OBESSU
Organising Bureau of
European School Student Unions

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1. **What are the challenges the world is facing now, how they will affect the future of human rights, and what future do you want for human rights?**

   - The long term Impact of COVID 19: The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant disruptions to education systems worldwide, exacerbating existing inequalities and challenges faced by students. From a human rights perspective, it has highlighted the right to education and the need for equitable access to quality education for all. The pandemic has affected the right to health and well-being, with the impact being felt disproportionately by marginalised groups. In terms of the future of human rights, it is crucial to ensure that education systems are resilient, inclusive, and responsive to emergencies like pandemics, prioritising universal access and digital literacy - this leads to an updated curricula that adapts to the current digitalisation, use of AI and different learning materials related to non- and informal learning.

   - Climate Change: Climate change poses a grave threat to human rights, including the right to life, health, food, water, housing, and development. As the world faces increasing natural disasters, rising temperatures, and environmental degradation, it is essential to prioritise climate justice in our future approaches to human rights. This means recognising the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic rights, and taking collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to renewable energy sources, and ensure the participation of vulnerable communities in climate decision-making. Linking this to education it is essential to learn about climate and sustainability in schools on all levels of education and cross-curricula. Schools and education institutions also need to have a structural priority to this by physically making campus-areas more sustainable.

   - Cost of living crisis & extreme poverty: The cost of living crisis and extreme poverty have a direct impact on basic human rights, such as the right to food, housing, and healthcare. In many countries, escalating living costs combined with stagnant wages contribute to a growing wealth gap, leaving vulnerable groups at risk of falling into poverty. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive social protection systems, fair taxation, sustainable economic policies, and the recognition of the right to a dignified standard of living for all individuals.

   - Inclusivity regarding both gender, identity, sexuality, ethnicity, accessibility: Achieving inclusivity in all terms is fundamental to ensuring the full realisation of human rights. Discrimination and exclusion based on these characteristics undermine the principles of equality and non-discrimination. OBESSU advocates for inclusive education systems that

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respect and celebrate diversity, provide safe spaces, promote comprehensive sexuality education, and foster inclusive policies, free from any form of discrimination or prejudice. The future of human rights should aim for societies that embrace and protect the rights and identities of all individuals, irrespective of their gender, identity, sexuality, ethnicity, or accessibility needs

2. **What are your recommendations to decision and policymakers, including governments, civil society, international organisations, the United Nations, and others, to advance human rights in the future?**
   - Centreing the youth in the decision-making process: Recognising that young people are key stakeholders and ensuring their meaningful participation in policy discussions and decision-making processes. A drastic turn in the right direction here is needed more than ever. The youth are facing a numerous and growing amount of problems coming up in the future due to past generations - and will indeed be the ones facing the consequences. If the youth are not listened to, it will have fatal results.
   - Vote@16: Lowering the voting age to 16 to enable young people to have a say in shaping their future and the policies that affect them. There is much evidence showing that young people are interested in voting and in some European countries lowering the voting age to 16 has has positive results. Our research can be found here.
   - Taxation of big tech companies: Implementing fair taxation policies for big tech companies to address wealth disparities and ensure that resources are allocated towards promoting human rights.
   - Giving more influence to society and away from single politicians and influential individuals: Promoting participatory democracy and ensuring that power is decentralised, allowing for more inclusive and representative decision-making processes.
   - Less polarised societies: Promoting dialogue, empathy, and understanding to bridge divides and create societies that value diverse perspectives, resulting in the protection and promotion of human rights. Promoting this through education and schools are important.
   - Green and twin transition: Advocating for sustainable development and transitioning towards environmentally-friendly practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change and prioritise the well-being of future generations.

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3. **What commitments and actions can young people take towards advancing human rights in the future?**

- Organising themselves in unions and organisations: Coming together collectively to advocate for their rights and create platforms for their voices to be heard.
- Voting: Actively participating in democratic processes by voting in elections to support representatives who advocate for human rights.
- Getting involved where they usually are not allowed, demanding to be taken seriously: Challenging barriers and stereotypes that limit their involvement in decision-making spaces and demanding their inclusion and recognition as valid contributors to policy discussions.