

## **"Timișoara - Declaration" by KOLPING EUROPA on the elections to the European Parliament from 6 to 9 June 2024**

*KOLPING EUROPA is a Catholic social organisation with more than 200,000 members in 20 European countries. As a democratic and intergenerational member organisation, KOLPING EUROPA unites national associations in EU member states, EU accession candidates (Albania, Serbia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) and in an EU candidate country (Kosovo). The organisation's commitment to European policy is also reflected in its 50-year participatory status with the Council of Europe. In connection with the 2024 elections to the European Parliament, KOLPING EUROPA is calling for a democratic, solidary and social Europe.*

### **Kolping stands up for a democratic Europe**

#### **The European Union must stand up for its values**

The European Union must stand up for democracy, the rule of law and human rights both internally and externally. Individual national governments threaten the rule of law from within. The EU must therefore consistently implement ongoing procedures to uphold the common European values as adopted in the Lisbon Treaty.

An asylum and migration policy based on human rights is the responsibility of all member states. Legal escape routes and life-saving measures at Europe's external borders must be provided jointly and in a spirit of solidarity. Democracy, the rule of law and human rights must not be dependent on nationality.

Democracy, the rule of law, human rights and European solidarity must be defended against dictatorships and authoritarian countries.

#### **Observe the principle of subsidiarity**

The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are enshrined in the European treaties. It is of great importance to ensure that citizen-centred regulations can also be made at local, regional or national level in the future if necessary.

#### **Strengthening democratic forces in the EU**

The European Union must work towards sustainable support for democratic civil society. At the same time, we call on all democratic MEPs to refrain from adopting extremist, nationalist and misanthropic positions. The EU peace project is currently under massive pressure from right-wing populist and extremist endeavours. It must be the goal of all of us to protect and strengthen the European promise of peace, freedom and democracy.

#### **Strengthening the participation of EU citizens**

In order to promote democratic participation within the European Union, the competences of the European Parliament in particular should be strengthened. Decision-making processes must be organised democratically and transparently. EU citizens should be better informed about opportunities for participation. The EU must be accessible and visible in the everyday lives of its citizens.

### **Kolping stands up for a Europe based on solidarity**

#### **The European Union must speak as one in a multipolar world**

The EU's prosperity and security depend on it being united internally and speaking with one voice externally. The European states would not be able to master today's major challenges on their own.

#### **Combating climate change and promoting environmental policy**

In order to stop climate change and the destruction of the environment, the EU must work closely with all other countries in the world and set a good example. It is essential to strive for a reorganisation of climate and energy policy that is based on European responsibility and solidarity with the global South. This also includes the joint financing of measures to adapt to climate change and the development of legal regulations that recognise the climate crisis as a reason for flight.

## **Solidarity with Ukraine**

It is essential that the EU member states present a united front towards Russia and make it clear that they stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. In addition to military support, this also includes the promotion of Ukrainian civil society as well as protection and prospects for Ukrainian refugees in the EU.

## **Protecting refugees**

The EU urgently needs a solidarity-based and humane refugee reception system that guarantees the rights and standards of people seeking protection across Europe. This also includes the creation of legal and safe escape routes. Letting people drown at the external borders contradicts a Europe that is founded on Christian values.

Kolping places the protection of the family at the centre of its own association's work, which is why we demand that special protection must be given to refugee families.

## **Promoting partnership with Africa**

Solidarity must not end at Europe's external border. The EU must work towards a partnership of equals with its neighbouring continent of Africa. This includes coming to terms with its own colonial past and standing up for fair economic relations. We see a strong and effective EU supply chain law as the first step in this direction.

# **Kolping stands up for a social Europe**

## **Strengthening Europe's social cohesion**

Based on Catholic social teaching, the EU should not only be a common economic area, but also an area of social cohesion, which is why social rights must be strengthened.

## **Understanding migration as an opportunity**

The European Union needs a common migration policy. A constructive migration policy is of central importance for overcoming the shortage of skilled labour in the EU. Migration and freedom of movement are seen as outstanding values within the European Union. It is also important to give people from non-EU countries uncomplicated access to the European labour markets.

## **Expanding the economy and the common market**

The internal market, i.e. the free exchange of goods, services, people and capital, must be further expanded in order to secure the location of European companies and jobs and to promote new technologies.

## **Offering young people prospects**

The EU must offer young people and young adults future-oriented career prospects. Youth unemployment within the European Union is still twice as high as the average unemployment rate. This makes it clear how important it is to strengthen Europe's social dimension.

We call for the EU Youth Guarantee to be strengthened and for the education and youth support programmes Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps to be further developed in line with needs in order to make them accessible to all young people. We also call for sufficient funding for young people's self-advocacy organisations and their inclusion in political processes at EU level.

## **The EU should be a community of peace based on common values.**

**Adopted at the meeting of the Executive Board of KOLPING EUROPA on 13 January 2024.**

**For the Executive Board of Kolping Europe**

**Vasyl SAVKA**  
Chairman

**Istvan GÖDRI**  
European Praeses

**Erich REISCHMANN**  
European Secretary

**Anton SALESNY**  
European Representative