



Our Joint Declaration

International Scout Conference “Scouting for Europe”



14th October 2017

Brussels

“Scouting for Europe” is part of the annual campaign “Be A Star” organised by the three scout associations Scouts et Guides de France (SGDF), Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft Sankt Georg (DPSG) as well as Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (ZHP) of 2017.





Scouting for Europe

On October 12-15, 2017 100 Scouts and Guides from France, Germany and Poland joined for the International Scout Conference “Scouting for Europe” in Brussels. Together they adopted a Joint Declaration expressing their vision of Europe.

The participants from Scouts et Guides de France (SGDF), Deutsche Pfadfinderschaft Sankt Georg (DPSG) and Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (ZHP) take a stand for Europe and express their self-understanding of and commitment to the following values: International Solidarity, Mutual Respect, Interfaith Dialogue, Life in Freedom, Democratic Cooperation and Tolerance.

The Scouts and Guides from France, Germany and Poland declare

- **that they want to their best to protect and foster democracy through Scout work and informal youth education;**
- **that they commit themselves to mutual respect and tolerance;**
- **and that they stand for an open und united Europe.**

They also call on decision-makers in politics, industry and society to encourage youth participation in politics and create room for the young generation to be involved.

In order to strengthen our European identity and a shared understanding of solidarity, they advocate for further international exchange and demand greater support for programmes such as Erasmus+.

We express our gratitude for their extraordinary support of “Scouting for Europe” to:

- Olivier Poquillon, OP & Michael Kuhn, COMECE;
- WOSM European Scout Region & WOSM Europe Office, in particular: Veerle Haverhals, Jo Deman and Marguerite Potard;
- Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union;
- Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union.

We are extremely thankful for their support of the International Scout Conference to:

- Terry Reintke, MEP & Arndt Kohn, MEP;
- Peter M. Wagner, Ms Nadiya Vertebna, Mr. Tsitsopoulos, European Commission;
- Jo Deman, European Youth Forum;
- Juliana Wahlgren, European Network Against Racism;
- Sebastiano Potuto, Young European Federalists (JEF) Europe;
- Jérémy Apert, Erasmus Student Network.



Our Joint Declaration

Lord Baden-Powell himself gave us a responsible in his Last Message:

Try and leave this world a little better than you found it and when your turn comes to die, you can die happy in feeling that at any rate you have not wasted your time but have done your best.

BiPis Last Message (1941)

As the European Union faces ever more challenges every day, putting risks the survival of the European project and its values, it's just the right time to make a difference. Even more important is to share our ideas and opinions on Europe in order to create a better future together.

We are guided by our shared Values in Scouting, in particular:

International Solidarity

Mutual Respect

Interfaith Dialogue

Life in Freedom

Democratic Cooperation

Tolerance

The following Joint Declaration is the result of the International Scout Conference “**Scouting for Europe**” which took place from 12th to 15th October 2017 in Brussels. In six Working Groups, the Scouts and Guides from France, Germany and Poland have discussed the values above and developed statements on each of it.

The Joint Declaration was adopted at a plenary session.

Brussels, in October 2017

Participants of the International Scout Conference “Scouting for Europe”

International Solidarity

We as Scouts and Guides, from France, Germany and Poland declare:

Our conception of solidarity is a moral attitude of strong humanitarian values and the actions that follow from it. This attitude of unity and social justice is based on mutual trust, empathy and goodwill. Solidarity manifests itself in positive actions of support and mutual cooperation, especially in times of crisis, which creates progress and sustainable relationships. This concept applies internationally both within Europe and in Europe's relations with third countries.

International solidarity is an important value for us as Scouts and Guides because we are a global movement experiencing, living and promoting solidarity in ourselves. We contribute to foster this value through international gatherings where we share our ideas and points of view to impact our home communities and peers. Through the education we propose, we support international dialogue and cooperation, and lead young people to express their own opinions and accept others.

We wish to reach a common understanding of solidarity in all the member states. This can be achieved by including solidarity, as a counterpart to selfishness, into the formal education system and experiencing solidarity, for example through cultural exchanges. To improve the current situation in and around Europe, we use the following specific actions as well as advocacy.

The world has become more and more connected. Therefore, problems do not concern single countries anymore. If we wish to solve these problems, we need to work together on an international level. One of the European Union recent challenges is the humanitarian supply for refugees in and outside of Europe. As Scouts and Guides we want actively welcome refugees to our Scout camps and other activities in order to help in a successful integration. Another global topic which urgency is often underestimated is the climate change. We are certain, it can only be worked out, when cooperating worldwide. We want the European Union to use its potential to prevent a climate disaster! As Scouts and Guides it is our goal to educate children about the consequences of their actions.

Mutual Respect

We, Scouts and Guides from France, Germany and Poland, declare that mutual respect is the foundation of each and every kind of relationship between people.

Mutual respect is when we understand and accept differences which we consider a core value in our modern and pluralistic society. The base of mutual respect is tolerance which can be accomplished by listening to each other and by educating people about equality and diversity.

As a global movement, diversity is inherent in scouting and mutual respect is rooted in our Scout laws.

As scouts and guides, we are catalysts for change through our daily Scout work. We foster mutual respect by making people meet, educating by example, sharing our experiences and facilitating cultural exchange.

We strive for a united and open-minded Europe where everybody can be who and where he wants to be, and this applies in particular to discriminated minorities. We want to build a European identity and respect amongst its nations. To be able to realize our ideas we need support on an institutional, political and financial level. This way, we aim to reach the people of Europe and to make our voice heard by decision makers.

Interfaith Dialogue

We as Scouts and Guides, from France, Germany and Poland declare:

Interfaith Dialogue means for us - the Scouts and Guides from France, Germany and Poland, exchange of religious beliefs, values, ideas and opinions.

“Leaving the world a better place than we’ve found it” is the most important principle all Scouts and Guides vow to follow. Fostering dialogue is a way to fulfil our Scout promise. Interfaith Dialogue is a necessary factor to understand each other and prevent conflicts. For us, Scouts and Guides from Europe, it is our ambition to make such dialogue possible for all. Our Scouting organisations already help our scouts and guides to be engaged in Interfaith Dialogue. To ensure this, it is our task to keep our groups open to people from all religious denominations and to help our children to develop a deeper understanding of the different beliefs. Our common scouting values (tolerance, awareness, respect, friendship and brotherhood) enable Interfaith Dialogue to take place. As scouts, we learn to overcome our fears.

To encourage the future citizens of Europe to be open minded, respectful and aware of different religions and to stand up against discriminations our organisations want to commit to improve Interfaith Dialogue by multiple means.

- meet and discuss with local religious communities
- organise events together with multiple religious groups to present to each other their faith and discover the different places of worship
- make public and promote our actions and their results
- get inspired by experiences in neighbouring groups, regions or countries in Interfaith Dialogue

We should never forget that scouting is based on curiosity and discovery, and that religion is just one of the many colourful facets of this world! We want a change in Europe! We want the opportunity for people to discover other countries. Therefore, we call to all European countries to encourage young people to explore the EU! So they can collect a huge amount of experiences and the opportunity to talk to other people with other opinions and other religions in order to create an open mind.

One of our major points is to integrate Interfaith Dialogue into all school systems. So that everybody has a chance to learn about the different religions, traditions and customs, for example by making more excursions with young people to churches, synagogues, mosques and other holy houses. With all this point, we think that change in Europe can happen and people will be more open-minded.

Our claim for Europe is to change the attitude and way how people think about Interfaith Dialogue. For this, we need financial support, more active people, more projects, educated young Europeans and a common European spirit. As Scouts and Guides, we want to make sure of that by educating our Scouts and Guides and teach them our values. To go further, we ask decision-makers in Europe to support our claim.

Life in Freedom

We as Scouts and Guides, from France, Germany and Poland declare:

We, as Scouts and Guides, define Freedom by the ability of free choice and the ability to create your own identity.

It's hard to find a general definition of Freedom. Nevertheless, freedom, for us, consists of three different aspects. Political Freedom sets and secures the framework - through laws and constitutions - for social and individual freedom. Freedom of speech and freedom of beliefs are the fundamental pillars on which social freedom is built. Individual Freedom is the ability to create your own life the way you want it to be.

Freedom is essential for our culture. As Scouts and Guides, we help develop personalities that are open-minded and self-fulfilling.

As scouts and guides, we have to spread the message and the values of Freedom. We have to remind people that freedom is important, because people tend to take their liberties for granted. We want them to be more conscious about the importance of their own choices and the advantages they and the society can gain from this matter. Therefore, we as scouts and guides want to be an example: organizing intercultural debates, international exchanges and events of sensitization. In our daily lives, we need to show the values of scouting to the people around us, because we are all citizens of one united Europe!

We would like to get all people to know where their freedom is limited and where the freedom of others starts. We also would like to see politicians thinking about restricting Freedom more carefully, because it is a basic value and should be guaranteed for everyone.

Democratic Cooperation

We as Scouts and Guides, from France, Germany and Poland declare:

We, Scouts and Guides from France, Germany and Poland, experience democracy in our movement from a young age. As democracy is a core value for us, we consider the increasing number of nationalist ideas as a threat to minorities and foreign communities. By promoting violence and discrimination, some political actors contribute to the detriment of liberties, disturbing our democratic system.

These ideas have to be prevented through an education based on dialogue and diversity, leading to a sophisticated opinion. Doing so, this will improve international cooperation and lower the nationalist influence in Europe: Paving the way for a joint European way to address solutions on national problems:

We demand more transparency in politics and think separation of powers is essential for a democracy. A place should be given for young people in politics.

We demand youth representatives in the decision-making process. Their opinion is important and has to be heard. Let's increase youth presence in our democratic system and empower scouts and guides to take part as democrats!

Tolerance

We as Scouts and Guides, from France, Germany and Poland declare:

„The highest result of education is tolerance”
Helen Keller

*„If it's a change in you
Then the world is changing too”*
Daniel Lemma

Introduction

We, as Scouts and Guides, want to write about what tolerance means to us and what are its limits. It's worth to mention that by accepting and embracing differences of any kind, inclusion will be achieved. We want to point out that tolerance is also about courage. As ambassadors of tolerance we want to influence people and politicians to feel tolerance the same way we do. We should work hard to learn as much about the world as possible and show our local communities all we have learnt. In our declaration we will talk about our need to encourage people to engage in intercultural experiences and exchange their stories and culture. It will help us to deal with tolerance problems worldwide.

1. Our understanding of Tolerance

We define tolerance as:

- A. Accepting that other people have opinions without having to agree. The limits to tolerance are, when our set of values within the Scouting laws are compromised.
- B. The first step to an open, multi-cultural and peaceful society.
- C. A continues educational process. By exposing yourself to different cultures, customs and communities, prejudices and judgement is replaced by knowledge.

2. Tolerance in terms of Scouts & Guides

As Scouts and Guides, tolerance is important because it is a value of SGDF, DPSG and ZHP following the natural law. Tolerance is the first step to change and abolish taboos that inhibit our abilities to lead the future generations. We, as Scouts and Guides, are united in diversity both nationally and internationally. To protect and create peace, we need to tolerate our differences between individuals and as groups. Likewise, tolerance enables the ability to have healthy debates when discussing our individual and shared future. It is important that we express tolerance in our leading of young people, since this is the only way to get educated about the world we live in.

3. Protecting tolerance in Europe

In order to foster tolerance, we must guide the younger generations through education and games. As leaders we must be the best role models available and show the way in tolerance. Through shared experiences with other scout groups and associations, in both our own country and worldwide, we create an open mindedness that allows tolerance and provides material for a continued education for both leaders and youngsters. National and international jamborees are good examples of activities that embrace and encourage interactions through diversity in all age groups. Just as much, we need to draw lines and speak up against racism and injustice in our everyday scout life, it is important to open our troops to everyone and embrace the value of diverse backgrounds. By including newcomers, e.g. refugees and immigrants, we are offered an opportunity to gain valuable insights about the world from home. In order to receiving this educational gift, the first step is to be tolerant and inviting.

4. What do we want to change

In order to make the situation in Europe even better, it is important that we strengthen the European feeling and identity. By arranging more international projects, we are able to work together and become closer as one European people.

We need to draw attention to human rights in Europe especially protecting the freedom of speech, allowing people to have their own opinions, religions and lifestyles. The implementation of human rights starts by tolerating minorities and outsiders.

We need to show how important funding is for our work and we need to fight to avoid budget cuttings.

5. Future visions

We need to teach tolerance as a concept both in scouting as well as at school; it needs to be present in our everyday life.

We need to fight for and maintain peace in the world order to create a safe environment where fear is not ruling peoples lives. When people are safe at home, they are able to trust their peers and their authorities and become more tolerant and open minded towards diversity both nationally and internationally.

We need to strengthen the EU and the European identity. We need not to fear our neighbours but embrace our differences and find the common denominators to become stronger. We need funding for the youth education to create strong new generations.