

Centre Right European
Association of
Students



CREAS ELECTION PROGRAMME 2024

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Preamble*

Europe, as a political community of sovereign states with a common heritage, contributes considerably towards the well-being of all European citizens. For the sake of the peace of our continent, we must work towards increased European integration, while respecting the rights of all nation states and limiting centralisation. Therefore, CREAS is committed to a deeper cooperation based on subsidiarity and political diversity.

The future of Europe is intrinsically linked to the strengthening of its youth and a deepened collective understanding of European values and identity. Therefore, it is essential for European youth to forge stronger connections in order to fully grasp the European peace project and Europe's common, interest-led culture. Achieving this requires implementing a comprehensive, transparent, and cross-border education policy that promotes intercultural exchanges. CREAS aims to support the parties and political organisations of the European centre right.

*AG Austria neither endorses nor condemns this election programme.

Higher Education

The Erasmus programme is a cornerstone of European educational policy. No other EU project does as well at promoting the understanding of other cultures and making the European Union so approachable. Therefore, CREAS demands increasing financial support for Erasmus as well as additional funds for students from academically under-represented households.

To maximise the benefits of student mobility, CREAS calls for the complete enforcement of the Lisbon Convention and the Paris Communiqué, which ensure the comparability of university credentials. Under these agreements, students are entitled to have their academic achievements from foreign universities recognized by their home institutions. We call on regulatory bodies to ensure that national agencies uphold the rights afforded to students by these agreements and are direct points of contact for students.

CREAS supports projects such as the European University Initiative, the European Student Card or bilateral universities, European degrees or double degrees. These serve to harmonise the European Higher Education Area and to support the European labour market beyond Bologna. Universities are the centre for academic education, but without a common framework, it is not possible to guarantee that European universities thrive together.

Research

Investments in research and innovation play a central role in Europe's competitiveness and technological development. The EU should therefore allocate more funds to research. Horizon European has to be fully financed to be able to fund all qualified projects. CREAS welcomes the continuing cooperation with the UK and calls for the reassociation with Switzerland.

Considering the current geopolitical situation, we demand a common European military research agenda. The prohibition of dual-use research in the Horizon Europe programme has to be abolished. Universities which do not allow for military or dual-use research must change their policy. The European Union's research policy should be characterised by technological openness and must always be subject to strategic rather than ideological considerations. Competition of cutting-edge technologies should be approached strategically.

Economy

The European economy has a unique opportunity to be a central tool in fighting for the well-being of the people and against climate change. The future economy will be defined by innovation, digitalisation, and sustainability. Across the continent, there's an effort to combine these forces to drive growth, competitiveness, and resilience. CREAS believes that the EU should be the main driver behind these developments while working closely together with its member states as well as private companies.

Innovation lies at the heart of the European economy. With a history of scientific breakthroughs, world-class industries and a culture of creativity, European nations are striving to maintain their position as global innovation leaders. There are several problems facing Europe in the coming decades. An effective economy will be pivotal for reaching our goals and delivering answers to our common challenges.

For this reason, we call for the EU to foster innovation by loosening and harmonising regulation and promoting competitiveness and interconnectedness of the European market economy.

Digital technologies influence every aspect of society, from commerce to education. Europe should be embracing the digital revolution and take advantage of the productivity-growth it delivers. We demand the strengthening of digital infrastructure in the public sector and speeding up bureaucratic processes.

Sustainability should be a defining principle shaping Europe's economic future. Europe is facing the challenges of climate change, lack of resources and environmental degradation. We need to work for more sustainable practices across all sectors. New green industries could deliver new jobs, and prosperity for Europeans. We demand that the EU makes real progress towards a low-carbon economy.

Innovation, digitalization, and sustainability will shape the European economy. CREAS wants the EU to strive toward becoming a technology friendly and sustainable continent, on the frontline in the fight against climate change.

Freedom & Democracy

CREAS firmly believes that the foundation of a prosperous and secure Europe rests on the unwavering commitment to freedom and democracy. As we expand our borders, welcoming new members into the European Union, CREAS emphasises the importance of aligning with our core values and meeting the stringent standards set by the Copenhagen criteria. CREAS stands dedicated to actively supporting and enhancing the rule of law and human rights in Eastern Europe and other prospective member regions.

The EU, in its current form, lacks sufficient democratic accountability and transparency. We must strengthen the mechanisms for reviewing EU legislative proposals from a subsidiarity perspective. We must also ensure that these review mechanisms are transparent and involve national parliaments more closely. For this reason, EU institutions need to adopt more stringent and clear measures to increase openness in legislative processes and internal deliberations.

Europe has long been a beacon of freedom and democracy. We pledge to actively support movements and organisations worldwide that advocate for democratic governance and human rights.

Through strategic initiatives like the Global Gateway, and through free trade agreements, we aim to strengthen ties with nations that share our dedication to democratic values, creating a united front against authoritarian overreach. CREAS stands with Israel and Ukraine as well as the students in Belarus and Hong Kong, supporting their struggle to uphold democracy against external or internal pressures and aggressions.

Cooperation with authoritarian states, particularly in the fields of education and research, has to be weighed against the threats of their undemocratic influence and espionage. CREAS demands to immediately stop cooperation with organisations which seek to hinder academic freedom, such as the Confucius institutes. Academic freedom is a foundational democratic principle and has to be defended against the far-left, far-right as well as other hostile influences.

In line with our Christian-democratic, liberal, and conservative heritage, our commitment to human rights remains unwavering, particularly concerning the rights of the most vulnerable. We propose that adherence to human rights standards be a prerequisite for receiving development aid from the EU.