Young European of the Year 2021: Alexandru Manda fights for free access to education for every child

Constantin-Alexandru Manda (21) is "Young European of the Year 2021". This year's awardee is honored for his outstanding commitment to educational justice in Romania. Every year, the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe and the European Youth Forum award the prize to a young person who has shown particularly great commitment to a Europe based on solidarity. The award is endowed with € 5000 for an internship in a European institution or an individual project. The award ceremony will take place digitally on April 29, 2021.

Manda began advocating for a fair and equal education for all children in Romania at the age of only 14. He founded the country's first independent students' association in 2013 in the city of Constanta and began to fight for the fundamental right to scholarships, first locally, and later all across Romania. The success of his activism is visible and tangible throughout the country: among his greatest achievements is that the Romanian government now guarantees every child in need a minimum scholarship and invests approximately € 110 million of the state budget for this purpose. Currently, the law student is a project manager at the Romanian Academic Society, where he coordinates several local educational initiatives. Manda is one of the most active student representatives in the country and campaigns for the rights and interests of his 30,000 colleagues as a member of the Senate of the University of Bucharest.

On being named Young European of the Year 2021, Manda says: "*I accept this award with deep gratitude and humility, in recognition of the efforts of every team I have worked with over the last seven years. We cannot have a just Europe without free access to good education for every child. Investing in education is an investment in Europe's future, it is the only way to end the social divide between countries and communities.*"

The jury is deeply impressed by Manda's work: "*With his energy and sensitivity to justice, Alexandru has shown us how a young, committed person can make a big difference,*" commented Luisa Seiler, Executive Director of the Schwarzkopf Foundation. "*Alexandru's motivation to work with different institutions and to fight for justice is impressive,*" says Mariya Atanasova, Young European of the Year 2020, explaining this year's decision. Anja Fortuna, Vice-President of the European Youth Forum, adds: "*Alexandru shows great passion for his work, which benefits many young people in Romania. I am sure that his commitment will motivate young people all over Europe to do the same.*"

Since 1997, the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe and the European Youth Forum support young Europeans across all countries of the Council of Europe who take initiative and responsibility and seize opportunities to foster peaceful coexistence in a Europe of diversity. This year, the award's jury consisted of one representative each of the Schwarzkopf Foundation, the European Youth Forum, and the European Commission Representation in Germany as well as two former awardees.

For interview requests to Constantin-Alexandru Manda, please contact the [press office](#) of the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe via presse@schwarzkopf-stiftung.de.

For more information on the award and previous awardees, please click [here](#).