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## **EU Parliament: thousands of young people in Strasbourg for EYE2021. Welcome address from President Sassoli: “new chapter for Europe”**

“Welcome to all of you! It is a great pleasure for me to open this fourth edition of the European Youth Event (EYE2021), which has been by far the most long awaited. It is an even greater joy for me because this event has been postponed twice to allow all of us to come here in person, in Strasbourg, the seat of the European Parliament and the heart of European democracy”. This was stated by David Sassoli, the president of the European Parliament, who opened with an online speech the two-day event in Strasbourg that brings together thousands of young people from all over the EU and other countries. EYE actually kicked off on Monday, 4 October, with a series of online events, but the closing session is being held in person. The high number of participants is right now creating queues at the entrances. “I am happy to see so many young people in this hemicycle, once again full of citizens from all over Europe, who have gathered here to exchange ideas, debate and vote for the future of Europe, our Europe”, the president said. “This event is crucially important in the current scenario: the European Union is slowly emerging from the pandemic and a new chapter is beginning, we are looking to the future. Covid-19 has hit you, young people, the most. From day to day, you had to reinvent yourself in distance learning, you were deprived of social interactions at such a crucial time in your life. You had to change your plans for the future and for your career. With the restrictions, time has stopped and with it also your lives”. “The European Parliament is aware of the immense difficulties you are facing, because the economic and social crisis caused by the pandemic and the lockdowns is not an illusion. This is why we have called, and will continue to call, on Member States to mobilise the necessary funds to support youth employment, education, mobility and sport. Significant European funds have been allocated to these policies. We will continue to fight for that, and we will not allow your generation to bear the brunt”.

Valentina Bombelli