

## Preface

Few questions are more important for the future of the European Union than this: what do young Europeans want it to be and do? Over the last three years, a group of young Europeans at Oxford University has been working with me to find answers to that vital question.

Our team has used a variety of methods. We have conducted some 200 interviews with a wide range of Europeans. A set of carefully designed, simple questions, asking for instance what people regard as their formative, best and worst European moments, and what they most want the EU to do by 2030, produced some fascinating answers. We posed those same questions to leading academics, politicians, journalists and artists, and then dug deeper with each of them into their special fields.

Since this is clearly not a representative sample of Europeans, we complemented this qualitative research with four rounds of opinion polling of a representative sample in the 27 member states of the EU and the UK. We were delighted to do this in partnership with the eupinions polling project of the Bertelsmann Foundation.

Needless to say, we also applied more traditional research methods, such as reviewing the relevant literatures and consulting with leading experts, also in a series of webinars, lectures and a major international conference at Oxford. Our internal debates, enriched by criticism from specialists in relevant fields, further deepened the analysis and sharpened the prescription. Most of this rich material, both qualitative and quantitative, is available on our website *europeanmoments.com*. That is the other major product of this 'Europe's Stories' project of the Dahrendorf Programme at the European Studies Centre, St Antony's College, University of Oxford.

This report starts with an introductory chapter exploring what we mean by 'young Europeans' and what some of their characteristic attitudes and priorities are. There follow thematic chapters on five major areas that emerged as being of the first importance to this generation. In each of these chapters we first describe, on the basis of our own and others' research, what young Europeans want the EU to do. We go on to discuss what the EU is and is not doing in this area. In a concluding section, the authors, all of whom are currently or have recently been graduate students at Oxford,

advance some suggestions of their own as to what the EU should do to meet these expectations. A final chapter looks at synergies and trade-offs between the different areas.

We hope that policymakers, analysts and opinion-formers will find this report of interest and we look forward to hearing the responses of other Europeans, young and old.

*Timothy Garton Ash*  
*Oxford, June 2021*