criticise men or to deprive them of their offices. Rather, I see the union („together“) of both sexes as an opportunity for peace and growth. The rhyme scheme consisting of couplet rhymes as well as exclusively pure rhymes are meant to illustrate the balanced gender ratio. The harmony of the design corresponds to the harmony of the content. As an allusion to Europe as a female force, the first three stanzas refer to Greek mythology. Divine values will guide the EU in the future: trust, love and hope will be integrated into the existing structure so that political, economic and social progress will succeed. Even if no direct reference is made to migration and borders, the values mentioned are to be interpreted as an awareness of social responsibility and resulting actions. Governing and leading men are impressed by the achievements of the integration of female qualities („Men marvel in their seats“). Heartlessness, hardness and egoism are replaced by love, devotion and passion. In the process, the EU does not lose strength, but becomes even more resistant to crises and conflicts. The 12 pink strands are unquestionably symbolic. The unshakeable belief in a strong, peaceful Europe has ultimately led to just that version of Europe. Crucial to this is a balanced gender ratio that interweaves female qualities and values with existing structures."



**Henrieke Jarosch:** „I have been writing down my thoughts ever since I can remember. I wrote my first (ten-page) book when I was eight years old. Over time, my writing style has changed, but my creativity and imagination have remained. In my A-levels, I loved the German advanced course and gradually discovered poetry as an expression of my reflections for myself. I am privileged to have been born in Germany and to be able to publish my thoughts. Not every woman has this opportunity and that has to change.“



# Twelve Stars in 2050

Daniela Matoušová (FNF)

European Parliament .....  
 ..... European Council  
 European Commission .....  
 ..... Council of the European Union.

Never heard of it?  
 Not anymore.

**People know now.**

705 ... 705 ... 705 ... 705 ... 705 ... 705 ... 705 ... 705 ... 705 ...  
 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ... 27 ...  
 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ... 12 ...  
 1993 ... 1993 ... 1993 ... 1993 ... 1993 ... 1993 ... 1993 ... 1993 ...

Just numbers?  
 Not anymore.

**People know now.**

- Rule of law mechanism.
- Green Deal.
- Joint security policy.
- Free movement of people.

No one cares?  
 Not anymore.

**People know now.**

## About the Poem

“The poem portrays an utopian idea about higher participation of the EU-citizens in EU-politics in 2050, which starts with their awareness about EU issues. In 2050, more people know, which EU institutions there are and what their powers are, they know about its members and history. They know about the EU policy, they know, where the EU can step in and alter things. They understand the European values. Thus, also the desire to be engaged stems from this awareness. Without knowing, there is no caring.

First strophe: these days, many citizens of the EU countries are not well aware of existing EU-institutions and its powers and functions. The voter turnout in the European Parliament elections is significantly low in many member states. In 2050 vision, the situation is much more positive. An illustrative story: in a small town, in the north of Hungary, his mother did not even know, that there was one more election-sunday, where her european self could turn her wishes into a vote. That was 2023. This year (2050), the whole family will sit by a lunch and instead of their usual afternoon sleep, they will go to the local school to cast their vote.

The second strophe displays important numbers related to the European Union. 705 MEPs, 27 member states, 12 stars on the European flag and the founding year 1993.

The last strophe pursues some of the important achievements and guarantees provided by the European Union. People in 2050 are well aware of the rule of law mechanism, because it has been already used several times since its launch in 2020 – Hungary and Poland nearly lost its funding in 2030 because of the limited media freedom. The governments of both states implemented several reforms, which lead to an increased independence of the media landscape in both countries. Green Deal has lead to reduction of CO2 emissions and transfer to the renewable energy resources.”



**Daniela Matoušová** joined the Prague office of the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation for Freedom in January 2022. She has a degree in public and social policy at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Charles University in Prague. She spent a year at a grammar school in Bavaria during her high school and a semester at the University of Vienna during her university studies. She speaks German and English.

# Sustainable Europe

Dr. Nele Fabian

The topic of sustainability lies at the very core of any outlook on Europe 2050. Every societal, economic, and demographic change around the globe is inseparably connected to it. Every political problem, solution and any possible resulting scenario of events has to be seen as intertwined with a much bigger environmental picture, whether we pay conscious regard to this fact or not. The visions for a sustainable Europe portrayed in the following poems all make distinct reference to the complexity of this issue. From the biosphere impacted by pollution over the exploitation of limited resources and the economic dimensions of (sustainable) technology, to conscious consumption and viable urban lifestyles – all are interconnected and can only work out or fail in combination.

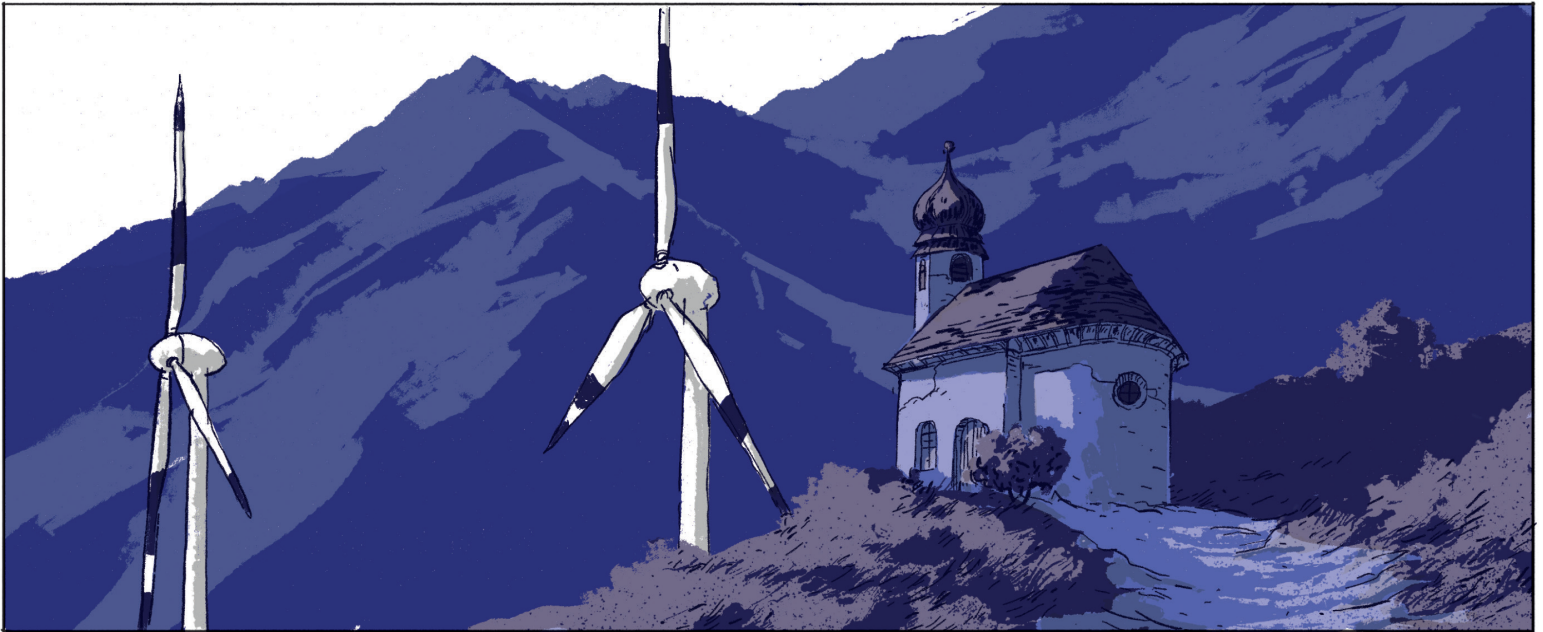
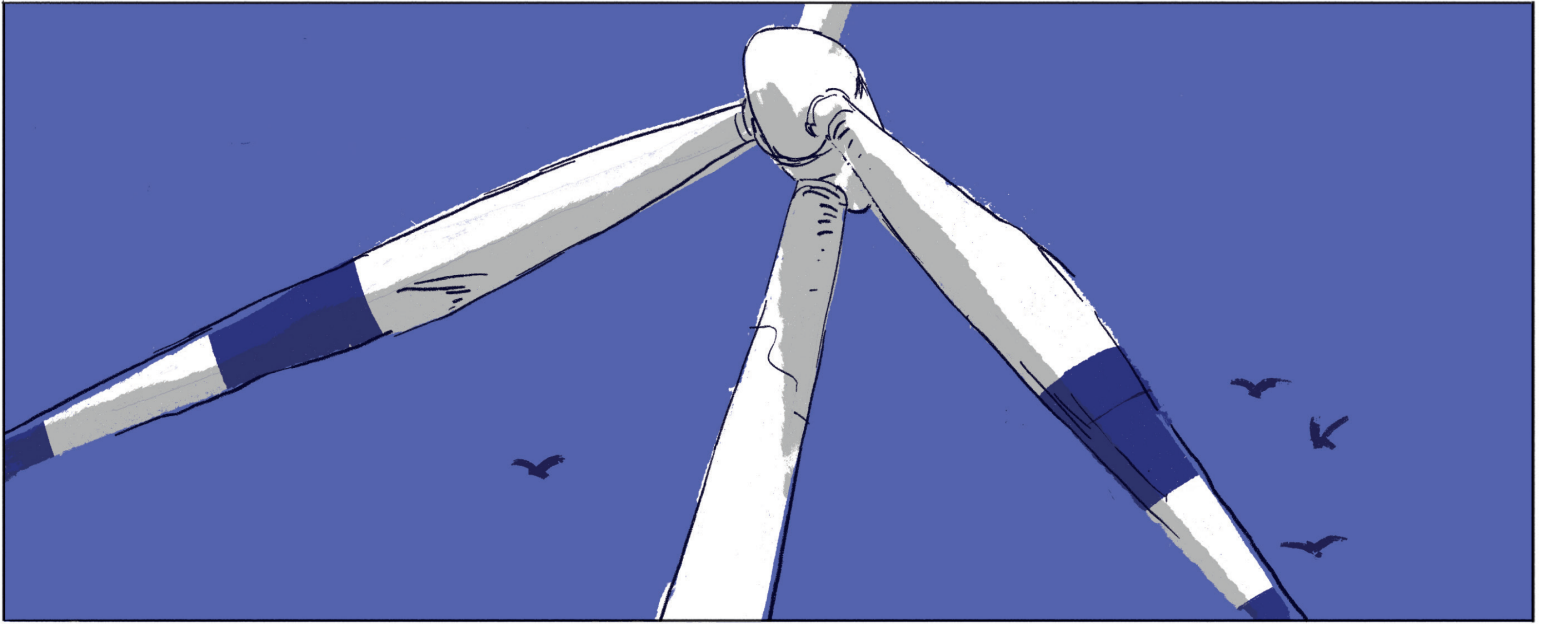
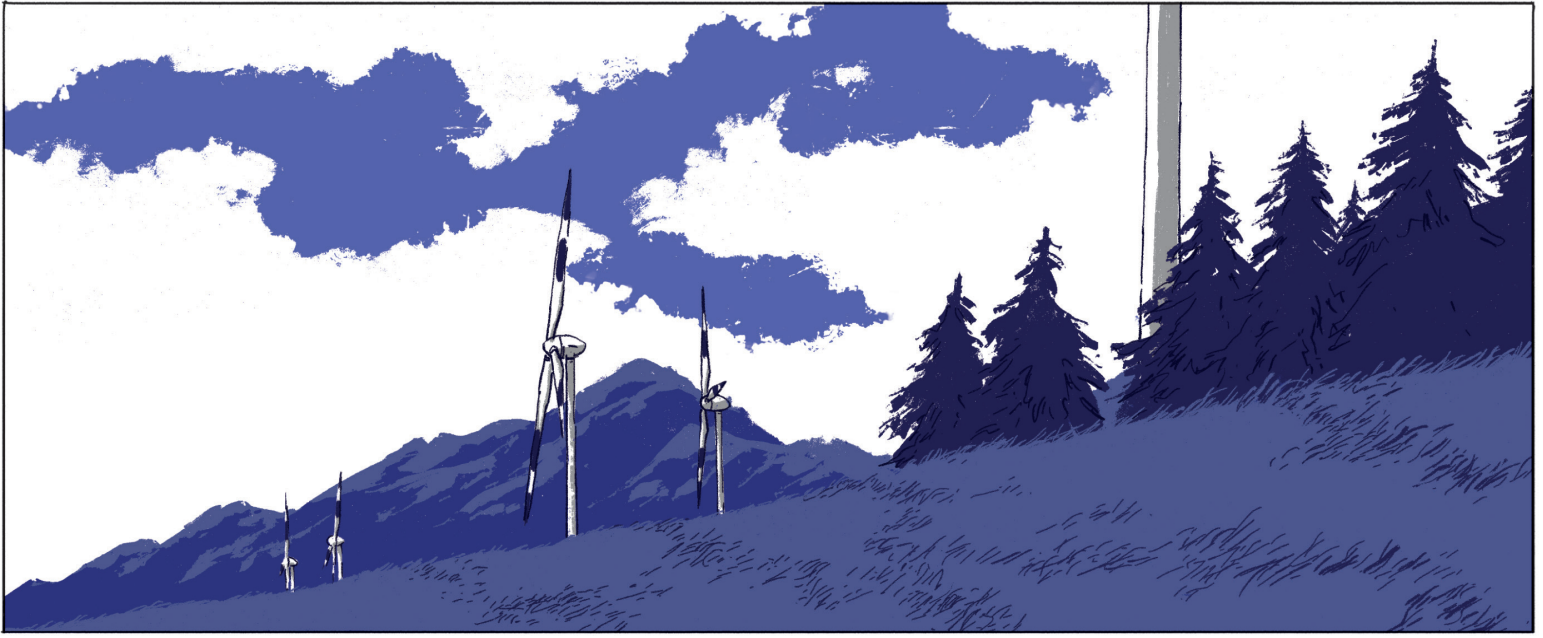
The poems complement each other, by basing their outlook on what they consider the key components of a good life, and it is not surprising that all of them centre their vision around a healthy, clean, and diverse natural environment. *“A World Full of Life”* emphasizes the importance of a conscious choice in political and economic decision-making, implementing that a collective choice is composed of many individual choices. Thus, one choice is nothing without the many, but the core unit of the many is always the one. *“We Will Stand by the Sea”* echoes the claims of impactful global movements such as Fridays for Future, envisioning a scenario where we have taken all right decisions in the present. Consequently, we are able to rest in the knowledge that we have ensured the safety of future generations. But there is another layer of experience: even if the decision-makers of the “past” (= our current present) now (= in 2050) have much less time left on earth to enjoy the benefits of their own work than their children have, they see and feel the mere experience of a recovered environment on their own bodies. All the effort has been worth it, and in hindsight the past degradation of the environment seems almost impossible not to have overcome. Finally, our bonus poem *“European Dream: The Sustainable Renaissance”* ties together the impressions described above, but subtly places a universal claim over it: ultimately, the European Dream is not about reserving this thriving future for Europe only. Europe is to stand as an example, not only for its own diverse societies, but for mankind and the entire planet at large. This encompasses the basic values of solidarity, responsibility, and collaboration out of insight, not through force. These values are to be held just as high as the goal of sustainability itself. The poem thus suggests that eventually, only a combination of both can lead to a truly good life.

The poems, although utopian, uniformly suggest that a recovered environment is ultimately the determining factor of the ability to experience true fulfilment: This insight goes beyond mere romanticism: even under the (equally utopian) scenario of a future, where remaining resources are well-managed through technology, societies are shielded from the effects of climate change through engineered approaches, and advanced urban structures facilitate synthesized lifestyles that are less and less dependent on “classic” natural resources

altogether; the idea of a societal disconnection from an impoverished natural environment remains instinctively disturbing. The EU’s approach is highly value-driven and, in its core principles, very much aligns with the utopian visions depicted in the three poems. The idea of a good life is at its centre and based on a fundamental understanding of “prosperity”. This encompasses fairly distributed access to all basic preconditions that a thriving society requires: safety, nourishment, healthy and good living conditions, the possibility to contribute to the economy, and the possibility to rest and recreate. Paired with the claim to always make equal access to fundamental rights conditional as well, the European idea of a future where sustainability meets freedom may sound truly utopian in some other regions of the world. Yet, the EU already has most, if not all crucial structures and resources in place to make the utopia become a reality.

The 2020 European Green Deal, with its goal to make the EU carbon neutral by 2050, projects a clear commitment to all utopian components addressed in the poems: containment of climate change in a status quo, high biodiversity, carbon neutrality, the end of pollution, a circular economy, energy-optimized buildings, food security, and a thriving economy based on clean technology, non-toxic production and innovation made in Europe. Implemented through the European Climate Law and voluminous policy packages such as the “Fit for 55” policies, the European Union is working hard against the currently still prevalent present bias that has dominated both European politics and its economy. The term “present bias”, as used in behavioural economics, describes people’s tendency to prioritise short-term over long-term payoffs when comparing two future scenarios they have to choose between when work towards or invest into them. The additional fact that the delayed reward of a clean environment in about thirty years is weighed against the enormous effort and delayed financial benefits that have to be taken into account before this reward is achieved, leads to a consecutive struggle to define priorities: economic safety now or economic safety later? In either case, the effects of climate change are already driving and will increasingly determine the economic options that are still available. Finding a joint approach in a race against time where short-term decisions have not had a comparable impact on the entire future of the planet before, seems an unprecedented mammoth task, even with the most open mind and most sincere set of values. And even if Europe manages to solve the problem within its own borders, it still cannot impose the same strategy on other regions of the world, nor can it prevent the massive global effects that are already beginning to show wherever climate change is beginning to make the world uninhabitable.

Still, Europe is determined and has set itself up to fight for – and succeed in! – whatever can still be done to ensure that the environment stabilises, resources remain available and that access to them can be provided to all that need them under the wings of rule of law, political participation, human rights, and freedom. As the poems make clear, this is a choice that every European has to understand and consciously live by. Europe’s definition of a good life will be measured by its ability to fulfil the Green Deal whilst staying true to its values. In the end, this is going to be Europe’s biggest and most convincing asset and power.



# A World Full of Life

Niklas Pienemann

In a world full of wonder,  
Where the sun shines like thunder.  
There's no more room for harmful gas,  
Only clean air for the masses to amass.

By 2050, we've made it right,  
Free from pollution, day and night.  
No more reliance on resources for our wealth,  
And happiness for all, no one left to stealth.

A future that fulfills us all,  
Sustainable, peaceful, and with a ball.  
As individuals, companies, states, and institutions,  
We're all responsible for our functions.

Nature needs us to flourish again,  
Renewable energy is what we'll attain.  
Solar and wind power are the paths ahead,  
Ensuring nature doesn't end up dead.

Everyone will contribute,  
No resource will ever deplete.  
Companies will be sustainable,  
And nature will bloom, so pure and able.

States will collaborate,  
Tackling problems, not hate.  
Institutions will be environmentally aware,  
And everyone will join, with joy to spare.

Companies invest in eco-production,  
Eco-friendly innovation is their introduction.  
Reducing their CO2 emissions and waste,  
Creating a world that's livable and with haste.

# Eine Welt voller Leben

(German version)

In einer Welt voller Wunder,  
In der die Sonne strahlt wie Donner.  
Ist kein Platz mehr für schädliche Gase,  
Nur noch saubere Luft, die jeder atmen kann in der Masse.

Bis 2050 haben wir es geschafft,  
Die Erde von Verschmutzung zu befreien, weit und breit.  
Die Wirtschaft wird nicht mehr von Ressourcen abhängen,  
Und niemand wird zurückgelassen, ohne Glück zu empfangen.

Eine Zukunft, die uns erfüllt,  
Nachhaltig, friedlich und erfüllt.  
Als Einzelpersonen, Unternehmen, Staaten und Institutionen,  
Wir alle sind verantwortlich für unsere Funktionen.

Die Natur braucht uns, um wieder zu gedeihen,  
Erneuerbare Energie werden wir beziehen.  
Sonnen- und Windkraft sind die Wege der Zukunft,  
Um sicherzustellen, dass die Natur nicht vergeht.

Jeder Einzelne wird beitragen,  
Und keine Ressource wird mehr versiegen.  
Die Unternehmen werden nachhaltig sein,  
Und die Natur wird blühen, so rein.

Die Staaten werden zusammenarbeiten,  
Und die Probleme gemeinsam angehen, ohne zu streiten.  
Institutionen werden auf Umweltschutz bedacht,  
Und von jedem wird mit Freude, an der Veränderung mitgemacht.

Unternehmen investieren in ökologische Produktion,  
Umweltfreundliche Innovation ist ihr Ziel und ihre Vision.  
Sie reduzieren ihren CO2-Ausstoß und die Abfallmenge,  
Um eine Welt zu schaffen, die lebenswert ist in jedweder Hergänge.

### About the Poem

“Our society has a responsibility towards the environment to ensure that natural resources are protected and nature can thrive again. It is important that we realise that we are part of a bigger picture and that each and every one of us has a role to play in creating a sustainable future. As a society, we need to focus on renewable energy sources to ensure that we stop wasting resources. We need to transform our energy supply to reduce our need for non-renewable energy sources such as oil and coal. This will allow us to reduce our environmental impact and protect the climate. By using renewable energy effectively, we can ensure that we meet our energy needs while living a sustainable lifestyle. Each and every one of us can contribute by changing our daily habits. We can rethink our consumption patterns and choose products that are produced in a more environmentally friendly way. We can also use public transport to reduce the environmental impact of road traffic. By making conscious choices in our everyday lives, we can do our bit to protect the environment. Businesses also play an important role in shaping a sustainable future. They need to invest in green production and green innovation. Businesses should strive to use environmentally friendly processes and materials to minimise their impact on the environment.

By creating sustainable business practices, companies can help protect the environment while improving their competitiveness. States must also assume their responsibility to address environmental problems together. Global solutions to environmental problems can be found through the cooperation of states. It is important that governments use their resources and political power to promote environmental protection. Through international agreements and cooperation, global environmental problems such as climate change, air pollution and water pollution can be addressed. Institutions also play an important role in protecting the environment. They must look after the environment and ensure that environmental regulations and laws are respected. By monitoring and regulating industry, institutions can help reduce pollution and ensure that the environment is protected. In summary, we must all feel responsible as individuals, companies, states and institutions to create a world worth living in. We need to focus on renewable energy sources, change our daily habits, invest in environmentally friendly production and innovation, promote cooperation among states and ensure that institutions take their responsibility to protect the environment. We must realise that our actions have an impact on the environment and that we are responsible for our choices. By working together to protect the environment, we can shape a sustainable future and create a world in which we can live in harmony with nature. A world that is not only worth living in and fulfilled today, but also for future generations.”

**Niklas Pienemann** is currently a student at the Berufskolleg Rheine, graduating in nutrition. He would like to become a teacher in this field, to bring others the same joy in teaching that he experienced. In his free time, Niklas likes to write poems about topics that are important to him such as the beauty of nature, family and friends, as well as political topics.

# We Will Stand by the Sea

Petra Zeil

“Do you remember?”,  
my daughter will ask me.  
“In days long gone by:  
Tower blocks where now there is only wide beach.  
Where birds are building their nests,  
tourists used to be.”  
And she takes my hand.  
The once small child  
is a woman now.  
And then she says: “Look  
how the sea starts to live again:  
The ray, the haddock, the burbot, the eel  
all swimming again in large numbers.  
Life and freedom as far as you can look.  
No more rubbish is dumped into the landscape,  
and that has made all the difference.  
No more seals are washed ashore sick and oily.  
People finally take care of nature,  
they show respect to their fellow creatures,  
full of consciousness, compassion, regard.  
Since then, there has been no pollution, no contamination.  
And our Earth is no longer too warm.”  
She laughs and hugs me tightly.

And we will stand by the sea,  
look at each other.  
The danger is over.  
Vastness and beach.  
Silent magic in the air,  
our Earth is a safe home again.  
Humankind has finally come to its senses,  
And indeed, it is already 2050.

We will stand by the sea that heavenly tomorrow,  
And I will no longer worry about my daughter,  
like I did for so many years.  
She will have a good future, now I am sure.

And we will stand by the sea,  
full of ideas.  
We will live,  
sensing new days while the sun is setting.  
We will stand by the sea,  
the water all clean.  
And there will be no fear, nor destruction, nor pollution,  
nor death.

# Wir werden am Meer stehen

(German Original)

„Weißt du noch?“,  
wird meine Tochter mich fragen.  
„In längst vergangenen Tagen:  
Hochhäuser, wo jetzt nur noch weiter Strand.  
Wo jetzt wieder Vögel nisten,  
waren Touristen.“  
Und sie nimmt meine Hand.  
Das einst kleine Kind nun eine Frau.  
Und dann sagt sie: „Schau,  
wie die See neu zu leben beginnt:  
Rochen, Schellfisch, Quappe und Aal  
schwärmen nun wieder in riesiger Zahl.  
Leben und Freiheit so weit man sieht!  
Es ist ein gewaltiger Unterschied,  
seit kein Müll mehr in unserer Landschaft landet,  
keine Robbe mehr krank und ölig strandet,  
der Mensch endlich aufpasst auf die Natur  
und Achtung hat vor jeder Mitkreatur,  
Bewusstsein, Mitgefühl hat und Respekt.  
Seither ist nichts mehr verseucht und verdreht.  
„Und unsere Erde ist jetzt nicht mehr zu warm!“  
Sie lacht und sie nimmt mich fest in den Arm.

Und wir werden am Meer stehen,  
uns ansehen,  
die Gefahr ist gebannt.  
Weite und Strand.  
Ein stiller Zauber breitet sich aus,  
die Erde ist wieder sicheres Zuhause.  
Die Menschheit ist endlich vernünftig.  
und wir schreiben tatsächlich schon 2050.

Wir werden am Meer stehen in jenem paradiesischen Morgen.  
Und ich werd mich nicht mehr um meine Tochter sorgen,  
wie ich es so viele Jahre getan.  
Ihre Zukunft wird gut, ich glaube daran.

Und wir werden am Meer stehen,  
voller Ideen.  
Wir werden leben,  
neue Tage erahnen im Abendrot.  
Wir werden am Meer stehen,  
das Wasser ganz rein.  
Und es wird weder sein  
noch Angst, noch Zerstörung, noch Verseuchung, noch Tod.

### About the Poem

"I wrote the poem „We will stand by the sea“ for the category „Sustainability“. I imagine myself standing by the sea in 2050 with my daughter, who was born in October 2022, and we see how much has changed for the better: The water is clean, the beaches wide and no longer overdeveloped and overrun by tourists. Displaced and endangered animal species are back in large numbers and can flourish in their natural habitats: The sea is no longer overfished, birds breed undisturbed in the Wadden Sea. There is no more litter in the water and on the beach because people have stopped throwing plastic and other waste into the landscape. The great change has come about because man has developed an awareness of the consequences of his actions and of his responsibility towards his fellow creatures and the whole of creation, and has changed his way of life. We eat less meat and fish, do not harm animals unnecessarily and intervene as little as possible in nature. Small-meshed nets are not used for fishing, and it is a matter of honour not to leave any ghost nets in the sea. The fate of the whole earth is essentially linked to the fate of the seas. As the oceans recover when humans refrain from harmful influences, a positive effect on the climate can already be felt: global warming is no longer increasing. My daughter can still remember the state of the oceans when she was a child, and in 2050 she is relieved that the situation has improved so much. I myself no longer have to worry about the future of my beloved daughter and the new generations. A feeling of freedom, life, light-heartedness and peace remains..“



**Petra Zeil** is a theologian and counsellor. She lives with her young daughter near Freiburg im Breisgau. She is interested in language(s) and other countries, loves books, poems and stories, is close to nature and particularly enjoys being by thesea.

# European Dream: The Sustainable Renaissance

Maximilian Luz Reinhardt (FNF)

In the year twenty-fifty, oh what a sight,  
A Europe reimagined, bathing in light,  
Sustainability thrives, the land breathes anew,  
A continent united, with purpose so true.

The cities now lush with gardens of green,  
Where once stood gray concrete, a new world is seen,  
Solar, nuclear and wind, our power unfurls,  
Combine minds, markets and nature, and innovation whirls.

Factories transformed, now allies of Earth,  
Resourceful and mindful, a circular rebirth.  
No person, no place, in shadows they hide,  
For in this new Europe, all stand side by side.

From north to the south, the east to the west,  
Each culture entwined, in free dreams they're dressed,  
A beacon of hope, for a world to admire,  
Europe's green heart, sets the globe on fire.

Rivers run crystal, the air pure and sweet,  
As forests grow dense, and ecosystems meet,  
The creatures of old, find refuge once more,  
In sanctuaries sprawling from mountain to shore.

How can we achieve, this future so bright?  
Ingenuity, incentives and vision bring light!  
For it is these features, which bring mankind's power,  
Nurture them, and they shall bloom like a flower.

This vision of Europe, a promise we hold,  
A future unwritten, a story untold,  
For as we unite in the name of the Earth,  
Our actions today shall give this dream birth.

Let us dream of a Europe, a garden of life,  
Where sustainability conquers, and ends nature's strife,  
And as we imagine this world, let's not wait,  
The change starts today, for Europe's free fate.

## About the Poem

„European dream: the sustainable renaissance“ is a poetic envisioning of a bright and sustainable future for Europe in 2050. Rooted in the belief that collective action and commitment to environmental stewardship can transform the continent, this poem seeks to inspire hope and positive change in the face of the climate crisis and environmental challenges. The poem's central idea is to portray a Europe that has undergone a profound transformation, with cities and landscapes flourishing in harmony with nature. By embracing renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, and adopting sustainable practices, this envisioned Europe becomes a beacon of hope, demonstrating that it is possible to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility.

The poem emphasizes the importance of unity and collaboration in achieving this vision of a greener, more sustainable Europe. It highlights the role of individuals, businesses, and governments working together, ensuring that no person or place is left behind in this environmental renaissance. This collective effort is what ultimately drives the success of the European Green Deal and the broader sustainability movement. As part of Project Europe 2050, this poem aims to offer a creative perspective on the potential of sustainability to shape the future of the continent.

By presenting an optimistic outlook, it seeks to inspire readers to consider the possibilities that lie ahead and to work towards realizing this green vision. This imagined Europe is not merely a utopian dream, but a feasible aspiration that could emerge from dedicated efforts and shared commitment to environmental stewardship. By reflecting on this vision, the poem aims to spark a constructive dialogue around the values and priorities that should guide Europe as it addresses pressing environmental issues and navigates the path towards a more sustainable future. In conclusion, „Embrace the Green, Europe United“ serves as an artistic invitation to contemplate the potential of sustainability in shaping Europe's future. By presenting an optimistic vision for Project Europe 2050, the poem encourages readers to look beyond the challenges of the present day and work collectively towards creating a greener, more prosperous, and unified Europe for all.



**Maximilian Reinhardt** is policy advisor on economic and sustainable development at the FNF Liberal Institute. Among other things, he works on energy policy, innovative climate protection and agriculture. As an active hunter and hiker, Maximilian is passionate about nature and the environment.



# Global Europe

Máté Hajba

When we imagine the future as children, it is usually optimistic and rather utopic. Utopias intertwine the human psyche and have been present in our history from the very beginning. Optimistic thinking imagines an idyllic society, where people are not lacking, are living in peace, comfort and all is well. They are dreams which have never been truly realized, nor do we want them to in many cases. Would anyone want to live in a Hieronymus Bosch painting after all? Our image of utopias changes with time and we tend to become more cynical about their realization. Yet, if we do not work for an optimistic future, progress will stop. Many artists, be it painters, writers or poets have long realized this. Poets, such as Percy Bysshe Shelley used the dreams of utopias to outline his at the time radical ideas about a perfect society and it was Oscar Wilde who famously said: *“Progress is the realization of Utopias”*.

Our aim with this edition of Poems of Liberty is not to root out utopist thinking, but to also include proposals and ideas as to how to get closer to it. The Global Perspective chapter looks at the EU in an international context, how it compares to other countries with regards to economic progress, human rights, and peace, but also how it is influenced by the rest of the world in the year 2050.

Optimism or the realistic hope of (even partially) achieving utopias may not be on the mind of EU citizens today. Inflation is high, there is a terrible and bloody war right at our doorsteps, immigration is dividing opinion, populists are on the rise, and economic growth is slowing or stagnating. In addition, the COVID-19 and immigration crises made us question the EU values of free trade and travel. The result: The European dream is stagnating and support for the EU is polling lower. We are fatigued by dreams, outlined by policy makers, that are too abstract, only indirectly affecting our lives, while the EU fails to properly communicate its many successes. Utopist thinking is not only lacking among the population, but it became something to steer clear of.

This is exactly why we need utopias. Dream big, and let the dreams of a better future help us through these difficult times. Let us focus on what we can achieve to give us hope and something to strive for. We need to imagine a future better than today, as it is the main driving force of progress. However, we need specifics on how to achieve that future we hope to see, so that dreaming is not self-serving but will translate to action.

Just think how far we came in realizing the European dream! It might seem gloomy now, but for people in the past this might seem much better than what they had. Utopias motivate us and the poets of this chapter do not only focus on their vision of the EU in 2050 but on how to get there. The poem *“Dreaming of Peace”* calls for unity in bringing peace, while acknowledging the problems of today: the war in Ukraine, and the debates on immigration and open borders. It envisions a Europe, where people move freely and war is nowhere to be found. We realize that immigrants is needed to supplement the workforce, and therefore adopt a welcoming culture and

a mechanism for them to be integrated. This in turn promotes more peace. Unity in the face of threats, such as the war is key in solving the problems that we are currently facing. The poem focuses on the human factor and what we, as individuals can do, to realize the European dream.

The poem *“Liberty’s Dance”* focuses more on the relationship of economy and liberty in the future. The EU is an economic powerhouse with a lot of potential. Rather than over-regulation, freedom to enterprise and to prosper may bring us closer to the envisioned utopia. In order to achieve it, people must be given the opportunity and freedom to succeed. The poem is not blind to the issues the EU is facing today, yet it calls for more Free Markets and Liberties to bring peace and prosperity.

Both poets and their works in this chapter imagine an idealistic future. Their strength, however, lie in not over-idealizing the present. In this way, they manage to raise actionable policies that could bring us close to these utopias in the not so far future.

We might have imagined flying cars as children, but they will probably never swarm over our cities. In this day and age, more accessible, cheaper, and more efficient ways of travel have become available. We reimagined the ways of achieving the dreams of the future without compromising on the goal. The poems are excellent because they provide guidance in creating a bright future, rather than over-specified steps that will have to be reworked due to unseen circumstances. They do what the greatest arts do: inspire us to action under the banner of values they provide.

Yet action needs to be taken today, not tomorrow, as 2050 is not that far away. It is alright that we dare to dream big, but we also have to work hard today to realize these dreams.



# Liberty's Dance, Europe's Market of Dreams

Lorenz Schmidt

In the year twenty-fifty, Europe rejoiced,  
As markets and freedom found their true voice,  
A union of nations, where liberty shone,  
A dream now awakened, with barriers gone.

The markets were vibrant, their colors alive,  
A dance of prosperity, where all could thrive,  
Entrepreneurs gleaming, with dreams in their eyes,  
In Europe's fair landscape, their fortunes would rise.

With choice as our compass, and freedom our sail,  
The winds of the market, set Europe to sail,  
Innovation and progress, in every street,  
A testament to liberty, making life sweet.

Regulations reformed, our markets breathe free,  
An engine of growth, for the world to see,  
In the hands of the people, the power restored,  
A Europe of liberty, where dreams have soared.

The flame of free market, our beacon of light,  
Illuminating Europe, in darkest of night,  
For in this new world, where liberty guides,  
The chains that once bound us, no longer reside.

In this Europe of fifty, where freedom prevails,  
Let us dance to the tune, of market's sweet tales,  
As we dream of this future, let's not hesitate,  
For the change starts today, and our fate we'll create.

Let us celebrate Europe, with liberty's grace,  
In markets united, where dreams find their place,  
And as we imagine, this vibrant scene,  
Our actions today, shall make liberty's dream.

## About the Poem

„Liberty's Dance, Europe's Market of Dreams“ envisions an optimistic future for Europe in 2050, where freedom, market, and liberty lead the continent to prosperity, unity, and progress. This vision for Project Europe 2050 is deeply rooted in the belief that these fundamental principles can foster a better Europe, capable of overcoming the challenges it faces today.

In the backdrop of the poem, contemporary Europe is grappling with numerous challenges that threaten the continent's stability and future. These challenges include economic stagnation, increasing wealth inequality, the rise of populism, and concerns around the erosion of individual liberties. Additionally, the European Union faces the task of maintaining unity among member states while addressing divergent interests and opinions.

The idea behind this poem is to inspire hope and positive change, encouraging the reader to imagine a Europe where individuals and businesses can thrive in an environment that embraces freedom and liberal values. It focuses on the potential of reformed regulations, open markets, and individual liberty to drive innovation, entrepreneurship, and overall economic growth as a means to overcome these challenges. By acknowledging the challenges Europe faces today, the poem emphasizes the importance of embracing free markets and liberty to combat issues such as economic stagnation and wealth inequality. In the envisioned future, Europe transcends these difficulties and emerges stronger, more unified, and prosperous.

As a part of Project Europe 2050, this poem aims to offer a unique perspective on the importance of free markets and liberty in shaping the future of the continent, addressing the contemporary challenges head-on. By highlighting the potential positive impact that these principles can have on the EU, the poem seeks to inspire readers to consider the possibilities that lie ahead and work towards realizing this vision.“



**Lorenz Schmidt** is a research associate at HU-Berlin. As an agricultural economist, the European Union and European politics are very close to his heart. He is enthusiastic about the free market and free trade and believes that the EU can benefit from both principles.

# Dreaming of Peace: The EU's Vision for 2050

Daniel Ilkevič

In 2050, the EU stood tall,  
With open borders and no walls,  
No quotas, no caps, no hate, no fears,  
Only freedom and love, through the years.

Amidst this peace, a world apart,  
The war in Ukraine weighed heavy on hearts,  
But Europe stood together in its pain,  
Hoping for a day without bloodshed, without stain.

Migration flowed with ease and grace,  
People moving from place to place,  
Seeking safety, seeking love,  
Embraced by all, below, above.

The world looked on with awe and wonder,  
At how the EU did not sunder,  
But rather chose to build and grow,  
Together, hand in hand, aglow.

The EU had learned to see,  
That true strength lies in unity,  
That diversity is a gift,  
And all deserve a chance to lift.

So let us dream of such a world,  
And may this dream become a reality.  
A world without war, without brutality.

## About the Poem

"This poem portrays a vision of the future of the European Union in 2050, where there are no borders, quotas, or hate. The poem envisions a world of peace, where people can move freely and safely, seeking love and embraced by all.

The backdrop of the war in Ukraine shows the reality of the world, where conflicts and suffering still exist. However, the EU stands together in solidarity, hoping for a better future where there is no bloodshed or stain.

The poem highlights the idea that true strength lies in unity and diversity is a gift that should be celebrated. The EU has learned from its past and has chosen to build and grow together. The poem calls on us to dream of a world without war and brutality and to work towards making that dream a reality.

This poem aligns with the vision of the EU's project 2050, which aims to shape a sustainable, prosperous, and equitable future for the EU. The project seeks to address global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and digital transformation. It emphasizes the need for a sustainable and just transition, building resilience, and strengthening democracy and the rule of law.

Overall, the poem and the EU's project 2050 share a common goal of creating a better world for all, where people can live in peace, safety, and prosperity. They both inspire us to work together, embrace diversity, and take collective action to shape a brighter future."



**Daniel Ilkevič** is a prominent Polish-Lithuanian researcher and advocate for liberal democracy, gender equality, and minority rights. He is currently the head of the Liberal Democracy Institute, a think tank that promotes democratic values and human rights in Lithuania. Ilkevič is also an advisor to the Minister of Justice of Lithuania.

# Remember Fortress Europe?

Jana Sproul

Remember Fortress Europe?  
It was a strong and lonely place.  
We built up our walls as if surrounded by enemies,  
and didn't see that it wasn't the case.

As actor on the global stage,  
how weird it must have been,  
to shine so splendid to the outside,  
and be so scared within.

What were we scared of anyway?  
Today we know no more.  
It must have been some silly reason,  
from times and times before.

Our children know of fear no more,  
of joy and peace they sing,  
for Europe is a home to all,  
which prosperity will bring.

Once the walls were broken down,  
we began to finally understand,  
that in a globalized world we will drown,  
if we don't give each other a hand.

As we grow and flourish,  
our responsibility expands,  
to be a leader on the world stage,  
and take on more demands.

Our economic dealings,  
nowadays promote,  
human rights and sustainability,  
to create a just and fairer world.

No one does doubts it anymore,  
that Europe knows it best,  
as values are not only preached,  
but lived at home at last.

## About the Poem

"The EU has done a great job at establishing itself as an important actor on the global stage. While the US is known to be the main security and defense player and China has been taking on a lead role in innovation and economic development, the EU has made itself known as somewhat of a values hegemon. We see this in the way in which it can leverage its most influential tool (trade) to support and promote democracies around the world, through programs such as the Everything But Arms Agreement. What dims the shining light of moral lighthouse Europe and undermines its credibility abroad, however, is the issues that it faces in these areas at home. The past years have seen worrying populist movements in countries like Hungary and the EU has long been known as "Fortress Europe", both in terms of markets and immigration. In my vision for 2050, the EU will have cast these doubts aside, as it has learnt to embrace openness. It has realized that immigration may offer many benefits for the bloc, e.g. to counter demographic and economic issues, and diversity is so normalized in our societies that children grow up knowing nothing different. This in turn will lead to less discrimination and a positive picture of migration and an overall stronger European society. Abroad, the EU has continued its efforts to promote democracy, human rights and sustainability and moved beyond promises to tangible action in fields such as due diligence in supply chains. The world regards them as a strong and just actor that leads by example."

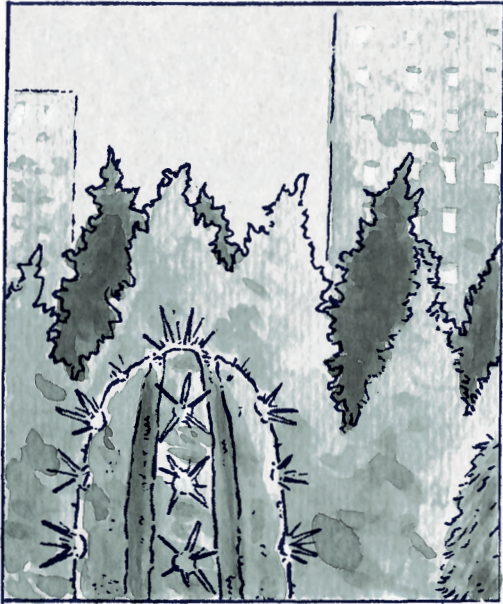


**Jana Sproul** is the Senior Human Rights & EU Funding Manager at FNF Europe. She is an avid human rights activist, with special focus on child rights and modern day slavery and has been working on the Poems of Liberty project since its beginnings.

# Naive.

What could our position in the world, a European path, so to speak, look like?

Nowadays there's often talk about this... though very uninspired in my opinion. Our own path, our own voice. What a chance! So I dare to write something myself...



I think about a European voice bringing values to the table, that are not presented often these days.

Im not talking about economical values here, but real ones which offer a thoughtful, life-orientated path.

Couldnt this be something truly valuable in the global discourse? Hmm....



Naive, isnt it?

But to dump it... wouldnt that be even more naive?







**ANIMATE  
EUROPE**



[www.animate-europe.eu](http://www.animate-europe.eu)