



Statement by the European Commission

Delivered by Vice-President Šuica, Vice-President of the European Commission

**On the occasion of the 2023 SDG Summit
High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the 78th
United Nations General Assembly**

Accelerating SDG Commitments: 1.8 Billion Adolescents and Youth Transforming our World

**19 September 2023
New York**

Your Excellencies,
Honourable Guests
Ladies and gentlemen,
I am delighted to speak to you today.

The European Union believes that we need the vision, engagement and participation of all young people to build a greener more inclusive, fair and just future.

We recognize children and adolescents as key drivers of the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We therefore took concrete measures to better support their well-being, and to empower and engage youth inside the European Union and globally.

Together with UNFPA, we promote the health of adolescent girls.

Through our Spotlight Initiative, we protect adolescent girls from gender-based violence, and I have announced an additional 16 million Euro this past Sunday here at the UN. The European Union is the leading donor to the Global Partnership on Education with 700 million Euro.

We have launched our first ever Youth Action Plan in External Action. A policy framework for a strategic partnership with young people around the world. It ensures that our external policies and programmes contribute to youth empowerment and participation at all levels of society. It delivers on the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.

First, we engage. By increasing the voice and leadership of young people, especially of girls. We have therefore launched a Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative.

Second, we empower. Through a new youth empowerment fund we will facilitate young people's ability to fund their own actions that promote sustainability.

Finally, we connect. By increasing opportunities for young people to connect, network and exchange with their peers.

We must enable young people to fulfil their potential to be able to contribute to prosperous societies.

I firmly believe that the strength of any society is determined by how much we invest in the well-being of our young generation.

To achieve intergenerational justice and fairness.

To make our planet future – proof.

Thank you.