

## **NEW TALENTS FOR EUROPE**

### **ADDRESS BY ADEM KUMCU PRESIDENT OF UNITEE**

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Dear young talents, **welcome** to **Brussels**. **Welcome** to the conference **New European Talents for the EU**, and **welcome** to **your chance** of actively shaping your own and Europe's **future**. It is a great honour and privilege to be here today speaking in front of this **fantastic audience**.

At UNITEE, the organisation that I represent, we have a **deep interest** in the subject of promoting new talent for Europe and the notion of **New Europeans working for the EU institutions**.

Let me start by explaining what the term **New Europeans** means, and why we are referring to ourselves as 'New Europeans'?

In Europe, some politicians and certain elements in the media use the term **immigrant** to describe people whose families may have come to Europe **more than 50 years ago**. When however will this description as an immigrant **end**?

At UNITEE, we try actively to **change this mentality**. We **avoid** the term as the majority of our members are **second or third generation** European-Turks. They are holding the citizenship of their respective countries and are **no 'immigrants'** in the strictest sense. Their country of origin is still dear to them but they see themselves as **fully European** and see **their future** in Europe. Therefore we prefer to use a description, which **reflects our**

**member** more accurately.

The European Commission's Euro-barometer Survey defines 'New Europeans' as "people who **live in the EU** and have **connections** with more than just the country where they live".

We are a diverse community of Europeans **united** by our **common heritage**. Europe is our **home**, and Europe is our **future**. And any one of you can make a **crucial impact** in defining it.

At UNITEE, we decided to **support and help** organise this conference, as a part of **UNITEE ACADEMY**. A **programme** that was designed to assist our members and young New European professionals to **maximise and cultivate** their individual talents and to enrich one another. We offer workshops, tools and methods that will **support them** in becoming the **professionals** Europe so desperately needs. Our mission is to help New European entrepreneurs and business professionals to expand and grow their businesses. We now represent **more than 15000** of them across **23 European countries**.

This goes not without saying that economic growth needs **political and social support**. **Raising the number** of New Europeans working in the EU will help us to ensure their **voice is heard** and general conditions are **improved**.

This conference aims at helping young professionals and students **like yourself** to get a better understanding on how the EU institutions function, and how you can become an **active player** in influencing their decision making processes. Working for the EU is not just a great way of improving your CV and getting valuable working experience, but is also a **unique opportunity** to get invaluable inside of how the EU functions and to be part of this **amazing project** called **European Union**.

In the times of **economic** crisis and **growing** social insecurities, it is **extremely** difficult for young people to find their place in the world. Today I want to talk to you about how the European community can offer you exactly **that**; a place where you can achieve your **goals**, where you **belong**, and where we can built a great **future together**.

The aim of the conference is to **inspire and motivate you**. It is not easy to get a job at the EU, as the competition is very high, however it is definitely **worth a try**. Let me quote Oscar Wild who said: Shoot for the **moon**, if you miss, you'll land **among the stars**

In theory, the European institutions are a place that should provide work opportunities for citizens from **each and every member state** no matter what **gender or colour of skin**. The *EPSO*, the European recruitment agency claims to **mirror** diversity in its own team and to take **the best** from people with different backgrounds to achieve **our common goals**. These guidelines should ensure that the workforce working at the EU **reflects** the **many New Europeans citizens** living in the union.

However, the reality still looks somewhat different. Referring to an article by Sonia Jordan there still exists a **dominant uniformity** of appearance of the workers in the European Institutions, resulting in a **visible lack** of ethnic diversity and under-representation of European variety.

To give you an idea, out of the 754 Members of the European Parliament only 3 are of Turkish origin, under representing the 5 million New European Turks living in the European Union.

So why is it that there is still such **low ethnic diversity** in the EU? Are New Europeans **less equipped** than others? Are they **less educated**? Are you unable to become the next Barroso or next Lagarde?

Of course not, these are simply misperceptions.

- One of the reasons for the existing discrepancies today is that cultural diversity is regarded as **a threat** rather than **an opportunity** by many public institutions.
- Another reason is the fact that **many potential candidates** do not have enough **information about the possibilities** at EU level.

This event will address these two important issues. It will **make you familiar** with the wide **range of opportunities** the EU institutions offer, and show you why **cultural diversity** in the EU is an **asset** rather than a danger.

Let us start by analysing why New Europeans are so **important** for Europe's future.

The two main reasons are:

- ⤴ Because of your **young age** you are the **answer** to many questions in times of the European **demographic crisis**.
- ⤴ Because of your special **intercultural and linguistic skills**, that makes you an invaluable asset in **global competition and international relations**.

One of the major problems Europe is facing today include the **demographic change** and the **ageing population**. The Berlin Institute for Population and Development recently published a study, the findings of which are **quite alarming**. It shows **significant demographic changes** among Europe's population as the century progresses. By the year 2050, the European population is set to **decline by 8%** while in every other region of the world it **will rise**. In addition, the average age will **increase** from 39 years to 47 years. Europe needs young professionals **like you** to take on responsibilities and get ready to work in leading positions.

Moreover, I do not need to tell you just how **fast and drastically** our world is changing. Europe and the United States were the dominant economic powers of the last century, but the picture will be **considerably different for the coming decades**. Countries like India, China and the other BRICS states, and also Turkey for that matter, are **growing rapidly** and are already **challenging Europe's dominant role** in the world economy.

Due to the changes in the power distribution, it is extremely important to create **lasting alliance** with our friends from the different regions of the world. **Diplomatic excellency and deep-rooted economic integration** will **stabilise and facilitate** good international relations.

Using the **skills** of new European citizens will be one of Europe's **greatest assets** in these

matters. You do, like no other, **understand** the different cultures. You know how to **overcome** differences and to focus on **commonalities** in order to build a more **peaceful** and **equal global society**.

To work at the EU level requires excellent **intercultural skills** and the capacity to **overcome linguistic and cultural barriers**. Coming from migrant backgrounds **you** are likely to **already possess all these abilities**. You can face the challenges of a multinational society with your profound understanding of **different cultures, religions and languages**. You will play a **key role** to **communicate between different groups, civilisations and countries** and **connect** our increasingly multi-cultural community.

Let me point out one of the main keys in successfully doing so. **Networking**.

You have to understand that **getting yourself heard** by the **right people** and bringing important subjects to the agenda, is crucial in order to **influence decision making and policies**. Build up your **social capital**! Through **networks, friends and associations** you can get a more powerful initial position and have access to internal knowledge and prospects. So then all that you have to do is: **jump at the opportunity!**

I also want to encourage you to **focus on your strength**. Stop thinking about what you cannot do and start concentrating and developing the skills you are **good at**. Live by your **values** and believe in **your dreams**. People can see it in your **heart** – and if you are **passionate** about a cause you will succeed in making them feel passionate about it **too**.

And Europe needs your **passion and compassion**. It needs people like **you**, intelligent young and motivated. You have **unique and fresh ideas** that differentiate you from the older generations. It is this knowledge that Europe **needs** to face and to overcome some of its greatest challenges.

Later on in this conference you will get the chance to listen to some **experts** that will **support you** in getting valuable inside on how the recruitment processes at the EU level function. So you can get involved and be **real role models and spokespersons** for not just New European communities but also **young and ambitious** people all over Europe.

In conclusion, let me remind you that Europe **proved its resistance** and ability to cope with big **transformations** in the past. Today we represent a **tolerant and modern society** based on **human rights** and **liberty**. We are the **pioneers** in renewable energies, are looking back on a **fantastic cultural heritage** and provide a social safety net which is **unique** in the world.

I want to encourage you to participate in this **extraordinary project** called **Europe**. This event today is only the first step on your way of becoming the **leaders of tomorrow**. It is also **an invitation** to take part in the **events** and profit from the **opportunities** our network will offer in the future. UNITEE and our partner organisations will be there to assist **you** in the challenge ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity **to thank** the **EPN, PERITUS Network, Reseau PROACTIF, BS PLATFORM, STIP** and **MULTITUDE** for helping us organising this event.

Thank you everyone.

Last but not least let me **finish** by sharing with you what my **father** used to say: **Find** a way, **build** a way or **get out** of the way.