



MODEL European Union 2009 Strasbourg



Organized by Bringing European Together Association e. V.



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Foreword

Ladies and Gentlemen,



Is there a decreasing interest in the European Union? The outcome of the European elections some weeks ago, with voter participation all over Europe at about 43%, confirmed an ongoing negative trend. In some countries anti-European parties gained significantly more power than in previous elections. How could a project like the MEU 2009 succeed under such premises?

Our Bringing Europeans Together Association (BETA) organisation team was created less than a year ago. When we started to gather together and organise the Model European Union (MEU) we mostly were “freshers”. But some of us had already made first-hand experience within the MEU 2008 – enough to get started and realise this project!

The project would have been impossible without the new technologies: thanks to the internet we could connect easily and work all over Europe together in one team. Like in every organisation problems arose, but we nevertheless mastered them and I am very proud of my team and I am grateful to have been working with you until now. You did a great job – thank you!

Furthermore, I want to thank again all our partners and supporters, who made this amazing event possible in the European Parliament in the city of Strasbourg, which is a symbol of European integration and paradigm of what Europe can achieve.

The MEU project from 25th April to 1st May 2009 demonstrated that Europe matters to young people. European topics and politics are of interest to the younger generation and the recent disenchantment cannot be generalised. We were really glad to welcome 120 participants (chosen from several hundreds applications!) from all over Europe to experience a truly European spirit.

We gave them an opportunity to have an active and real-time insight into the workings of the EU, so that they could better understand how the EU works, to train their intercultural communication skills and finally to bring Europe closer to them by making it more transparent.

These were our main objectives when we engaged in organising this wonderful event. We worked hard so that, in the end, it was as amazing an experience for them, as it was for us as organisers. Participating and organising MEU enriches the lives of everybody involved. We have put our hearts into it and with this result booklet, we want to present to you, what we gained from it and summarise the results.

As a result of the simulation and as in previous years, more people joined the organising team to improve our work, organise MEU 2010 again and spread our message to bring Europe closer to the young people: Nowadays, with a generally limited understanding of the EU, a low media coverage and a voter participation predicted to be the lowest ever on a European level, something needs to be changed in our opinion.

We still have a very long way to go but we believe this project is worth supporting and can make a difference in Europe. Participants have seen what Europe offers and makes possible for them. This should be enough motivation to increase young co-operation and support more MEU simulations in the future.

On behalf of BETA I welcome you and invite you to share our gorgeous time with the presentation of the scope, the progress, as well as the preparation and post-processing of our MEU project.

Yours sincerely,



Philipp Obenauer
President of BETA and MEU Main Coordinator



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Project

MEU: A European challenge

The Model European Union 2009 (MEU 2009) is one of the most challenging simulations of the European Union that one can experience so far. A project that is going to bring together more than 100 young Europeans in the European Parliament – Strasbourg, France. For one week, participants had the opportunity to get familiar with the EU in a setting which is a genuine projection of reality.

The main purpose of the conference is the simulation of the EU's decision-making process, including the debates taking place within the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. The law proposals which had been discussed during the MEU Conference 2009 were an environmental directive and a directive about European elections.

These topics are relevant for the present situation

and of broad European interest, especially with the elections, which took place the 7th of June 2009 for the European Parliament with a low average voter turnout.

During the simulation, the participants had the chance to learn about other countries' positions towards the EU and experience a truly international working environment.

The Model European Union Conference 2009 is much more than just a non-formal learning process focused on the European Union. Participants had the possibility to practice and improve their negotiation strategies as well as to upgrade their English language skills. Moreover, they could experience a truly European atmosphere, contact with many different cultures and discard stereotypes and myths.



The roles

Member of the Parliament
are the only directly elected representatives of the European citizens

The Ministers of the Council
represent their respective governments, regardless of party affiliation or personal interest

Journalists are the so-called Fourth Power in a democracy

Lobbyists are an influential power in politics at all levels

Discipline and a strict timetable

/ RONJA SCHELER

The timetable for MEU 2009 was basically divided into three parts: Workshops – simulation – workshops.

The core idea behind this was to have the main activity, namely the simulation of the EU's legislative process, framed by two days of organisational and procedural issues (the dry stuff...), and lively debating and discussing.

After the official welcome we kicked off with the Incoming Workshops, setting the task for the participants to develop an election campaign for their parties, respectively for the Council. The main objective was to give everyone the possibility to get to know their colleagues that they were going to work together with during the following days. Moreover, creativity played a major role, as well as the involvement in political matters (i.e. European election campaigns).



The three workshops on Sunday were much more focussed on the simulation itself. While the first one gave the participants an understanding of the rules of procedure, the second and third one offered the possibility to discuss the subjects of the two proposals (European elections and CO2 emissions). For this purpose, the workshop leaders were specialists on the proposed topics: Prof. Dr. Thomas König, an

Saturday 25th April

9.00 - 14.00 Check in and registration at the Hotel
16.30 - 18.30 Incoming workshops
19.00 - 21.00 Dinner at La Galia
21.30 Walk in the city center

Sunday 26th April

07.30 - 08.30 Waking up and having breakfast
09.30 - 10.15 Workshops: Rules of Procedure
10.30 - 12.15 Workshops of the environment proposal
12.45 - 13.45 Lunch at La Galia
14.00 - 15.30 Workshop on the elections proposal
16.45 - 18.15 Panel discussion - moderated by Troy Davis with parliamentarian Mr Wieland (EPP)
18.30 - 20.30 Dinner at La Galia
20.40 - 22.10 Boat tour

Monday 27th April

06.30 - 07.45 Waking up and breakfast
08.00 Leaving for the European Parliament
08.30 Arrival at the Parliament
09.00 - 09.30 Official Welcome
09.30 - 10.00 Council and Parliament Opening
10.00 - 11.00 Free time to discuss / Introductory statements
11.15 - 12.45 Introductory statements and debate
13.00 - 14.00 Lunch
14.30 - 16.00 Presentation and debate on amendments to the environment proposal (Council) and European Elections proposal (Parliament)
16.00 - 16.30 Meet the Press / Lobbyist
16.30 - 17.15 Presentation and debate on amendments to the environment proposal (Council) and European Elections proposal (Parliament)
17.15 - 17.45 Press Conference
18.30 Dinner at La Galia
21.00 European Pique Nique

Tuesday 28th April

06.30 - 07.45 Waking up and breakfast
09.00 - 09.30 Discussion of amendments (Council) and political group meetings (Parliament)
09.30 - 10.30 Voting on the amendments to the environment proposal (Council) and European Elections proposal (Parliament)
10.45 - 11.15 Official presentation of the European Elections proposal (Council) and the environment proposal (Parliament)

11.45 - 12.15 Introductory statements (Council) and Fraction meetings (Parliament)
 12.30 - 13.30 Lunch
 13.45 - 14.15 Meet the Press / Lobbyist
 14.15 - 15.15 Debate on the European Elections proposal (Council) and the environment proposal and (Parliament)
 15.30 - 17.15 Presentation and debate on amendments to the European Elections proposal (Council) and environment proposal (Parliament)
 17.15 - 17.45 Press Conference
 18.30 Dinner at La Galia
 21:00 European Night at the Living Room

Wednesday 29th April

06.30 - 07.45 Waking up and breakfast
 09.00 - 10.30 Presentation and debate on new amendments to the European Elections proposal (Council) and environment proposal (Parliament)
 11.00 - 12.00 Voting on the amendments to the European Elections proposal (Council) and environment proposal (Parliament)
 12.15 - 13.15 Lunch
 13.30 - 14.00 Presentation of amended environment proposal (Council) and European Elections (Parliament)
 14.00 - 16.00 Debate and final voting
 16.00 - 16.30 Official signature of proposals and Press Conference
 16.45 - 17.45 Tour through the Parliament
 18.30 Dinner at La Galia
 21:00 Free Time

Thursday 30th April

06.30 - 07.45 Waking up and breakfast
 09.00 - 09.30 Presentation of the Workshops
 09.30 - 10.30 Get Active!: Workshops
 12.15 - 13.15 Lunch
 13.30 - 15.00 Get Active!: Workshops
 15.00 - 16.00 Taking pictures
 16.45 - 17.45 Closing Ceremony
 19.00 Dinner and Farewell Party

Friday 1st May

07.30 - 10.30 Waking up and breakfast
 Until 12.00 Check out of the Hotel

expert on European Integration and environmental issues from the University of Mannheim, Ralf Diemer, a representative of the German automobile industry, Hans-Jürgen Zahorka, former MEP and director on the European think-tank “Libertas”, and Marco Incerti, member of the Centre for European Policy Studies.

Afterwards, we had a controversial panel discussion together with Troy Davis and Rainer Wieland, Member of the European Parliament, where the participants could get a further insight into the legislative process of the EU and discuss more general European topics.

The following three days were mainly dedicated to the simulation. The hours in the Parliament were filled with debates about the two proposals, political group meetings, meetings with journalists and lobbyists, votes, press conferences, not to forget the informal meetings during the coffee breaks.

Of course, we did not spend day and night in the Parliamentary premises, but also had some free time. Here, everyone went on a city walk as well as on a sightseeing boat tour through the city of Strasbourg, we celebrated a “European Night” in one of Strasbourg’s night clubs and during a European Pique Nique enjoyed traditional food of the participants’ home countries that they had brought to the conference.

“The hours in the Parliament were filled with debates, political group meetings, meetings with journalists and lobbyists, votes and press conferences”

After the proposal had been passed both in the Council and the Parliament and was signed, on the last day the attention was centred on how to “Get Active”. During several workshops organisations like AEGEE, JEF, ELSA, BETA and others were presented to (and also by) the participants. The overall question that was discussed in the groups was: How can Europe be more democratic?

Finally, after the obligatory “taking pictures”, the Closing Ceremony and a departure party, everyone left to travel back home, exhausted from a week of hard work, making new friends and having lots of fun.

Preparation

Introduction / MARIA INÊS NASCIMENTO

MEU is made for the participants and also by the participants, which makes the selection and preparation tasks two of extreme importance. The whole team, not just the Incoming, was involved in establishing the criteria that would be used to select them. A 700-word essay was considered to be enough to demonstrate both reasoning abilities and the level of information of the author on the subject, and yet not so long as to be restrictive to the point of only having people from political and law backgrounds in the Conference: we wanted to give any interested and enthusiastic young European the chance to participate.

We were not disappointed: most of the essays had a very good quality and showed the interest and commitment of the applicants, as did the effort that many participants put on the preparation work, both in the position papers. The following two contributions have been put in by two of our participants.

How will the Lisbon Treaty affect the EU? / ANNA MARIA KARAFOLIDOU

Global evolution keeps a brisk pace and creates the indispensable need for a radical change; one that will restore the efficiency of an enlarged European Union and show all 27 member-states the way out of the institutional stalemate which prevailed after the enlargements of 2004 and 2007. In these terms, the Reform Treaty of Lisbon is indisputably a step towards the re-birth of a formation that keeps playing for a long time now a new game, with the old rules.

Being the capstone of an institutional reform of the post- enlargement European Union, the Treaty of Lisbon has a major impact on the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Union. The large number of the Commissioners is reduced to 18 and the role

of the European Parliament is strengthened through the extension of the co-decision legislative procedure. Furthermore, stability is ensured for the European Council, as the rotated six-month presidency is replaced by a 2 ½ year elected president and transparency is increased, as the Council will now meet in public.

Moreover, the Lisbon Treaty aims at the democratisation of the Union: along with the enhanced participation of the national parliaments in decision-making process, the voting system in the Council is modified on a basis of a “double majority” of states and populations. The democratic influence is confirmed by the withdrawal clause that is included in the Treaty: a member-state will have the right to withdraw from the Union at will.

However, the utmost step towards democratisation is taken through the, in the Treaty incorporated, Charter of Fundamental Rights, which is – for the first time in the history of the European Communities – recognised as part of the legally binding, primary European law. The rights and values of Europe, freedom, security and solidarity between member-states are carved in the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the enlargement policy of the Union with an explicit reference to the accession criteria (widely known as the “Copenhagen criteria”), defining the eligibility of a state to join the European Union.

The ultimate contribution of the Lisbon Treaty, however, concerns the EU’s external action: for the first time the Union is recognised with a sole legal personality, implying the ability to be part of an internatio-



nal convention or a member of an international organisation. Additionally, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Policy and Security Affairs (assisted and supported by a European External Action Service) enables the Union to speak with one voice in the international arena and therefore ensures coherence and unity to the EU's foreign policy.

When all is said and done, it is rather obvious that the Lisbon Treaty will only affect the future of the EU in a positive way. Providing a more stable and function-

nal institutional framework, based on a democratic and transparent nexus; ensuring political unity and coherence in external affairs, as well as in terms of solidarity between the member states, the Lisbon Treaty attempts to overcome the obstacles of the past and create the ideal conditions for the European Union of 27 member-states to thrive. The EU's significant role in the international political and socioeconomic scene requires unity, solidarity, good will and efficiency – and this is exactly what the Lisbon Treaty will be bringing in.

The EU is often accused of being too distant from Europeans /

MATTHIAS VERLOOY

The European Union has determined the width of the line around warning messages on cigarette packages (between three and four millimetres), the minimum speed of windscreen wipers of tractors (20 movements per minute) and how much noise a lawn mower is allowed to make (between 96 and 105 dB, depending on the cutting width of the lawn mower).

It is, however, also responsible for the fact that Europeans now have a two-year guaranty on products they buy, that the costs of their mobile phone bills have been vastly reduced and that fathers now have the right to take a paternity leave of three months.

Is the EU too distant from the Europeans? The first three examples could be used as evidence that it is, yet the next three are evidence for the exact opposite. This shows that the question cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

One cannot deny that the EU has a major democratic deficit. The President of the European Commission is not directly elected by the citizens and

national parliaments do not have. The Lisbon Treaty will only increase this development.

The EU has apparently great difficulties in defending itself in matters like those mentioned above. Policies like the regulation of the decibel level for lawn mowers harm the citizens' image of the EU considerably more than its implementations regarding customer protection improve it. The EU has a massive problem in communicating with its citizens and is, in this regard, certainly too distant from them.

'The presence and influence of the EU in our daily life is growing many people feel a genuine distrust in the EU, its politicians and its bureaucrats'

neither are the commissioners. Furthermore, the EU often refrains from acting in areas in which its citizens want it to act. The EU is, however, not undemocratic either. Its system of checks and balances is, although different from the national ones, valid and working. The European Parliament, in earlier times important, even carrying some characteristics nation-



Although the presence and influence of the EU in our daily life is growing – a study even showed that more than 80 percent of the laws passed in national parliaments have their roots in the EU – many people feel a genuine distrust in the EU, its politicians and its bureaucrats. For too many people the EU has the reputation of being a giant, incomprehensible, bureaucratic monster, a distant organization, where over-motivated young bureaucrats have joined hands with elderly, semi-retired national politicians to make the life of the Europeans miserable.

But are EU politicians not trustworthy? This sounds just like people's opinions on national politicians. In most countries of the EU, whenever research is conducted con-

cerning the occupational groups people consider trustworthy, 'politicians' rank among the bottom five. And is EU law-making too complicated? Not considerably more than national law-making.

The main problem lies elsewhere, namely in the fact that the EU is still not seen as the logical next step after local, regional and national politics. The main culprit for this is probably not the EU itself, but rather national media and politicians.

National politicians do their bit by, for instance, blaming the EU when they have to implement unpopular measures, but then also take full credit themselves when they are actually just introducing an EU measure on national level. This is a problematic situation because media and politicians on national level should actually function as a mediator between the EU and the Europeans.

Is the EU too distant from the Europeans? Yes, but one also has to admit that the EU is not solely responsible for this. Often it does not get the fair chance it deserves, being used as an easy target – institutions we actually do not know much about, run by politicians we have never heard

of and all happens in far, far away Brussels.

Can this be changed? Yes, by informing citizens better and more objectively. Of course the EU itself should be involved in this, but more importantly, national media and national politicians could and should play a bigger role in solving this. Otherwise, the EU will continue to be too distant from the Europeans.

“The EU itself should be involved in this national media and national politicians could and should play a bigger role in solving this. Otherwise, the EU will continue to be too distant from the Europeans”

“Although the presence and influence of the EU in our daily life is growing many people feel a genuine distrust in the EU, its politicians and its bureaucrats”



Simulation

The course of the simulation: Non Formal Education /

RONJA SCHELER

The simulation itself focused on the discussion of two acts, namely the “Regulation setting emission performance standards for new passenger cars as part of the Community’s integrated approach to reduce CO2 emissions from light duty vehicles” and the “Direct Elections Act”. To ensure the applicability to our concept of the simulation, both texts were adopted beforehand.

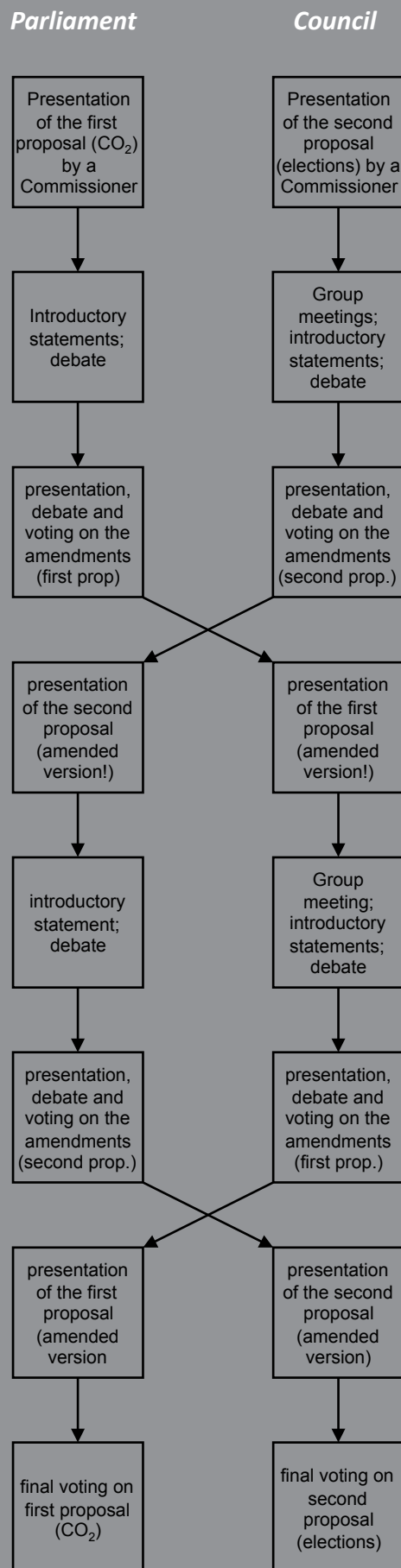
The participants were divided into four groups: Members of Parliament, who formed the by far largest group; Council Ministers, who represented the Member States’ opinions on the proposals; Lobbyists of different wings, who tried to influence both the MEPs and the Ministers; Journalists, who took care of sufficient reporting on the legislative process.

As it was the case with the proposed texts, the procedure itself had to be adopted likewise. A process that normally takes several months had to be packed into three days. Therefore, the decision making procedure in the Council (left column) and the Parliament (right column) of MEU 2009 looked as follows:

Non-formal way of education / LOUISA LÖSING

The European legislative procedure is very complicated to understand. You can either try to get the idea of the whole structure of EU politics through books and the various existing schemes ... or you become part of the legislation procedure for a short time, follow the steps of decision making and experience the difficulty of finding a common solution for completely diverse positions. This is the concept that MEU stands for.





Both groups started to work on two distinct proposals. These were presented by a Commissioner (one person of the organizing team) and later on discussed. Since all the participants were asked to write a position paper before the conference, in which they stated their country's/party's point of view, the debate in the Council as well as in the Parliament started with the introductory statements of the 27 ministers and the chairmen/-women of the five political parties (EPP-ED, PSE, ALDE, G-EFA, ID). Therefore, five leaders had to be chosen during the first party meeting.

During the negotiations, amendments on the presented text could be handed in by every minister or political group. The proposed changes had to be presented in the plenary session, where they were discussed and defended, and finally agreed on or rejected. For the proposals the institutions discussed in the second reading (in the diagram this is where the arrows cross), both were presented the amended versions, which had been decided in the other body during the first reading.

After the second round the texts were exchanged again (second narrow-crossing), and the Council as well as the Parliament had to make the final decision on one of the proposals.

At this point, the MEU-procedure notably differs from the "real" legislative process: There was no third reading or Conciliation Committee, but due to time reasons the whole process had to be adopted as it had been stated in the beginning.

The whole procedure was administered by two chairpersons who took care of the compliance of all procedural rules and who were responsible for the sessions' frame. To ensure realistic negotiations, four experienced chairs were chosen by the organizing team.



In between the whole process there were several “Meet the lobbyists” opportunities. The lobbyists’ group, who had prepared specific information concerning the CO2 Proposal beforehand, were able to offer any technical details to Parliamentarians and Ministers. On the other hand, their main aim was to present their own opinion and to influence politicians into the “right” direction. Since there were lobbyists from two different wings (representatives of the automobile industry trying to overturn the whole regulation, and members of environmental NGOs who were strongly in favour of setting high emission standards), very conflicting positions were presented. For this, the lobbyists installed an “Information Board” where they made public their findings and organized a demonstration spontaneously.



During the simulation you could always find some of the lobbyists sneaking around the Parliament Room or see them working hard on any new strategies. Shortly, even if they did not directly take part in the legislative process, they were always “present”.

The second group who worked constantly during the conference were the journalists. Having already written a pre-paper, they started working on two newspapers immediately. While “Voice of Europe” daily published a lot of informative articles, mainly focussing on the progress of the discussions within the different institutions; “Little Bird” reported on free-time activities of our politicians and spread gossip about any interpersonal relations. Above all... Information could be gathered during the everyday-press-conference in the Parliament or, preferably, at night when partying in the clubs of Strasbourg.

The Results

The Council of the EU had the final say on the CO2-proposal, while the European Parliament decided on the amended Elections Act, in the end.

Unfortunately, the “Regulation setting emission performance standards for new passenger cars as part of the Community’s integrated approach to reduce CO2 emissions from light duty vehicles” failed in the Council’s last voting. The ministers rejected the amended version they had received from the Parliament. On the other hand, a final version of the “Direct Elections Act” could be signed on Wednesday.

Both the Parliament and the Council changed it by giving back more competences to the member states. Although the “Commission” presented a proposal that equalized nearly all components of the elections (cons-

tituencies, candidate’s campaign expenses, voting ages), the legislative bodies nearly set everything back to how it is determined in the “real” Direct Elections Act. This did not only show that the participants were well-prepared, but also how realistic their attitudes towards European legislation were!

In addition to this, the institutions introduced one very modern point that had not been mentioned in the text proposed by the Commission and not in the original Act either. In the final version, Article 1(4) reads out as follows: “In order to promote the public interest and to gain the attention of the European media, the results of the European Parliament elections shall be published in a broadcasted European event held right after the closing poll.”

Being the President of the Council / CELIA LIANGOURA

Making compromises is not easy. Especially when it comes to 27 different opinions, backgrounds and cultures... That's how the Council of the European Union works. And that's how the most professional EU simulation at University level worked: the Model European Union in the EU building in Strasbourg in April 2009.

The Consilium of the MEU 2009 consisted of University students with major in Law, Political Sciences, Economics and Mathematics coming from most of the European countries, ranging from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Atlantic to Eastern Europe. They were all directed by myself, Celia Liangoura, a law student from Greece, studying in Germany and travelling through Europe combining various European identities and attributes.

Innovative, compromising and conservative ideas have been heard during the discussion of the two recent EU directives: the reduction of the cars' CO² emissions and the very current topic on the European elections. Very remarkable was not only the fact that all the participants were very professionally prepared (they were very well informed on the topics and their countries policies and they were confident with the rules of procedure), but also the fact that they conducted passionate debates playing their as part as one of 27 ministers. After a fruitful discussion, the Council ended up with a collage of diverse ideas which revealed the background and the culture of every participant. Those ideas – in the form of amendments to the two directives – have been debated and voted upon in a constructive and diplomatic way. The result was a peaceful compromise that satisfied most of the voices heard.

And that is the interesting conclusion of this Model: This simulation did not only simulate the decision-making procedure of the EU Council. It was merely a mini edition of the continent of Europe itself; a collage of different nations and cultures in the smallest continent of the world, that merge in a harmonic way, with each of them offering a unique attribute to the others and thus creating a very successful outcome.



"Innovative, compromising and conservative ideas have been heard during the discussion of the two recent EU directives"

"The Council ended up with a collage of diverse ideas which revealed the background and the culture of every participant"



Being the President of the Parliament /

CHRISTIAN BÜRCKEL

Serving as a chair at the MEU 2009 has been an honor and a great pleasure for different reasons.

As President of the European Parliament, it was our responsibility to guide the MEPs through a challenging, yet fruitful week. Through negotiations and the eagerness to venture beyond political conduct I observed with pleasure, that students stopped pretending being a MEP and started to become a representative of their respective country and party. Personally, I was deeply impressed by the high motivation everyone of us shared. The students from all over Europe who developed ideas and worked passionately on new solutions such as the reduction of CO2 emissions, the organization staff who almost worked the whole night through to provide an extraordinary event for all participants and of course my co-chairs with whom it was great to work.

It was interesting to see how each party reacted differently to certain questions concerning the same subject which encouraged the others to identify themselves even stronger with their role. The lobbyists understood how to find a balance between the interests of the industries/NGOs and acknowledging the amendments of the parliamentarians. The highlight has doubtless been the daily newsletters which the journalists have provided us with. I must admit, that I was very curious what headline would be presented every morning and I



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quite enjoyed the statement of the press, that the chair was very persistent to the rules as it assured me of my doing the job as expected. As a chair, it was my duty to keep the code of conduct at the highest possible level and lead the parliament to a productive but also controversial discussion. The importance of being a chair is the neutral status you hold. Therefore, the MEU 2009 was also for me a demanding experience. Reflecting the final voting procedure, I realized, that this week had considerable influence on all of us, creating transnational relations which are the core of the European spirit.



Being a Member



MICHAEL BÓRAK

Model European Union was my first encounter with such a simulation and it was a very useful and remarkable experience. This year, MEU brought together 120 young people from different European countries that were discussing the very actual topics of European election and CO2 emissions. Participants were divided into different political groups which for some of them might have been interesting to defend a political view that they do not stand for in real life. However, because participants had to prepare their position papers before the simulation, the discussion was on a very high level. The whole model was prepared to the smallest detail: faction meetings, press conferences, lobbyists, workshops, different newspapers published every day including tabloids, etc. All these details together with the environment of the European Parliament helped young people to feel as real politicians changing our world. One of the positive aspects of MEU2009 was that it took place right before the European election. The simulation thus helped to promote the idea of the

European Union among young people and I don't think there was a single participant that did not vote in the European election which took place a few weeks after MEU.

My task together with another participant was to represent Spain in the socialist faction in the European Parliament. Model European Union helped me to understand how the real EU works and the relationship between the Council and Parliament. I had several courses about EU and its policies at my home university. However, MEU as well as discussions with Mr. Wieland and other persons connected with the EU, showed me the practical side of politics and I must mention that a single week in Strasbourg was more useful than one semester of theoretical studying. Another great experience was the EP building itself. Without MEU I would probably never visit these places. My big respect also goes to organizers that besides the model itself prepared a rich social program for every evening that we spent in Strasbourg.

of the Council



DIANA COCORU

I would like to begin by saying that everyone should participate to a simulation like MEU, especially one organized by BETA! It was a great time being there and attending the simulation in the parliament together with the 118 participants. I had the opportunity to exercise my language skills and to socialize with people from all over the world (the cultural impact was great).

I remember that sitting in the plenary room made me feel like I was in the real world, during a real Council debate. Even if outside this room everyone expressed the joy of participating in such a challenging event, inside we were all very serious.

We had to approach the microphone so that everyone could hear you and it was sometimes a little bit embarrassing to repeat what you just said because you forgot to turn on the microphone or because you didn't take into account that you had to approach the microphone in order for others to hear you.

The debates were about two directives: the reduction of CO2 emissions and direct elections for the European Parliament. Every Minister was so well prepared and took his job very seriously!

We started to discuss the first directive and the "national interest" was in the air. I mean that after discussions we brought up several amendments but just one passed in the Parliament. And that was because we were not used to compromise or to convince other people that a specific amendment would be good.

But we learned our lesson and the discussions

about the Direct Elections Act were improved. As a minister of Austria, my job was very difficult: I had to convince every other minister that voting at the age of 16 was a very good idea, and that after the EP voted for the 18 to be the voting age. It is true that the Commission's proposal stated that the voting age should be 16, but this seemed not to count because the MEPs were unanimously in favor of 18 as the appropriate voting age.

When I first started to talk about the advantages of a lower voting age it seemed for me that everyone nodded and was disapproving. My job was even more difficult because, in my opinion too, a 16 years person is immature and not so well informed. So this vote wouldn't have an accurate basis.

Having to reach my goal, I used every coffee break in order to get other ministers' support or at least the support of the ministers with a larger number of votes. And I was very happy that my amendment passed in the end and the EP also voted in favor of this election act. It was probably more important to have direct elections than having the voting age of 18. So Austria had the chance to let its 16 years old citizens to vote for the MEP they want.

Overall, being a minister was a tough job, but I liked it very much. For this position you have to have several skills, but once you gained them it makes you feel like you do have the possibility to influence the decision-making process.

Being a Member



MICHAEL BÓRAK

Model European Union was my first encounter with such a simulation and it was a very useful and remarkable experience. This year, MEU brought together 120 young people from different European countries that were discussing the very actual topics of European election and CO2 emissions. Participants were divided into different political groups which for some of them might have been interesting to defend a political view that they do not stand for in real life. However, because participants had to prepare their position papers before the simulation, the discussion was on a very high level. The whole model was prepared to the smallest detail: faction meetings, press conferences, lobbyists, workshops, different newspapers published every day including tabloids, etc. All these details together with the environment of the European Parliament helped young people to feel as real politicians changing our world. One of the positive aspects of MEU2009 was that it took place right before the European election. The simulation thus helped to promote the idea of the

European Union among young people and I don't think there was a single participant that did not vote in the European election which took place a few weeks after MEU.

My task together with another participant was to represent Spain in the socialist faction in the European Parliament. Model European Union helped me to understand how the real EU works and the relationship between the Council and Parliament. I had several courses about EU and its policies at my home university. However, MEU as well as discussions with Mr. Wieland and other persons connected with the EU, showed me the practical side of politics and I must mention that a single week in Strasbourg was more useful than one semester of theoretical studying. Another great experience was the EP building itself. Without MEU I would probably never visit these places. My big respect also goes to organizers that besides the model itself prepared a rich social program for every evening that we spent in Strasbourg.

of the Parliament / CHIARA PALIERI

Being a MEP for 3 days and generally being a participant of the MEU 2009 is an outstanding experience. Thanks to the hard work of the organizers and the constant commitment of the other participants, this experience is a terrific opportunity to all those young Europeans who want to know how the decision-making process works in reality. These three days were truly amazing: everyone put so much vitality, creativity and professionalism into their own role that it really seemed the real European Parliament!

A MEP is representing the voice of people; therefore he/she ensures that the interests of citizens are taken into account and that the national realities and national needs are respected. Day by day, a MEP is constantly working with his/her own political group, is animated by passion, commitment and a desire to design a better Europe. A MEP proposes amendments, modifications, suggestions or constructive critics upon the proposal delivered by the Council.

Decision-making is never easy. Thus collaboration and debates are the most important moments to persuade the Parliament to vote for a certain amendment. The decisions are made by majority rule and thereby satisfy as many parties as possible in the end. But the Parliament never works alone. The smooth development of the EU life is ensured by the strong collaboration between the Parliament, the Council, the Commission and also by the influence of lobbyists who try to persuade the institutions' decision makers by advocating the interests of their company or organization. In conversations with the MEPs and ministers, the lobbyists deliver speeches and thereby expose them to the controversial issues in a respectful though challenging manner.

The Lobbyists represent in front of the Parliament and the Council the interest of the company or the organization he/she is representing. He/she delivers a speech exposing the controversial issues, trying to persuade in a respectful though challenging manner the MEPs and the Ministers.

As far as my experience in the simulation is concerned, I saw everyone extremely keen on the European topics such as the elections act and the CO2 emission proposal. We achieved a huge success, thanks to the passion each one of us showed in such an important



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context. MEPs performed as real MEPs, Lobbyists decided upon a course of actions like real lobbyists, Ministers decided upon the amendments and the approval of the Parliament and Journalists did a great job during the press conferences and with the daily journal.

As this was something new for everyone, each participant put so much interest and did his/her best in order to emulate a real MEP, Minister, Lobbyist and Journalist; the atmosphere was professional and after we argued about issues in the parliament we enjoyed the voting time.

As a MEP I tried not to be influenced by the lobbyists who were very good at performing their role. I spoke with the minister of the country which I was representing (since - like in real life - we defend the same interests) and when I was speaker of the PSE for two days

I can proudly say it's an amazing experience and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it especially to people like me who are still in high school and want to know more about the EU institutions. In my opinion, this is really the best informal education that the EU offered to us. Studying about the EU decision progress might be quite difficult due to the complicated jargon and the specificity of the subject but having a hands-on experience really opens the eyes of young Europeans and inspires them to do more for the European Union.

Ten members of the press rose to a challenge / STEFANIE DITZEL

Controversial topics, intense discussions, and concrete results made the MEU 2009 an interesting event which represented a challenge for the ten journalists who reported about everything that happened during that week. Besides serious political issues, gossip news about some European politicians' striking behaviour were worth being published. The journalists from different countries started their work with creating a preparatory newspaper containing introductory articles about the two legislation acts dealt with in Strasbourg.

When the MEU began, they met in the capital of Alsace, in order to report about the debates and the people involved. As the topics seemed to be so diverse, they decided to divide the reporting into two newspapers. "The Voice of Europe" dealt with background information, the latest news, commentaries, and interviews about the debates in the Parliament. The yellow press, "Little bird", set the Parliamentarians, Lobbyists and Members of the Council under pressure to behave well not only during their working time but also on public parties. Intense research and good pictures allowed the journalists to produce informative and entertaining newspapers.

From the first day on, we made useful experiences about the creation of a newspaper. At first, it was

difficult to coordinate our work, to decide on who was going to do what, and how the papers were supposed to look like. Everyone provided his or her ideas about the size and the layout of the paper, the length and the style of the articles. Publishing both papers every day turned out to be a problem due to time pressure. However, we journalists managed to accomplish four editions of the "Voice of Europe" and three versions of the "Little Bird". The politicians were quite excited every time the journalists distributed the papers that came directly from the printer. They felt observed, controlled and influenced by the press – the Fourth Estate. This was exactly the journalists' main intention.

Our highlights were the press conferences at the end of each day in the Parliament. The journalists confronted the spokespersons of the different fractions and the Council with critical questions about the decisions they made. Some surprised the audience with unexpected answers which caused further debates. Our role was a very special one. We tried to pay attention to everything 24 hours a day and at the same time to report from a neutral perspective. Everyone agrees that the project MEU 2009 was a great opportunity to learn a lot about the procedures of the EU institutions and about journalistic work in a team.





Greener cars for a green environment



STEFANIE DEITZEL

The European car industry might soon be facing new challenges with regards to production standards. In January, the Commission proposed a regulation which implies that new passenger cars must fulfil strict emission performance criteria in order to contribute to the achievement of environmental aims. At the same time, the commission expects the member states to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent until 2020.

As the use of passenger cars causes up to 12 percent of all emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the EU, the car sector has the potential to help achieving this ambitious aim. The concrete objective is to limit the energy consumption to 130g CO₂/km for the average new car. According to the Commission, the car industry provides an enormous number of jobs and plays an important role for economic growth in many European countries.

Therefore, the automotive sector has not only a key role in international protection of the environment but also in the European economy. Both

aspects can complement each other if the EU creates incentives for the development of new, progressive technologies that promote employment as well as ecological production. Such an improvement requires immense investments on either side, the EU and the manufacturers.

The commissioners justify an intervention in the car market by European regulation with the argument that standards that differ from member state to member state cannot lead to a collective reduction in CO₂ emissions. Only shared targets give the

manufacturers enough planning certainty and flexibility to achieve their aim. EU authorities are of the opinion that a reduction in CO₂ emissions can be realised by technological improvements and a growing use of biofuels.

The proposal also reminds of the diversity of the European automotive market. A new regulation should thus consider the different consumer needs and avoid unfair distortion of competition between manufacturers.

The proposed regulation concerns all manufacturers in the European Union and is supposed to be applied for those new passenger cars that are registered in the EU

for the first time. However, it does not affect special purpose vehicles. The Commission wants the car industry to decide flexibly on how to realise the requirements.

The manufacturers should be free to produce cars that in average fulfil the standards instead of tailoring each individual car to the emissions target. Also, the companies would be allowed to create pools for purposes of meeting the objectives. These pools must not last longer than five years.

The new regulation would cause some bureaucratic costs because every member state would have to monitor and report its average emissions on a regular basis.

A glimpse to how the European Elections are regulated

MARCO ZOPPI

At today European elections are regulated by the Direct Elections Act, concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage. Taking a look to the first article, it's straight evident the democratic nature of these elections, summarized in the vote characteristics: free, secret and by direct universal suffrage.

Besides, MEPs shall be elected on the basis of proportional representation (following the principles of D'Hondt for counting votes), using the fixed party receives.

receives. This is an important point: a fixed, closed list doesn't allow citizens to have any power to decide on candidates, in particular on the order in which party candidates are elected. In other words, the party has pre-decided on who will receive the votes for the political parties in the elections, that is, the candidates positioned highest on this list tend to always get a seat in the parliament while the candidates positioned very low on the closed list will not.

The second paragraph further defines the voting system by not

PAGE 5



Being lobbyist for three days / DOROTHEE NIEBUHR

Being a lobbyist for 3 days was a very interesting and enriching experience. Before I participated in the MEU 2009, I didn't really know what the job of a lobbyist is and why there are so many lobbyists – some say 10.000, others 30.000 – in Brussels. As I got the information that I was going to be a lobbyist in the MEU, first of all I needed to find out what it means to be a lobbyist and why it is so important to have lobbyists in any institution in order to give the different groups and associations of society a voice.

First of all, I have to say that my role as a lobbyist for the car company Volkswagen was interesting in two ways: Being a German student, I felt quite "proud" to represent a German company, even though in general I feel way more European than German. Second, I was never really interested in car issues, maybe because I am a girl and on top of that I don't have a car. Thus, I started to prepare myself for this role by reading some articles in order to get a better idea of the current issues and debates, especially about the CO2 resolution.

During the simulation I noticed very soon that the work of a lobbyist differed a lot from the work of the MEPs and the members of Council. While the politicians were having their coffee break, it was up

to us lobbyists to talk to them in order to convince them of our point of view. Even in the short times of party meetings, we needed to talk to the MEPs and to influence their decision-making. There were a lot of arguments to be considered and a lot of them were actually in favour of the automotive industry: the level of technology which doesn't always meet the requirements of the proposal, the high costs of research and of hybrid motors (a hybrid motor costs about 8000 Euros per car – which consumer would like to pay such an amount only in order to drive an environmental-friendlier car?), the risk of losing jobs in Europe as the employee's wages are particularly high in Western Europe, the risk of not being able to keep up the competitiveness with the Asian car manufacturers,... all in all, it was interesting to try to convince the MEPs in their decision-making process. Dependent on the party they represented in Parliament, it was more or less easy to find a sympathetic ear.

In the end, all the hard work of talking endlessly to politicians that quite often weren't interested in listening to a lobbyist's concerns and interests, was worth it. And that's not only because the Council rejected the proposal of the Parliament, which would have been devastating for the car

manufacturers, in the end, which meant our "victory". It was also worth it because the work of a lobbyist has a lot to do with communicating information. This was my favourite part of being a lobbyist in MEU 2009. And thanks to these first positive experiences of being a lobbyist, I could even imagine working one day as a lobbyist...!



Debates



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WORKSHOPS

INCOMING WORKSHOPS / LOUISA LÖSING

The incoming workshops took place on the first day, directly after our participants' arrival. Though many of them were still a bit wrecked by their travel to Strasbourg, everyone showed a great amount of enthusiasm and motivation!

The task for the first day was not easy: it was the participants' main challenge to show creativity and cooperation and work out an election campaign for the political group they represented during the simulation (PSE, EPP-ED, Greens/EFA, ADLE, ID), respectively for their position as Council of the European Union!

The main difficulty was probably to find a common team position very quickly – just after having met the other group members for the first time – and make the best out of it – a presentation, a video, ...

Secondly, as there were hardly any examples for EU-27 wide election campaigns. Hence the partici-

“THE PARTICIPANTS’ MAIN CHALLENGE TO SHOW CREATIVITY AND COOPERATION AND WORK OUT AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR THE FRACTION THEY REPRESENTED DURING THE SIMULATION”

pants really had to work out their own ideas and solutions.

I was overwhelmed by the professionalism and variety of concepts we squeezed out of approximately two hours of work:

We were shown very representative and strongly courting voters PowerPoints by “EPP-ED” and “PSE”, an interactive appeal by the “Green fraction”, a very radical short campaign by the “ID” and a massive liberalism promoting campaign by ALDE. The Council members referred in their video to the common values that connect the 27 countries.

Due to the great atmosphere, a very strong team spirit in all groups and due to a very good preparation by the participants in advance of the event I would consider the incoming workshops a great success!

Preparation workshops / LOUISA LÖSING

On Sunday, our second day at Strasbourg, the participants were prepared for the actual simulation by learning more about the content and the background of the regulation and acts later to be discussed.

Therefore we invited experts, at ease with the topic, to give some information on the EU and the restriction of car emissions and on the EU's voting system.

The first proposal was presented by Prof. Dr. Thomas König from the University of Mannheim to our participants playing MEPs. König is an expert on European Integration and has also worked on environmental issues. Meanwhile, the "Council members", "lobbyists" and "journalists" got some information on the proposal from Mr. Ralf Diemer, the represen-

tative of the German Automobile Industry (VDA), working at Brussels.

The proposal on European elections was presented to the "MEPs" by Mr. Hans-Jürgen Zahorka, a former MEP (EDD-ED) and director of the think-tank Libertas on European governance and economic issues. The other group (Council, lobby, press) spoke with another think-tank member, Mr. Marco Incerti, from the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) at Brussels.

In total, it was a tough learning day. Especially the "Council team" reported happily controversial debates with Mr. Diemer. For the other - very large - group this remained hard to achieve. Nevertheless the collection of new perspectives of view and data was quite a good preparation for the upcoming days.

Panel Discussion with parlamentarian Rainer Wieland and Troy Davis

ANA GALAN



How can Europe become more democratic? This is one of the most important questions that European politicians are trying to figure out.

The turnout trends of the last EU elections are clear: Many people do not vote. The voting rate is decreasing, not only at the European level but also at the national one. Why is it happening? On Sunday evening, the MEU participants attend to a panel discussion about this topic at the Strasbourg University with the parliamentarian of the European Popular Party (EPP-ED) Rainer Wieland and Troy Davis, the creator of an organization whose aim is to create the School of Democracy.

The member of the European Parliament,

Rainer Wieland argued that people only vote after a war or a revolution, so the problem is not only present in Europe, but also in other countries. "It has nothing to do with distance to the people, but with the feeling of political responsibility". On the other hand, the moderator Mr. Davis complained about the lack of a European spirit among the citizens. "Europe is too abstract. Legally, there is a European concept but citizens do not have the feeling and it will take time to become more real", said Mr. Davis.

Another subject that has been discussed was the creation of democracy and the controversial topic of the accession of Turkey to the EU."

Get Active Workshops

JEF / LOUISA LÖSING

The Jeunes Européennes Fédéralistes (JEF) is a supra-national, political movement active in most European countries. It is an autonomous youth organisation which works with political parties, European, national and local institutions and associations, as well as the general public. JEF is also a supporter of MEU.

Saska presented the general JEF structure, the ideas and values behind the movement. She also gave information on the activities that JEF plans and acts out – such as seminars, pan-European actions etc..

I further tried to motivate the participants of our workshop to see JEF as a chance to plan “smaller” (space) activities by telling them about our JEF initiative Osnabrück.

Although we answered quite some questions I had experienced our participants as much more active and interested the days before – I assume, they were very tired...

AEGEE / CHIARA PALIERI

Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE) is one of the biggest interdisciplinary student associations in Europe; it is represented by 15.000 students, active in 232 academic cities, in 43 countries all around Europe, which presents amazing culture variety. AEGEE is a secular, non-profit organization, not linked to any political party. All projects and activities are based on voluntary work of its members.

AEGEE works on the following fields: cultural exchange, active citizenship, higher education and peace and Stability.

ELSA / SOFIA KALLIO

ELSA (European Law Student Association) Germany, one of the 40 member countries of ELSA, was a partner of the MEU 2009. Stephanie Denowell and Nina Prantl from the board of ELSA Germany gave us an interesting presentation on the association and its current activities. We heard for example about the ELSA delegations attending the meetings of UNCITRAL and WIPO and about the conferences on the topics of travel law and Intellectual Property Rights.

The participants attending were mainly law students, but also students from other fields were interested in the association and in the possibilities for co-operation. Some participants were even keen on establishing ELSA in their own countries – maybe we will some day hear about ELSA Cyprus or a revived ELSA Ireland as a result of the workshop.

How can Europe be made more democratic? / JULIA HAUPTMANN

A bunch of young, open minded Europeans sat expectantly in Room N1.2 waiting for an unknown species of scientists; a democratic engineer. All of us were very curious to hear what Troy Davis would have to tell us about the alleged democratic deficit of the European Union.

Disagreement, so Mr Davis argues, can arise from two things; different assumptions or a difference in reasoning. In the discussion that followed, the former appeared to be the more likely reason. By way of introduction, Mr Davis had tried to characterise his theory of democratic engineering as a scientific

one, i.e. one that – just like maths or physics – sets up hypotheses that can then be either proven or disproven. Rather simple he said that, viewed in this light, political science is strictly spoken not a science.”

The establishment of a new democracy or the reform of an existing one needs to take into account two aspects; an appropriate architecture and the process by which it is established or reformed. The architecture needs to be based on human flaws as it is unlikely that humans will change for the sake of adapting to the architecture.

Does the European Union have communication problems? / PHILIPP OBENAUER AND CAROLINA C. SASTRIQUES



The EU, its institutions and its representatives are often accused of being too distant towards its citizens. Furthermore, the process of the EU is too complicated, complex and the decision-making not visible for its citizens.

According to the recent Eurobarometer results this spring, it is a true fact: Only 44% of EU citizens were interested in the European elections against 53% not being interested in its results. Beyond that, the basic knowledge about the EU is terrifyingly low. 53% of EU citizens knew that the European Parliament is directly elected, only 36% knew that the seats in the Parliament are distributed according to different “political alliances” and just 48% knew that number of MEPs per country is different.

Therefore it is not surprising that only 45% of its citizens trust in the Parliament and only 42% in the European Commission. Would you trust in something you do not know? An explanation is directly given within the results: There is a tendency of young and educated people with a higher knowledge, interest and support of the EU. Only 33% with a bad objective knowledge support the EU against 62% with a good objective knowledge, on average 53% of the EU citizens consider the EU as a good thing, whereas only 15% as a bad thing.

When it comes to the interest, there are 60% of the

citizens who did not have any media recall of the European Parliament recently. The numbers show a high correlation between the media recall, the interest and the voter turnout. So one factor to be examined closer should be the communication of the EU about its work, how it decides and how people may participate in this European-wide project.

In a world increasingly globalised and connected, environmental or economical problems can only be solved on a global level. Hence the cooperation on the European level is a necessary step. A precondition to (re)act is communication. Communication has become an important way to engage citizens in politics and economy and helps to develop solutions. Through the mass media, we can have news about the developments in science, learn more about other cultures and people.

In corporate communication, there is a key operating principle: “Do things right, and make them known”. The conclusion is clear: Without communication, there are no facts, nothing exists. No matter if the product sold is a “good” one.

Many people in Europe would agree on the EU being a “good” thing: It gives global answers to global and local problems, helped to solve the problem of enduring war in Europe, mass poverty after the Second World War

and to rebuild the European states. It furthermore offers many opportunities for young people to discover the world, amongst all the diverse European world.

In this “sense” of communication, does the EU exist?

The European elections in June passed silently. The feared expectations became reality: Only 43% of the population eligible to vote went to the polls. The voting rate is falling down at the same time when the European Union is increasing its power. Moreover, with the Lisbon Treaty coming into force, the pan-European institutions would gain weight and importance and be a cornerstone in the political processes of the member states of the Union.

Daniel Bell, a sociologist and a professor at the Harvard University, said “nation-state is becoming too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life”. We need Europe. But Europe needs the citizens to ensure the viability and legitimacy of the political, legal and economic integration process. Without Europeans there is no Europe. But European citizens are not motivated by the dream of a European Union, because they do not feel they belong to it.

One of the main causes of the gap between Europe and its citizens is the poor knowledge of the structure, tasks and essential work of the Union, and the impact of Community law on the lives of citizens. Only a little part of the institutional work of the European Union appears in the mass media, and citizens have a limited knowledge of our neighbor states. Thus, one of the weaknesses of the Union is its communication.

Could the idea of the European communication body solve the lack of communication between the citizens and its parliament? Parliamentary chronicles, televised debates, reports of the effects of the European Legislation into the national policies, into the day by day of the citizen, bring the members of the Parliament closer through interviews. Yes, a ‘Voice of Europe’ could make known the Union from the inside, from the origin. And yes, it is a great challenge to install a television in the 23 languages of the Union, a common newspaper for the 27 members, which are so different and at the same time united by one purpose: A large European Union for all and with all.

Maybe then, the European Union could begin to exist?



Local

The city of Strasbourg / CONSTANTIN SCHÄFER



Strasbourg is the capital and principal city of the Alsace region in north-eastern France. With 700,000 inhabitants in 2007, its metropolitan area is the ninth largest in France. Located close to the border with Germany, it is the capital of the Bas-Rhin department.

Strasbourg's historic city centre was classified a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1988, the first time such an honour was placed on an entire city centre. Strasbourg is fused into the Franco-German culture and, although violently disputed throughout history, has been a bridge of unity between France and Germany for centuries, especially through its university, currently the largest in France, and the co-existence of Catholic and Protestant culture.

The city is chiefly known for its sandstone gothic Cathedral of Notre-Dame with its famous astronomical clock, and for its medieval cityscape of Rhineland black and white timber-framed buildings, particularly in the Petite-France district alongside the Ill and in the streets and squares surrounding the cathedral. Strasbourg also offers high-class eclectic buildings in its largely extended German district, being the main memory of Wilhelmian architecture since most of the major cities in Germany suffered intensive damage during World War II.

As a humanism centre, Strasbourg has a long history of higher-education excellence, merging

French and German intellectual traditions. Although Strasbourg had been annexed by the Kingdom of France in 1683, it still remained connected to the German-speaking intellectual world throughout the 18th century and the university attracted numerous students from the Holy Roman Empire, including Goethe, Metternich and Montgelas, who studied law in Strasbourg. Nowadays, Strasbourg is known to offer among the best university courses in France, after Paris. Until January 2009, there were three

As a humanism centre, Strasbourg has a long history of higher-education excellence, merging French and German intellectual traditions

universities in Strasbourg with an approximate total of 48,500 students. Since 1st January 2009, those three universities have merged and constitute now the Université de Strasbourg. The prestigious Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Strasbourg (or Sciences Po Strasbourg) is part of it.

Strasbourg is the seat of several European institutions such as the Council of Europe (with its European Court of Human Rights, the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and its European Audiovisual Observatory), the Eurocorps as well as the European Parliament and the European Ombudsman of the European Union.

The European Parliament / CONSTANTIN SCHÄFER

Strasbourg is the official seat of the European Parliament. for twelve sessions a year with each one lasting for about four days. All the other work takes place in Brussels and in Luxembourg.

Today, the principal building is the Louise Weiss building which was inaugurated in 1999. Built at a cost of 470 million Euro at the intersection of the Ill and the Marne-Rhine Canal, it houses the hemicycle for plenary sessions, the largest of any European institution (750 seats - expanded to 785 - for MEPs and 680 for visitors), 18 other assembly rooms as well as a total of 1133 parliamentary offices. It was constructed due to the enlargement of the European Union in 1995 (and the planned enlargement to the east in 2004).

Due to the new members, the Parliament needed a larger hemicycle to hold debates, and more offices for MEPs. Through a covered footbridge over the Ill, the Louise Weiss building, whose voluntarily unfinished 60m high tower reflects the unfinished construction of Europe, communicates with two secondary buildings of the Parliament: the Winston Churchill and Salvador de Madariaga buildings.

Members sit in a hemicycle according to their

political groups arranged mainly from left to right, but some smaller groups are placed towards the outer ring of the chamber. All desks are equipped with microphones, headphones for interpretation and electronic voting equipment. The leaders of the groups sit on the front benches at the centre, and in the very centre is a podium for guest speakers. The remaining segment of the circular chamber is primarily composed of the raised area where the President and staff sit. Behind them there is an EU flag attached to the wall with national flags in rows at each side of it. Interpretation booths are located behind them and along the sides of the chamber, while public galleries are located above the chamber around the entire perimeter. The chamber as a whole is of a modern design, with the walls entirely composed of lights with large blue chairs for MEPs.

Prior to the inauguration of the Louise Weiss building, the Parliament shared the facilities of the Council of Europe, who had built a hemicycle in their headquarters: the Palace of Europe whose hemicycle was inaugurated for the Parliament's use, and for the use of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, on January 28, 1977.



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Center Walk

During their first evening in Strasbourg, the participants discovered the centre of Strasbourg. Divided into four groups, they were guided by our Local Support team to the most important and beautiful parts of the city, notably the illuminated Cathedral and the oldest quarter of the town, the Petite France. Every group finished their tour in a different pub of Strasbourg where organizers and participants got to know each other by having a little drink together.



Boat Tour

Before their first day in Parliament, the new deputies, Council members, lobbyists, and journalists spent their second evening in Strasbourg on a boat that showed them all the interesting parts of the city from the river Ill. While listening to the audio-guide, the participants learnt about the history of the Alsatian capital as well as the architecture of the old buildings and the institutions in the European quarter.

European Night

In the middle of their stay in Strasbourg, the young Europeans celebrated their new parliament lives during a so called European party in the bar "Living Room". Many of them came in European dresses which they had to create before the event. Two organised busses brought all of them back to the hotel, so that everybody could still get some sleep before the next working day in Parliament.



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Farewell Party

Of course the participants had to celebrate their achievements in the Parliament in the night of the MEU. Since most of them left the day after, the party in the Golden Gate club provided also a good opportunity to say "goodbye" to each other. Once again, two big busses cared for their way back to the hotel afterwards.

Pique-Nique

Another highlight of the social program was the European Picnic in the "Euro Student Café". The participants brought food and drinks from their home countries and regions and shared it with their colleagues. While living through this fantastic intercultural experience, the participants recharged their energies for the last day in the Parliament.



People

Impressions...

...by participants

Everything was so realistic / CLIVE CUSENS



MEU2009 was a real eye-opener for me. It was one of the best experiences I've ever had, and gave me an opportunity to learn and participate in European parliamentary affairs first-hand. The organisers were amazing; we were extremely well-looked after, we had a good balance between work and fun (and trust me, there was a lot of fun!), and the whole experience was simply fantastic. Having participated in it, I am now more certain than ever in what I want to be doing in the future. We got to listen to experts and ex-MEPs about their experiences, we got to know like-minded people from all over Europe, we got to see Strasbourg, and most importantly we got to live like real politicians – working by day – both inside the Parliament and with the lobbyists outside, wary of the media by night, and hurrying to read the newspapers in the morning to make sure we weren't reported about in some scandal! Everything was so realistic... as head of the Green party, I was honestly upset when one of our proposals didn't go through, that's how into the whole thing we got. I would recommend MEU to anybody who has a wish to become a politician, journalist or lobbyist, since living the role for a week gives you infinitely more experience than just reading about it. Besides that, I've made some true friends out of the whole thing, and at least some of us will see each other again before the end of summer. The fact that I would like to help organise future MEUs shows how satisfied I was with the whole experience! Totally recommended!

Point of Information! / JOÃO BRITES

Hey everyone! My name is João Brites, I am 18 years old and I am studying Business/Economics at the New University of Lisbon.

Well, about my experience at MEU... It was not quite what I had expected. It was deeply more. You know, Einstein said once that creativity or intelligence does not only depend on how we are taught, but mainly on how the conditions in which we can learn are real opportunities for us. I am not such a great scientist, but I really believe Einstein is right, at least for this last MEU2009 for sure.

I don't know how it is in your country, but in Portugal, although we have in general a good education, sometimes we are "over taught" and we miss some opportunities to learn from ourselves. This last part is what MEU gave to me, a strong experience about defending democratically another country (in my case Poland), defending a completely different party (Independence and Democracy) and to know many different persons and histories.

The result is that you will be able to argue, debate and discuss much better when you return. And I am sure that something like this could never be taught, but learned. The truth is that what we can learn with others experiences and differences ex-



pands our pride beyond our countries frontiers and breaks the limits of our prejudices.

Apart from that, the organization is great, the food sometimes could be better, but the people you know are amazing (from the environmental friendly Greens to the paltry ID...).

Now you know, and if you decide to come next year's MEU, you should know that it will be a very intensive week but in the end, it will be powerful and powered by a good organization.



My big experience / VICENTE VILA MADRAZO



Model European Union (MEU) 2009 opened my eyes. It was a breathtaking experience and now I want to share it with anybody that may listen.

It was February when I heard about MEU 2009. I had been once inside the European Parliament, and the idea of coming back to the EP, playing the role of a MEP captivated me. My essay for the application was related to the distance separating EU and its citizens. MEU turned out to be a great tool to get young people engaged in the European Union.

Everything started on a sunny day. More than a hundred youngsters met together in Strasbourg – they all were going to live MEU 2009. The first days were filled with workshops. Each party designed a campaign, Mr. Troy Davis and Mr. Wieland (EPP) exchanged opinions with the participants... But the eagerly awaited moment came on Monday, when the time to get into the European Parliament arrived.

I had been waiting for more than a month for this moment to come. Little by little, all of us passed the security control and entered the plenary where the European Parliament's meetings were going to be held. It didn't look as if it was a simulation – it really seemed reality. I was part of the Green party, and I shared three days with five more Green MEP debating on the CO2 proposal and the Direct Elections Act. We also worked on the amendments and tried to get our ones through the Parliament's approval. The decision-making process in the European Union insti-

tutions came closer to us. I easily understood why it takes so much time to approve a proposal or an Act. Moreover, I lived three days as a MEP, talking to lobbyists and journalists, and I realized how difficult is to represent the will of the population.

But the day didn't end at six o'clock, when we left the EP. The social program completed MEU participants' experience and allowed us to get to know each other better. We were more than a hundred persons, so we needed time to introduce ourselves to the other participants. It was an amazing experience to see that we came from all the Member States of the EU. I could be talking to people from Finland or Latvia; countries that I felt were far away from me.

MEU has been a great experience and will surely be a transcendental step in my life. As I said at the beginning, it has opened my eyes and has widened my vision on the EU. The European Union is a great opportunity to its citizens to open their "mental borders" and let themselves to get to know the great chances they have.

I tried to take the most of every minute of MEU 2009, but finally time left and it finished. Now, when I come back to my memories of that week, I can only think in how hard we worked, in how close we get to the European institutions and, of course, in how much I enjoyed this experience. Everyone should live something like Model European Union at least once in a lifetime.

Impressions...

...by the team

From participant 2008 to main coordinator 2010 /

MARIA INÊS NASCIMENTO

It all started with MEU 2008. Being accepted as a participant in the Council was a turning point for me, and when I had to choose which workshop to attend, I had no doubt which one I wanted to be in: I wanted to know how to organize such a large event and, if possible, give my feedback on it.

Later on, as the team was being formed, I have chosen the Incoming Responsible position since it would very well fit my availability and abilities. I have to admit that one of the things that I also found really exciting was getting to know and to choose the participants. I had no idea what was still to come.

At the beginning, having little to do except participating in the forum, I tried to contribute as valuably as I could. The project was developing and it was quite exciting to watch it and contribute to it. But, with the event drawing nearer, it was my turn to step in. Establishing the criteria and the essay themes for the application, working on an application form, creating the database for the participants and putting together the Preparation Guide and the Welcome Manual was fun, although not always easy. The highlight of my task: Selecting the participants. Reading and marking all the essays, assembling all the information, sorting it out and then choosing the 120 people from amongst the almost 400 that applied was no easy task. On the day of the selection I sat for 17 hours in a row at a huge table sorting out hundreds of little pieces of paper. But I survived it, and I was happy!

After the selection came the organization of the details for the arrival of the participants, as well as the bureaucracy. And, of course, answering all the emails from participants and team alike. It was normal to have 40 emails per day to answer to, and God forbid that I did not check them even one day! They would have piled up. But I have to admit: it was great to get to know all the

participants before everyone else: their names, where they came from, what they wrote about... All that made me feel closer to the event as nothing else had. Still the one-and-a-half month before the conference was one of these periods when you think you are in the middle of a nightmare while you are living it but, when it is over, you look back and wish that you could have it back again. Well, maybe not really back, but somehow you miss it. There was so much to do, so many different things and decisions and emails to answer to! The fact that I had to attend an event in Cyprus during the two weeks prior to the conference, where I could not be sure if I would have internet, let alone when I would have it, was not a very happy one. I now have a very thorough knowledge of the internet cafés in every place that I visited on the island...

When I arrived back home, I just had time to do my laundry (I had packed two weeks in advance) and catch the train to Strasbourg to prepare the welcoming of the participants. There were some things that did not quite go as planned, but in general things went well. Actually, the most challenging part was still to come, and it had nothing to do with Incoming... The Parliament Secretariat in the chair demanded all my attention and most of my skills. Despite the different work methods of the chairs, to which I was not used to, and my omnipresent duties as Incoming, I managed it and, I have to say, I was proud of it. My only regret is that I actually had absolutely no leisure to listen to the discussions in the Parliament!

To tell the truth: Regardless of all the work and the stress, I would not trade this experience for anything in the world. I am really happy that I was a part of MEU2009, I am proud of the work that the team did and I am proud of the commitment that the participants - in a way, MY participants - put into it. And if MEU2010 is as good as this was, it will be a great event!

Meet the team

Philipp Obenauer



President of BETA e.V and Main Coordinator

Philipp, 23, studies political science and economics in Mainz, Germany. He is an active member of AE-GEE and was participant of MEU 2008.

Christopher Finck



Vice-president of BETA e.V

Christopher, 23, studies law in Mainz. In spring 2007, he graduated from the University of Mainz with a Certificate of Japanese Studies. Christopher has been an active member of ELSA.

Julie Meißner

Finance Responsible

Julie, 20, studies mathematics in Dortmund, Germany. She is volunteering for the German Youth For Understanding Committee and has been involved with Model United Nations Projects.



Stefan Madeja

Website Responsible

Stefan, 27, is a trainee at DG Communication in the European Commission in Brussels. He studied Master of European Linguistics in Freiburg, Germany and wrote his master thesis about the European public sphere.



Tiberiu Stanescu



PR Responsible

Tiberiu, 23, studies Computer Science in Ploiesti, Romania. Since he participated in the MEU 2008 and really enjoyed the event, he decided to become one of the organizers of MEU2009.

Anatoli Tsakalidou



Fundraising Responsible

Anatoli, 20, is a law student at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She is very interested in anything that has to do with the EU or International Relations and is president of AEGEE-Thessaloniki and an active member of ELSA.

Maria Inês Nascimento

Incoming Responsible

Maria Inês, 27, comes from Porto, Portugal. She has a BA in Languages and International Relations and, still as a student, participated in the Erasmus program in Germany, where she now lives.



Content Responsible

Jenna, 21, studies European studies in Osnabrück, Germany. She is an active member of a political party in Germany. Since she attended MEU 2008 in Strasbourg so she decided to help with MEU 2009.

Jenna Schulte



Florian Schweitzer



Fundraising team member

Florian, 27, studied economics in Mainz and finished on his thesis. He wants to promote the European unification process and is excited by the idea of MEU.

Anna Schleicher



Fundraising team member

Anna is 20 years old and studies science of books, musicology and economics in Mainz. In school, she joined a one-week-workshop to design a commercial for the elections in 2009. Since then, she wants to enthuse other students to take part in the European Union.

Jens Wickert

Fundraising team member

Jens, 26, studies history and archeology in Mainz. He is involved with MEU because he wants to get an impression in which way an unique political construction like the EU could go in the future and to offer the same to other committed people.



PR team member

Artan, 24, is from Macedonia. He currently studies Political Science and Political Economics at the University of Vienna in Austria. He is an active member of United Nations Youth and Student Association of Austria (AFA-UNYSA).

Artan Mehmedi



Saska Gocevska



Institution Responsible
Saska, 27, lives in Bulgaria. The first time she got sensible for Europe was during a simulation game in Brussels. As a member of the European Movement and JEF Belgium, she participated in different events aimed at young people with an open spirit.

Louisa Lösing



Workshop Responsible

Louisa, 22, lives and studies in the lovely city of Osnabrück, Germany. She is hurrying towards her Bachelor thesis in European Studies. She is 22 years old and Organizing MEU in 2008 and 2009 was a great impressive experience and was a lot of fun!

Constantin Schäfer

Local Support

Constantin, 24, studied at the Sciences Po Strasbourg where he was integrated in the "Certificate for European Political Studies" programme. He worked in the European Parliament and used his Strasbourg connections to support the team on the spot.



Lobbyist Responsible

Hortensja, 24, is currently at Gent University in Belgium doing her post Master in European Criminology and European Criminal Justice Systems. Before, she studied political science in Amsterdam and took care MEU 2009 to be the best simulation up to date.



Hortensja Pajko

Ben Labbe



Incoming Team Member

Ben, 25, is Belgian and lives in Dublin working for a car rental company. He is involved in numerous organizations. For him, MEU is the perfect opportunity to create a pro European environment.

Agnes Lüdicke



Content team member and Journalist Responsible

Agnes, 21, studies European studies and economics in Osnabrück. Having participated in MEU 2008, she wanted to give others the opportunity to have the same great experience.

Janina Czas

Fundraising team member
Janina, 21, studies geology in Mainz and is very enthusiastic about MEU 2009.



Fundraising team member and Journalist Responsible

Theresa is 22 years old and studies English, geography and educational science in Mainz becoming a teacher and a M.A. She has already participated in a Model United Nations conference in school.

Theresa Mast



The Future

Join us in MEU 2010 / PHILIPP OBENAUER AND INÊS NASCIMENTO



“They could experience how important the decision-making process is and had a wonderful occasion to get to know many young people from all over Europe!”

“The new MEU Team consists of experienced BETA members and many former MEU 2009 participants!”

The disenchantment of young people towards the EU is a European-wide problem. However, this booklet has shown that it is not as low as one might expect it to be. Still, this outstanding simulation is one valuable step to raise young people’s awareness and give the participants the opportunity to state their opinions and their cases and learn how to make compromises.

They could experience how important the decision-making process is and had a wonderful occasion to get to know many young people from all over Europe! Such an experience may change young people’s mind. They saw how the EU works and being aware of their influence on European decisions – understand that their vote counts to choose how they want to be represented on the European level.

We are very proud to say that this goal was achieved to a great extent. Even more: coming back home they will spread the message, talk about the event, its results, the opportunities the EU offers to them and their friends and will thus raise further awareness towards this important matters!

If you were not selected for this year’s event, you are maybe a bit sad for missing this chance of temporarily becoming a member of the European Parlia-

ment or a minister of a EU member state. If you were, you might regret that MEU 2009 was so quickly over. But we have good news for you: This initiative will continue in 2010! We intend to make MEU in Strasbourg even better and establish it as a long-time tradition to work on the awareness and knowledge of young people about the EU and Europe.

We are right now working on the content of MEU 2010. We have already had our follow-up meeting of this year’s and started preparing next year’s MEU, and we have many interesting ideas that we will still discuss. When the time comes, we hope to be able to offer you again an unforgettable experience and bring the world of the European opportunities closer to you!

The new MEU Team consists of experienced members and many former MEU 2009 participants and you may look forward to spring 2010 for the next edition! If you cannot wait, we suggest that you check out our website (<http://www.meu2010.org>), have a look in our forum and engage in European debates.

Apart from that, the Bringing Europeans Together Association (BETA) e.V. is working on bringing MEU simulations to different cities in the future. If you are interested to have your MEU simulation, do not hesitate to contact us!

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- Member of Parliament Rainer Wieland: Thank you for giving us an impression about the life of an MEP! Thank you and your assistant, Mr. Georg Becker, for again making MEU take place in the EP building in Strasbourg again
- Dr. Hans-Gert Pöttering for supporting us for three years now and letting us use the European Parliament's building for our simulation
- The European Parliament and especially Mrs Eckert (our contact person in the European Parliament): Thank you for your outstanding support in the European Parliament
- Teodora Deaconu (a trainee in administration of the European Parliament): Thanks for being a helping hand in the Parliament
- Our trainers, professor Dr. Thomas König, Marco Incerti, Hans-Jürgen Zahorka, Ralf Diemer and Troy Davis: Thank you for expertise and the lively discussion we enjoyed together
- Everybody else who supported us in organising the MEU 2009 and spreading the message of MEU 2010!



*Thank you all
for your support!*

Your MEU 2009 Team

Our partners and sponsors:



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