

## Opening Remarks

**By Ambassador Jovan Tegovski, President of the Diplomatic Club-Skopje at the Opening Ceremony of the Model European Parliament**

28<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 9:30 AM, at MladiHub Skopje.

Dear youth delegates and friends, distinguished organizers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour to address you on behalf of the Diplomatic Club – Skopje, an association dedicated to building bridges between diplomacy, society, and the next generation of leaders.

The Diplomatic Club, which this year celebrates 15 years since its establishment, has long recognized that meaningful dialogue and international cooperation begin with informed, engaged, and motivated young people. Our mission is rooted in promoting dialogue, diplomacy, and mutual understanding - values essential not only in foreign policy but also in addressing global challenges such as *climate change*. That is why we are proud to support initiatives like the Model European Parliament, which empower youth to step confidently into the world of democratic debate and policymaking.

We meet at a time when Europe is confronted with multiple, profound, and interconnected challenges that test its security, cohesion, and long-term resilience. Just to mention a few: the war in Ukraine is reshaping security priorities, increasing defense spending, and exposing vulnerabilities in energy supply and critical infrastructure. Economic growth is slowing; demographic decline and continued migration pressures are creating political tensions; and the rise of AI, cybersecurity and hybrid threats, competition for critical raw

materials, and populist movements further complicate consensus-building on reforms and, not to forget, on enlargement - an issue of crucial importance for North Macedonia and candidate countries of the Western Balkans.

*Climate change* adds an additional layer of strain, as governments must balance environmental commitments with short-term economic and social costs. It is no longer an abstract concern; it is a transformative force affecting our security, our economies, our natural environment, and the prospects of future generations. Europe has set ambitious goals: climate neutrality, clean energy transitions, decarbonization, and biodiversity protection. But achieving these goals requires more than strategies and policies. It requires a shared sense of responsibility and active, sustained citizen engagement, especially from young people.

And this is where young Europeans, including those from the Western Balkans, stand at the forefront. Across the continent, your generation has shown that you are not passive observers of climate policy. On the contrary, you have demonstrated clarity of purpose, moral courage, and a willingness to demand that climate policy match the scale of the challenge by placing climate issues at the center of political discourse. From initiating public movements and community projects to influencing debates and demanding greater ambition, young people have played a decisive role in placing climate action at the top of Europe's agenda. Your generation has insisted that sustainability is not an abstract concept but a moral and political imperative.

This is precisely why the work you are doing here matters. The Model European Parliament is not just a simulation; it is a training ground for democratic participation that allows you to understand how complex policies are crafted, how compromise is built, and how ideas become legislation. When you debate climate transition strategies, sustainable growth, or environmental protection, you are engaging with the very same

questions debated in the European Parliament. The Model European Parliament matters profoundly because it gives you the opportunity not only to understand how decisions are made in Strasbourg or Brussels, but also to experience the complexity of policymaking, the need for compromise, and the importance of evidence-based debate. When you discuss climate legislation, energy transitions, or environmental justice, you engage in the same processes that shape Europe's future every day.

Moreover, your participation here strengthens *democratic culture* at both the national and European levels. By debating, negotiating, and advocating your proposals, you contribute to the values at the core of the European project: openness, dialogue, cooperation, and solidarity. These values are essential if Europe is to meet the climate challenge effectively.

As you begin your sessions, I encourage you to be bold in your ideas, constructive in your debates, and conscious of the long-term implications of the policies you propose. Your voice matters. Your participation strengthens democracy. And your vision is essential for building a greener, more resilient, and more just Europe. Consider the long-term perspective that true leadership requires.

Thank you for your commitment, your energy, and your willingness to take part in shaping Europe's climate and democratic future. And stay confident that your engagement has meaning.

The Diplomatic Club – Skopje believes in your potential, and it is determined to support youth engagement wherever possible: through educational initiatives, public discussions, mentorship opportunities, and partnerships with institutions that share our commitment to empowering young citizens.

I wish you an inspiring and productive session.

Thank you.

