



# GERMAN-BALTIC CONFERENCE Tallinn 2021

***“EUROPE SHALL HEAR YOU”***

***European Answers how to shape our Future***

**– POLICY PAPER –**

**Cluster A: “United or divided. Is there a way  
between individualism and collectivism?”**



BOTSCHAFT VON ESTLAND  
IN BERLIN



Botschaft der Republik Lettland  
in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland



***The Conference is organized by:***

**German-Baltic Academic Foundation. German-Baltic Youth Office**

The German-Baltic Academic Foundation promotes exchange and cross-cultural understanding between young adults from Germany, the Baltic States and Russia on the basis of democracy and human rights. For this purpose, we award scholarships, organize seminars and congresses, arrange internships and facilitate networking of participants and scholarship recipients through alumni work. In the context of the shared history, the Foundation aims to continuously develop towards becoming a German-Baltic Youth Office (Deutsch-Baltisches Zukunftsforum / „DBJW“).

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## ***Content***

Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Solution Proposal and Analysis.....	14
Conclusion. ....	26
References.....	30

## Abstract

Individualism and Collectivism – two strong words that are somehow united but also divided. Cluster A of the conference “Europe shall hear you” defined these two contradictional terms and determined three different problematic topics which are important for them. Four young ambassadors present in this policy paper their solution and thoughts which have been produced during several discussion rounds and the conversation with an expert, the representative of the European Commission in Tallinn, Mathias Juust.

Communication gap between youth and politicians has been a well discussed topic for many decades. Politicians do not understand the perspective of the younger generation, while youth, which is in many cases overheard, lacks profound political education at school. We propose that a uniform political education system in Europe and more accessible communication platforms between pupils and politicians would be a good start to build a bridge between them.

Lobbying as an influential power in politics has been increasing more and more, as well in local politics as in institutions of the European Union. Although there are regulations and special policies for avoiding lobbying, these are still not effective enough to support

transparency and prevent misuse of power behind the backs of citizens. We suggest that politicians should be controlled stricter for any collaborations with private companies, and for transparency purposes, everything which can influence third parties should be made publicly available.

The Baltic Sea is one of the most important transport ways and has been always used for logistic and travel purposes. Although several steps have already been taken regarding sustainability of ferry lines and cargo ships, there are still many concerns which need a fast proceeding. In regard to cargo ships, the lack of efficient technology and the cost of the existing one are the biggest problems. In order to solve that, we propose a cooperation between governments, companies and population, each striking from a different angle, so that complete and broad solutions can be offered. As almost all the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea are in the European Union, this organization is an important factor for the mediation and discussion of this topic, offering a common meeting point for the definition of new policies.

## Introduction

### Communication gap between the youth and politicians

The first topic of our policy paper is about the communication gap between politics and the youth. The problem of young people's lack of involvement in politics prevails in all EU Member States, although in some cases even more serious than in others. As the severity of the problem varies between each country, so do the different measures that have been used to try to resolve the issue. Although it is a difficult problem to solve, various methods have been successfully used to increase young people's interest in politics and their political participation.

With us youth becoming more disconnected from politics, we would no longer be representing our interests. It would be an undermining of democracy, since us youth would no longer be accounted for by the representatives of our parliament. Democracy is supposed to be for us, but if our generation ceases to participate, we will no longer be accounted for by the powers that be. Hence, personally we feel it is important that our generation does not forget the privilege we have to be living in a democracy and for them to be more active when it comes to shaping their country.

Currently, in the EU, the problem of young people's participation in politics varies from one Member State to

another. A universal measure which has been used in all EU countries is political education in schools. However, the content of this subject varies significantly from country to country. Judging by youth participation in elections, the most effective political education programs are in Austria, Italy and Malta. The worst programs appear to be in Estonia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic, where voter turnout among young people is generally low.

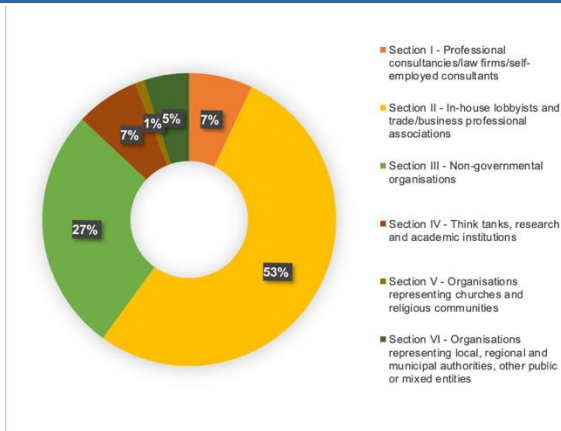
Certain countries also have programs like Youth Parliament, Model United Nations, etc. However, these are not universally promoted among all EU member states and in some countries, they are only promoted within certain schools. There are many programs that have been used in EU Member States to improve youth involvement in politics. For example the Swiss digital platform [engage.ch](https://engage.ch) that was launched in 2014. The main objective of this was to bring traditional politics closer to the youth using digital media. Users of this platform can express their concerns and demands to politicians and youth parliamentarians, also making it easier for them to hear the voice of the youth. The platform proved to be popular with the Swiss youth and the creators of the platform have also worked together with the national parliament regarding certain issues.

The youth being well educated on the matter of politics is vital for the future of democracies. With our proposed solutions we wish to bring politics closer to the youth and provide every young person with the necessary knowledge to feel safe partaking in politics. Our plan would ensure

that every student will have been given the knowledge to be more familiar with the political landscape of their country and feel more welcome to take part in politics. We also want to bring more opportunities to those who wish to participate more actively in politics and give them platforms to voice their questions, demands and concerns.

### Lobbyism as influential power in politics

The second topic of our paper concerns the role of companies and their influences on policymaking. The question of whether corporations on the one hand should have to get more individualistic spaces on influencing-possibilities or on the other hand should rather be restricted in favor of the common good, is not an easy one. An estimated number of 30,000 lobbyists with an annual budget of at least 1.6 billion euros influence the EU institutions in Brussels. About 60 percent of the registered Lobbyists work for companies, trade associations or consultancies. In order to better illustrate the statistical information, the following chart breaks down the distribution of registrants according to the section they chose to register in.



*Figure 1: Distribution of registrants per section, source: European Parliament*

They enjoy privileged access to Members of Parliament and the Commissioners. And they inundate MEPs with their amendments to draft laws. European democracy is in danger of being eroded into a business-dominated *lobbyocracy*. Now, the representation of interests is in principle legitimate. After all, neither MEPs nor Commission officials or even the Commissioners themselves can always take every aspect of legislative proposals adequately into account. Still most of the time, it is not always transparent what these lobby groups are up to in Brussels. Added to that politicians often comfortably overtake the information, numbers and statistics handed to them by companies and lobbyists without questioning them or checking whether they might be correct.

The creation of a political system which is transparent, also in the process of legislation, is something which should be extremely vital not only to young citizens but to everyone. The process of legislating is one which ought to be democratic. It is the interest of younger people to have a future which is not only shaped by distorted corporate-influenced laws but adequate laws which emerge from deliberation of politicians and various experts. Those experts should be lobbyists who are transparent and have equal opportunities of being heard. We believe that the current situation in the member states but also in the institutions of the EU is looking grim and that there is no policy strong enough to ensure this democratic, transparent way of lobbying and equal opportunities for all stakeholders.

The EU now has a weak “mandatory” transparency register which is not going far enough and is only partially mandatory. The register is a database of lobbyists seeking to influence European Union decision-making, and has covered the European Parliament, the European Commission and more recently the Council of the EU. The idea is that only those registered can hold meetings with EU officials. However, it comes with numerous loopholes, and is marred by inaccurate and incomplete data.

Of the three EU institutions, the European Commission is the most strict. Only registered lobbyists can meet with European Commissioners and their immediate subordinates. Phone calls though are not registered and unregistered lobbyists are still able to meet lower-level

staff. The European Parliament recommends MEPs only to meet with registered lobbyists. However, there is no obligation. And their assistants and other staff are exempt. Only 50 percent of the MEPs actually publish meetings with lobbyists. In the Council of the European Union lobbyists will also have to register if they want to meet the Council's secretary general or have access to council events. Still there are blank spots. Lobbyists can target the member state embassies to the European Union, also known as permanent representations. Here they can heavily influence the legislation.

We are advocating a systematic way of transparent and well balanced legislation which should be put forward in a matter in which the politicians are only bound by their own conscience. Politicians should change their self-image to that of a critical representative of the people, who not only takes over the information of the lobbyists, but critically questions it and compares it with counter-positions. The balanced consultation by lobbyists and experts on topics is an important part of policy-making and should be preserved as such. Still it should be made transparent in a way in which citizens can comprehend why they have been created in a certain manner.

### Role of the shipping industry in battling the climate problems in the Baltic Sea

The third topic of our paper focuses on how we can make the Baltic Sea region more sustainable and environmentally-friendly. This topic is extremely broad, as it can be viewed in different dimensions. As the Baltic Sea

is one of the most sizable water masses in Europe and as it has a big economical importance, the question about the sustainability of the trade made by ships in this region caught our attention. This problem is more present in Denmark and in the west and south coast of Sweden, because there the ship traffic is more intense. The exhaust emissions from ship traffic into the atmosphere not only pollutes the air, but also affects the Baltic Sea environment through acidification and eutrophication of marine waters and surrounding terrestrial ecosystems, which is harmful to both the environment and human health. The shores of the Baltic Sea have many natural touristic points, which are also jeopardized by pollution of water and air, threatening the income of many countries and people. The culture of many people is tied to the Baltic Sea, making its protection also a matter of social protection.

There are ongoing conflicts and discussions about the claim that the industry is already doing something against the large amount of emissions and fuel consumptions versus the damage that they cause to the environment. Although many important steps have already been done, there is still a long way to go. A sustainable coexistence with the environment that surrounds us is fundamental for the future. The Baltic Sea has been one of the most important regions of Europe for centuries, being an important part of the history of many countries in this continent. It provides not only a contact area between different nations, but also economical possibilities, which should be explored without forgetting the environment. Tourism in the Baltic Sea plays a major role, which makes

the sustainability of its waters an important cultural and economical topic. The protection of the environment is not something that only applies to the present, but it is also related to the future, which makes it an urgent topic to be discussed.

How the environment can be protected is one of the biggest topics in the EU. This concern was raised in the last decades and today plays a big role in the politics and in the decisions that the Union takes. It sees the problem not only as a prerequisite to economically and sustainably explore the Baltic Sea, but also as a topic itself and to protect many species that inhabit its waters. With the exception of Russia, all countries located around the Baltic Sea are in the European Union, which makes this organization an important meeting point to discuss new policies that ought to be adopted. Also, its regulations about the environment apply to it, obligating members to keep up with environmentally-friendly policies and actions. The report “Towards an implementation strategy for the Sustainable Blue Growth Agenda for the Baltic Sea Region”, published in 2017, is an example of how the countries within the EU can come together and decide for common policies for the sustainability of the Baltic Sea.

The protection of the environment is a topic that interests everyone and because of that it should be a priority in our lives. One of the objectives intended with this policy paper is to raise awareness to this subject, especially in regard to the pollution caused by ships in the Baltic Sea. In order to achieve that, one of the possibilities would be the

compilation and divulgation of data related to the topic, because this subject is not as known as, for example, the pollution created by road vehicles. Another objective is the increase of environmentally-friendly technologies in ships that cross the Baltic Sea, so that their negative impact on nature is reduced. As this technology is expensive, financial aid and incentives by governments or multi-governmental agencies could be a solution. The third objective is the incentive of research to discover new possibilities, technologies and techniques that could help reduce the problem. In order to achieve that, governments, universities and their scholars, and companies could work together, so that different parts of society would be involved in the matter.

## Solution Proposal and Analysis

### Communication gap between the youth and politicians

The gap between young people and politics is different in each EU Member State. Some countries have succeeded in narrowing the communication gap between youth and politicians. Since this is a collective problem, collective solutions would be needed to resolve it.

The first solution would be to implement universal change in the EU Member States' education systems. The main objective of this new reform would be to enhance political education at primary school. As mentioned before, some EU member states have handled this issue more

effectively than others, for example Austria, which is why the main solution for the problem is largely modeled after the citizenship education taught in Austrian schools.

Austria has a high level of youth electoral participation, which can be widely accredited for their effective citizenship education. The part we propose to add could be implemented in existing lessons, as it was in Austria, or added as a completely new subject. The subject would be mandatory. It would consist of the programs of each political party in their country being read through and explained. This would ensure that the youth are aware of their political parties and which interests they represent. Also, this would help guide the youth through the political landscape in their country, since currently there is a general confusion among many of the youth about what their political parties stand for. Through this solution, the youth would be given the fundamental knowledge about the parties and would boost their confidence and encouragement to vote and participate as citizens. With this solution, youth would collectively have the basic knowledge of their political parties and who best represents their interests.

However, this can be difficult and expensive to implement. When a similar reform took place in Austria in 2016, many teachers were not well equipped to teach this type of material. The second problem was the absence of necessary manuals which had to be acquired. Both of these options were paid for by the Austrian government. The same goes for other countries that would also use it.

We have no way of ensuring that EU member states will put in the effort and resources to apply this solution in their country, since it requires time and resources that not many countries will opt to spend. Equally, although it would give the youth elementary knowledge about the political landscape and should help deter political alienation, it wouldn't fix the issue entirely. Those who were ignorant beforehand are still not guaranteed to go and vote.

A second solution would be to promote projects involving political participation of the youth. Projects such as Youth Parliament, European Youth Event, engage.ch, but also Youth Ambassador. These projects are good opportunities for the youth to learn more about political matters. And for those who aren't too caught up, it would be a good opportunity to do so. However, at the moment, these projects are not widely available in all EU Member States. We propose that the EU should take an initiative to spread projects like these more widely within the EU.

With more opportunities being available to the youth, to learn more about politics and their citizenship, we would feel more welcome to also take part in such programs. Among the youth there are many who would like to know more about the political landscape in their countries and the EU, but don't know where or how they can learn more about these matters. Another great project that is being used in Switzerland is the platform engage.ch. This platform allows for more direct communication between the youth and their local politicians. A platform such as this

should also be available in EU member states as well, since it makes communication easier between the youth and politicians.

However, as with the previous solution, it is not a guaranteed fix. Countries cannot be forced to contribute to making these projects available to their youth. More importantly, this isn't as collective as the previous solution. This will bring the youth, who are already interested, closer to the political world. However, we cannot force participation, thus those who aren't interested in politics are not guaranteed to take part.

### Lobbyism as influential power in politics

The negative Influence of powerful lobbyists, which is not in favor of a common good, probably won't vanish any time soon. Therefore a change of the way politicians and civil servants see themselves and their legislative work is necessary. To start this process we put forward some demands.

We call upon the EU to implement a Transparency/Lobbying Register which is legally mandatory in all the Institutions (Parliament, Commission, Council), and which also closes the current loopholes (e.g. who meets the staff of the commissioners, who meets the permanent representations). Added to that the European commission should urge all of the member states to implement a mandatory transparency register also on national and at regional level.

A “legislative footprint”, which is a comprehensive public record of lobbyists’ influence on a piece of legislation, should be implemented.

Stricter measures counteracting the revolving doors problem have to be taken. Including but not limited to:

- Obligations for registered lobbyists to declare the hiring of former members or staff of EU institutions
- A longer cooling-time of three years after a Commission-, Council, Parliament- mandate if wanting to work as registered lobbyist or consultant for corporations.

The transparency register should give insight on law-making to the public. It makes clear who visits the EU institutions a lot and has influence on decision-making. The act of lobbying itself is an important part of a deliberative democracy and because of that must be always made possible. Nevertheless, politicians must give accountability to the European citizens. The loophole-free transparency register would make a big contribution to that as their work could always be looked upon closely and be commented on by press or other public figures. Challenging hereby is to monitor all influencing meetings politicians have with representatives of different interests. Nonetheless, having to register before visiting the European Parliament and talking to MEPs is a big step ahead in terms of transparency.

The legislative footprint is supposed to be working in a similar way. Here we can look to Poland as an example. In Poland, the act on lobbying compels ministries to publish all documents related to the drafting of particular legal acts. Those interested in a piece of legislation, including professional lobbyists, must provide relevant ministries with declarations describing the interest that they are planning to defend or promote during their work. Those declarations are also made public. The European Parliament and Commission should also implement such a rule. The European Parliament should make it obligatory for rapporteurs, shadow rapporteurs and committee chairs to publish a legislative footprint. MEPs, their offices, and political groups should publish detailed information on lobby contacts as a matter of best practice.

Slowing down the revolving door system is another step towards a more serving-the-people-kind of legislation. To wait three more years after having had a mandate will not stop the doors from revolving but will slow this process down and will give an important sign to anyone going into public office. It emphasizes really, that they are responsible and accountable towards the public. Being a representative of the citizens is a full-time job and should be an obligation to devote oneself to the common good of the governed. Critics might argue that former politicians need to be able to continue earning money after leaving politics, or that they can't just quit their current job when they start their term in office. This point is correct to some extent. However, there is already a rule in the statute for members of the European Parliament for a transitional

payment after leaving public office and a retirement pension from the age of 63. This transitional payment should then be extended to three years taking away the worries of critics. The extra cost should be worth it.

Another means of transforming the relation between politicians and corporations is making it transparent when former EU-officials are employed by lobbying firms or big companies. By questioning ex-representatives, their new/old employers, and their decisions a sort of accountability is preserved even after the mandate. As previously mentioned, these two measures will not stop the door from revolving but hopefully will increase the conscientiousness with which elected representatives do their work and how they see themselves. In addition, a symbolic oath of allegiance to incorruptibility, conscientiousness in office and balanced consultation in case of lack of information could also be introduced here.

### Role of the shipping industry in battling the climate problems in the Baltic Sea

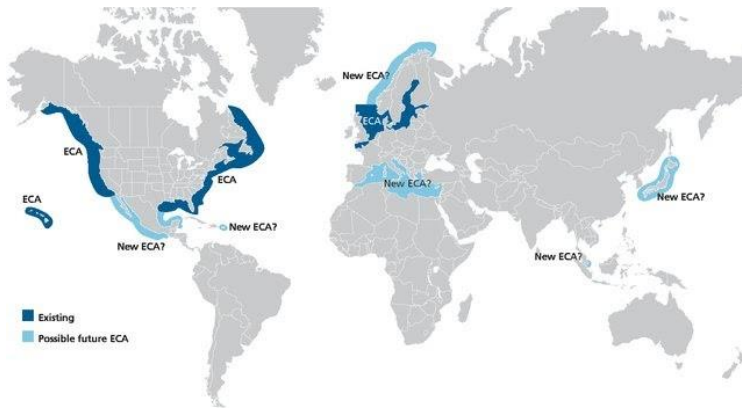
As the Baltic Sea is one of the most important areas of Europe, consequently so is its care. The thousands of ships that travel through it have an impact on both water and air. Many studies have researched the impact of ships in regard to pollution, which claim that up to 10% of all pollution can be attributed to ship emissions. Many cargo ships use fossil fuels and are not equipped with environmentally-friendly technologies, such as solar or wind energy. One of the big problems with the

implementation of such technology is the high cost of it. For example, the company Eco Marine’s Power offers the installation of solar panels for around \$200,000 and the installation of solar-paneled sails for around \$500,000. Because of that, many manufacturers ignore this situation. A solution for this could be financial incentives aiming at reducing the cost of implementation of new technology. By doing that, governments or multi-governmental entities could help the adoption of new equipment, while also boosting new sectors of the economy.

Many technologies that could reduce the pollution of ships do not exist yet or are in early stages of development. One solution for that could be partnerships between universities and companies, so that students and professionals from the university could test and better implement new technologies and techniques that could help tackle the problem.

Another problem is the relatively lack of specialized information about this topic. Information about the pollution of cars and industries in general is abundant, but information about the ship’s pollution is hardly known by the general public. To change this scenario, governmental agencies and universities could compile data together and organize scientific divulgation events aimed at the general public. Young researchers could be a special workforce for this task, as they usually have more time than senior scholars and could learn much new information, acquiring a broader view of the chosen topic. Since heavy oil is too hazardous for the environment, are there any alternatives

to power the ships? There are already international areas with limit values in terms of emissions. Emission Control Areas are areas with strict emission limitations, which are legally binding for ships. The Baltic Sea Region is included in such areas, as indicated in *Figure 2* below.



*Figure 2: Emission control areas (ECA) for Tier III and possible future ECA as indicated by DNV GL, source: DNV GL*

Since January 2020, the sulphur limit of fuel is at 0.5 %, compared to 3.5% in the past. In parts of the European Union the limits are even stricter with just 0.1% share of sulphur, at least when a ship lies more than two hours in the port. So called NECA (NOx Emission Control Areas) are regions that determine the exhaust of nitrogen oxides. From January 2021, the Baltic and North Sea regions are included into those areas. Shortly illustrated, a europe-wide or even worldwide network to face the problem of marine emissions exists already. What are the solutions

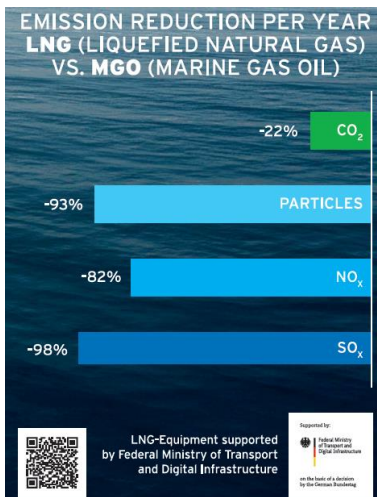
and ways selected marine companies already offer? Connected to the motto “individualism vs. collectivism”, this example should represent that every participant, including companies of all kinds, need to contribute to deal with climate change and issues.

Shore power is used by several cruise and ferry operators already. Viking Line and Tallink/Silja Line use it while staying in port for more than two hours in the ports of Helsinki, Stockholm and Tallinn. Compared to the usage of the auxiliary engine, emissions are reduced by roughly 1.5%. The switched-off engines have a positive impact on air quality, especially in the vicinity of the vessels, also there is less noise pollution. With costs between 300,000 and 3 million euro to install such a technology, shore power is very expensive. Also, producing the power onboard is much cheaper than producing it ashore. However, different studies of the EU-commission from 2009 and 2015 recommend the usage of shore power in the Baltic Sea Region with rather sustainable energy production. In the Mediterranean region it is not recommended, since most of the energy is produced by old coal-fired power stations. But even by producing the power from coal-fired stations, shore power is still recommended: “Relocating” the emissions from coastal regions to the coal-fired power station causes less emissions.

In some regions it is already mandatory to use such a technology, for example in Californian ports since 2014. Wouldn't this be a thinkable option for EU ports too? In

this case, shore power would be funded by the EU and it would be produced more sustainably.

Liquefied natural gas is used by several shipping companies, including ferry and cruise lines already. Thanks to the usage of this technology, nitrogen and particulate emissions can be reduced by up to 85% and greenhouse gases by up to 15%. Her usage of the dual-fuel engines is funded by a Swedish-Finnish EU project. Such funds could be solutions for even more shipping companies as an incentive to equip their ships with LNG engines. *Figure 3* illustrates the positive impact of the usage:



*Figure 3: Emission reduction per year: LNG vs. MGO, source: TT-Line*

Aside from the positive impacts by using this technology, still some questions arise: Is there a problem of “Greenwashing”, as in several new technologies? The

recent gas production is held via fracking. The impacts on the environment can be serious, particularly on the groundwater. To avoid the fracking problem, gas from the Middle East or Arabic countries could be gained, where fracking is not in use. Currently, most of the gas in Europe comes from such countries - up to 80%. Another option is the so-called “Power to Gas” technology, where LNG is produced by chemical processes, which is however generated from energy. So, the LNG usage would be even cleaner and more sustainable than gaining the gas from mineral wealth.

Apart from those two examples, other technologies are also in use: The Danish-German ferry operator “Scandlines” operates seven ships; six out of them are so-called “hybrid ferries”. That means the former diesel-powered ferries are turned into hybrid ferries (or were even built like this), where the diesel engine is paired with batteries. The surplus energy is saved in batteries which power the electric driving engines. According to Scandlines itself, there is a CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction from up to 15,000 tons per year. On top of that, scrubbers are used that lower the gaseous emissions up to 90%. Several shipping lines are already using such technologies, not only Scandlines.

## Conclusion

Individualism and Collectivism – two strong words that are at the same time united but also divided. Cluster A of the conference “Europe shall hear you” has taken a closer look at those two terms. Hereby, four young ambassadors considered three different social and political problems, and proposed their own solution to Europe. The main problems within the current policy paper for the topics "united or divided" are the political decisions which often are far away from the reality of the younger generation, the battle against climate change on individual level of ferry companies and as collectivistic collaboration with scientists, and increasing power of lobbying, which follows very individualistic goals, while strongly affecting the society.

The political gap between politicians and the youth is crucial for the future of our democracies. If we were to follow the example of Austria’s political education system, then the youth would be better prepared and more aware of the political landscape in their country. There are many projects/programs that can help improve the communication between the youth and politics, however these programs are not equally available. If we were to have these projects more widely available, we would have more of the youth taking part and either further expanding their knowledge or catching up on politics.

The problem of growing influence of big businesses influencing the legislation is one which has to be fought against collectively throughout the EU and beyond. In our case collectively does not necessarily mean that the individual freedom is restricted. It actually rather enforces individual freedom for smaller stakeholders which might have the same right to be heard, but not the same means. Our call for stricter transparency measures is the epitome of a more democratic and deliberative way of governing, law- and policymaking. Despite the demands made, the responsibility does not lie with young citizens, but with the politicians in power which are elected to work responsibly and trustworthy. As young ambassadors we continue to exert pressure and try to remind the responsible politicians of their actual tasks, which they should carry out in the name and for the benefit of all.

The researched contents about the ferry or shipping industry should illustrate examples that several steps against pollution and too high emissions are already implemented. In order to integrate this into the topic “individualism and collectivism”, it should be illustrated that every single participant needs to contribute to solving climate change. In this case, the shipping companies – as individuals – are one part of a big community – as collectivism – who produce emissions and should contribute to lowering them. If every individual gradually participates, together a lot could be achieved. There are several questions, which still need to be asked: Could there be even more European networks that fund or finance more eco-friendly (marine) fuel? More

incentives to use such sustainable options are needed. Furthermore, how could it be guaranteed that shore power or LNG comes from sustainable sources? How big is the impact of the shipping industry on the world-wide emissions?

Every strong community is built by strong individuals, whereas every strong individual is formed by a strong community - the first cannot exist without the second; they complement each other. This thought about individualism and collectivism guided our discussion, being an important reminder of how both terms walk together. A solution for the environmental problem will not come from only one side of society, but rather by the joint forces of different sections. Companies, governments and people in general should do their part and this paper tries to present solutions that could include all of these elements of society. Companies could pursue developing new technologies or techniques and try to make the existing ones cheaper; governments should give fiscal incentives and offer conditions for the work of companies; and people in general should canalize their efforts working on these solutions and encourage companies and governments that attempt to create solutions for the environmental problem. By doing that, the whole society would dedicate itself to create a better world for all of us.

## MATHIAS JUUST (EXPERT)



The expert of cluster A is Mathias Juust, who works as political adviser at the European Commission Representation in Estonia.

Currently he does his PhD at the University of Tartu on the topics of the impact of international trade agreements and EU trade policy. He supported the discussion of four young ambassadors while bringing his expertise and sharing his opinion on current problems such as communication gap between youth and politicians, problems of lobbyism, and climate change in Baltic Sea.

## JUNIANNA ZATSARNAJA (MODERATOR)



Junianna is moderator of the cluster A and has been part of DBJW since spring 2021. She is 22 years old and was born in Tallinn, although since autumn 2018 she has lived in Munich. Currently she studies there Technology & Management. Due to her intercultural background she thinks that it has become very fundamental not to separate the two

concepts – individualism and collectivism, but to understand that one is an important part of the other and they are actually complements through their differences.

## OTTO-TAANIEL KÄRBLANE



Otto-Taaniel is 17-year-old Estonian secondary school student currently studying at the German High School Tallinn. He joined cluster A because it deals a lot with the participation of youth in politics, an issue that he has personally experienced, and which could be a problem for the future of democracies in the EU. It is a problem that he believes should be tackled collectively, and cluster A offered him a great opportunity to do so.

## MATHIS SIEBLIST



Mathis comes from Berlin, Germany. Right now, he is 19 years old and studies bachelor's in Journalism and Political sciences at the University of Mainz. He chose Cluster A with the topic “Individualism and Collectivism”, because he was curious about this ambivalent topic and its meaning for young people. For him, on the one hand, individual self-determination is

one significant principle, on the other hand, only collectively, we can build a fair and bright future.

## MAXIMILIAN FREY



Maximilian is 28-year-old. Although, he was born in Potsdam, he felt himself connected to Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea region since his youth. Since April 2021 he studies History and Culture of Baltic Sea Region which fits his interest in Northern Europe. Already in his childhood he had a passion for ferries and cruise ships.

## WALTER JULIUS HOCHHEIM



Walter Julius is a 24-year-old Brazilian currently studying in the master program of History and Culture of the Baltic Sea Region in Greifswald, Germany. The topic of the Cluster A interested him because of the major role the discussion “Individualism and Collectivism” plays in history, especially in the last centuries. Inside this topic, the environmental discussions attracted his attention because of the freshness and significance that it has in the present time.

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