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Year of study: cadet of the 4th year

SIX THINKING HATS ON THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE EU

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Six thinking hats on the present and future of the EU

As Martin Luther King once said, “I have a dream today”. So I have a dream that the European community will be able to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic through mutual progressive values, creativity and valid analysis, introduce progressive ideas, approaches and solutions from these new conditions of world life. I have tried to have a look at the current problems of the European Union and the limitations that always walk side by side with opportunities. In order to cover different points of view and be as objective as possible, in the context of writing this essay I used the technique of the "Six Hats", the meaning of which is to analyze a problem from six independent points of view:

The President of the European Commission (process);

A journalist (feelings);

A police officer (negative facts);

A businessman (benefit);

A leader of a public organization (creativity);

An international observer (vigilance).

Wearing **the hat of the President of the European Commission**, I have to focus on the big picture, goals and objectives, as well as on how to organize the process to achieve common goals for the European Union.

My specific task should be a support of the world community in the fight against the coronavirus disease through financial support and the delivery of medical equipment to the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as to other countries that are most affected by the pandemic.

I have to regulate the activities of the banks to ensure their responsibility in the simplified loan disbursement to the households and enterprises. I need to advocate for the creation of joint strategic stocks of medical equipment, individual

protective gears and medicines. I must encourage research in the field of medicine in every possible way, including virology, announce the opening of the new medical research centers and laboratories, and support the study of philosophical and artistic aspects of life conception of society amidst of quarantine. Not the production of the most advanced self-driving cars, but the improvement of the vital self-defense equipment and the creation of new vaccines - this is a priority for the whole Europe.

My task should be a creation of the Recovery Fund after the coronavirus, strategizing of the development of economic, social and political spheres, support of new digital technologies and development of the general media literacy of the population.

I must criticize the unjustified limits on the rights of citizens by the governments of individual states (granting the emergency powers to the Prime Minister of Hungary), emphasizing on the need to implement solely proportional, necessary and timed restrictions.

The balanced growth of the youth as the driving force of the world progress should not be left out of my attention behind all these priorities in the context of a pandemic. I have to consult with young people on all these issues, support international exchange in a distance format, various young-adult competitions of video works, essays, works of art and social projects.

Putting on a **journalist's hat**, I have to think about the emotional reaction of my words, analyze what I feel in that very second, reading the world news.

I came across the fact that you feel a certain anxiety, diffidence and uncertainty in quarantine. It is a bit more difficult for me to manage my own time, maintain proper physical shape, resist panic attacks and maintain trust in people around me. I noticed that I became nervous every time when someone starts

coughing next to me or comes too close to me. But fear, isolation, distrust - this is not the way out!

We must not isolate ourselves from reality. Our main task is to look seamless into the new conditions. The human brain has a great potential for adaptation. This was proved by the studies of George Stretton, where the subjects spent all their time wearing glasses that flip an image around. After some time, everybody could well orient in space and was able to perform all their daily actions. We just have to learn to look at the world through the "glasses of new conditions." Wash your hands thoroughly, keep your distance, wear a mask, buy online – and these does not prevent you from enjoying this beautiful world. We also need to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves at this difficult time. We can save the lives of our parents, grandparents, lonely elderly neighbors when we once again go to the store instead of them or help them to pay for an apartment online. And it is better not to take photos of these good deeds and not share them on social networks, because goodness stays in the heart for the longest time...

And that is the young people who play the most important role in the realization of good deeds. Thus, the results of a survey that was conducted by the Sociological Group "Rating" showed that the youngest age bracket (18-29 years) more often than others are engaged in self-development, do sports, hobbies, feel joy midst quarantine time [1]. This indicates that young people are the main generator of positive emotions now.

Putting on a **police officer's hat** is not easy. In this role, I must point out the worst consequences from the coronavirus and the global economic crisis it has caused for the European community.

Decrease of international trade and consumption, falling of world prices on oil and declining of tourist flows constitute a significant menace to the world economy. Small and medium enterprises suffer, the number of unemployed is

rapidly increasing. At the same time, we must not forget about the rapid growth of cybercrime, the spread of fake messages, the sale of medical supplies of unlawful origin. Unemployment and uncertainty push people to commit theft, robbery and burglary.

Under quarantine conditions, when people spend most of their time at home, the issue of domestic violence and mass divorce becomes painful. The situation of constant nervous tension negatively affects the mental health of the population, stimulates the development of mental illness, causes suicide. There are ethnic conflicts, and the international tensions are rising over who should be responsible for the spread of the coronavirus disease. Erasmus + mobility programs and other international events were been canceled or suspended, and thousands of young people have had difficulty in returning tickets and changing of planned travels.

It is always difficult to talk about the problems. But it's time to put on a **businessman's hat** and think about the benefits of the current situation in Europe. How to inspire optimism and trust in the citizens in the context of what happened.

The time of challenges give a tremendous space for developing and promoting positive ideas.

The coronavirus pandemic has been a stimulus for some sectors of production: the demand for personal protective equipment, medical equipment, medicines and antiseptics, and delivery services has grown rapidly. The spread of the virus has led to the increased investment in medicine and science. The new conditions have established a clear vector for business development in Europe - in the future, competitive advantages will be given to the companies with a high degree of automation of production and a significant number of the staff that is working from home.

Reduction of the tourist flows and quarantine restrictions have led to an improvement of the world's environmental situation, in particular it has led to a

reduction of the concentration of NO₂ pollutants. Therefore, cleaner air will lead to fewer people dying from diseases of the respiratory system. In addition, the fight against coronavirus is an invaluable experience for the world community at struggle with global environmental problems. Freedom from industry, business, transport for the sake of saving human life is the first step on this path. We want to believe that in the future we will also be able to abandon the construction of new coal thermal power stations, develop a renewable energy and the production of environmentally friendly goods in order to maintain low levels of environmental pollution.

Spheres of leisure, education, and youth opportunities are also changing. Now everyone on the planet has access to the performances of leading theaters and circuses, the Louvre and Prado halls, the Vatican Museums and Budapest. Webinars, online courses, essay contests, programs of international mobility in a distant format, internships at the world's leading companies which can be held at home, volunteering to help the world to fight with fake news, video tutorials of physical training and selfdefense - this is only a small part of the current host of possibilities for humanity, and especially for the younger generation.

The situation with the pandemic has caused positive changes in the activities of the government bodies, opened new directions for their development in the future. The delivery of administrative services and payment of utility bills via the Internet, the improvement of electronic document management, arrange of distant court hearings and interrogations, online conferences with leading statesmen are all positive steps taken by the European countries to digitalize and increase media literacy.

The sphere of tourism also continues to exist and develop: new online tours are appearing, where the volunteers use cameras and the Internet to show people from all over the world the beauty of their home country. The new conditions

allow us to look differently at domestic tourism, which I am sure will overlay after the lifting of the transport restrictions within European countries. True beauty always lives nearby, you just have to learn to see it!

Now let's consider the position of the leader of the public organization. My main task is to invent creative approaches to jointly solve the problems that are afflicting the community. I should never ever sit idly by. Quarantine is a time for my double efforts!

I will analyze information on a daily basis, monitor the spheres where our community needs help. I will organize all new social projects aimed at supporting vulnerable categories in quarantine, involving young people in volunteering, monitoring the actions and decisions of the authorities, dialogue and interaction with the police, local administration, transparency of medical procurement, aid to the state in conducting the sociological surveys and statistics.

I will look for the partnership organizations in European countries to implement new youth exchange programs and volunteer projects under Erasmus + after the end of quarantine.

I should also support art, because it helps community to understand the essence of life in new conditions: corporality, vulnerability, constant anxiety, uncertainty, social distance, urban emptiness, new life... Art gives us the opportunity to see the beauty in any situation.

Thinking as **an international observer** allows me to find out objectively which information is available on the situation in Europe. I have to look at the facts and allegations as impartially as it possible, as well as maintain neutrality.

There's no country in the European Union that has homogeneous society. There are many social groups whose representatives need additional attention and support from the state, public and the international community.

For example, how those who do not have a roof over their heads can stay at home. The special programs for the temporary affordable housing need to be developed for such people. The countries need to make every effort to prevent people from losing their homes due to the inability to pay for rent, which is relevant in the context of unemployment.

I have to monitor the rights of patients with coronavirus, as well as monitor the situation with patients who have cancer or other diseases, determine whether they are provided with the necessary medicine in the face of the complexity of medicine and transport. I must ensure that, in the context of the public attention surrounding the coronavirus, the governments comprehensively support all spheres of practical medicine.

My task is to ensure that people with disabilities receive additional support from the state, because their lives directly depend on the services that may be suspended amidst pandemic.

I must offer consultations the Heads of the State that the situation of the prisoners in a pandemic is particularly vulnerable. It is appropriate for the courts to impose non-custodial sentences, especially for the juveniles. Therefore, the sphere of criminal proceedings should not be left out of my attention.

At the same time, I have no right to turn a blind eye to the problems of the migrants and refugees. These individuals often flee from harassment or mortal danger on the third hand of the governments, so they must exercise their right to the sanctuary. Such people are forced to live in the camps or settlements with a high concentration of population, so the states should implement additional measures to prevent and treatment of the coronavirus, focused on the migrants and refugees.

Due to the increase in the time which people spend in their families, the situation of women victims of a domestic violence, as well as the members of

LGBTI communities, who are forced to live in quarantine conditions with the relatives who negatively predisposed to them, becomes vulnerable. Therefore, I must constantly emphasize the need to maintain a sufficient number of the shelters where these people can be located.

I must ensure that quarantine measures do not compromise people's right to life and information, monitor actions of the law enforcement agencies, the facts of unjustified violence on their part, provide them with consultations and recommendations on how to act in the new environment.

At the same time, not only humans but also the pets are suffering from the pandemic. Many people lose their pets for fear of being infected or they are unable to keep them. These animals end up in the shelters or find themselves in the street. Therefore, maintaining proper funding for the animal shelters and centers, seeking additional donor assistance is also my area of responsibility.

Young people also need additional support. Amidst pandemic, young people face unemployment, inability to pay for the educational services. Every effort should be made to ensure that young people do not choose the criminal path to meet their needs in these difficult circumstances, but they receive appropriate support from the state in the form of additional financial payments, respite of tuition fees, employment programs for young people.

Well... I said a lot about different people facing challenges from the coronavirus. I am not a journalist or a leader of a public organization. I am a police officer who has a strong belief that new challenges bring new opportunities. I believe that by joining forces of all our hats we will be able to overcome the coronavirus pandemic, develop in many new directions and look confidently into the successful future of the European Union, slowly drinking wine somewhere on the Adriatic coast or passing green olive groves and emerald fields of Provence.

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