

EUROSCOLA

The future of the European Union, its role, organisation and place in the world, will determine the future of young Europeans. It is more important than ever to involve the young people of our countries in taking decisions, making choices and sharing responsibilities, in order to make them a part of Europe's democratic life.

The European Union cannot remain a mystery to young people in Europe. Whilst they are making choices about their lives and trying to find a direction, they must be able to take part in the European debate and experience European diversity and unity at first hand.

In order to meet this need, the European Parliament launched the Euroscola programme, designed to enable young people from all over Europe to meet, discuss their problems and experiences and get to know each other. The European Parliament organises regular meetings with secondary school pupils from the 25 Member States of the European Union in its hemicycle in Strasbourg, in the form of a European Youth Parliament.

At each event, 500 students (16 to 18 years old), who have done preparation work in their lessons, are invited to spend a day at the European Parliament

- 1/ to familiarise them with the workings of the European institutions,
- 2/ to make them aware of their role in the future organisation of Europe,
- 3/ to convey to them the need to invest in democracy and fundamental rights,
- 4/ to offer them a forum for expressing their personal opinions and strengthening their commitment.

It is difficult to imagine a venue more fitting than the European Parliament, the centrepiece of the continent's democratic life, which welcomes young people and, in a clearly symbolic setting, provides them with the opportunity to express themselves and exchange ideas on a given issue and on the need for mutual understanding, based on the young people's willingness to get to know others.

The Euroscola programme must operate to allow easy interaction of young people of different nationalities. As soon as they arrive at the European Parliament, the youngsters cease to represent their school, and become part of multilingual working groups of about 100 participants. The choice of group and the subjects to be discussed are dealt with prior to the day itself in the various educational establishments.

The games, questionnaires and surveys are organised in such a way as to require students of different linguistic backgrounds and nationalities to work together.

Throughout the day, participants are encouraged to make full use of their language knowledge to communicate with their colleagues from other European countries, to see foreign languages as a means of exchange, understanding the problems of others, their points of view and expectations, and to create a better welcome for young people with different traditions and customs.

It is intrinsic to the success of the day that the students participating are well prepared for the meeting, so that they can play an active part in the discussions, some of which will be held in a foreign language, on subjects to which they have already given some thought.

At the end of the day, each participant will receive a certificate signed by the President of the European Parliament.

A *EUROSCOLA* day at the European Parliament

After arriving at the European Parliament at 08.30, the 500 youngsters (mainly students from the upper sixth) meet each other over breakfast, during which the programme details are explained to them.

Following this initial meeting, the participants, who have already been assigned to multinational groups (to avoid any political confusion, these are designated by geometric shapes), make their way to the hemicycle where they take the seats of the MEPs. The session begins with an overview of the role of the European Parliament, followed by an hour of questions and discussions, along with a questionnaire on the students' plans and knowledge of Europe, during which the European Parliament's electronic voting system is used. This takes up the whole morning.

Lunch is an opportunity for great interaction, with participants forming smaller teams, consisting of four different nationalities, to take part in a game set out in the official languages of the EU.

After lunch, the students rejoin their five respective working groups, each of which appoints a chairman and spokesman. Each working group adopts a resolution that its rapporteur defends in plenary. The final text adopted by all the participants is the Euroscola resolution of the day.

A representative from the European Parliament concludes the debate.

The day finishes with the final of the quiz on knowledge of European culture and a closing ceremony at the end of which the European anthem is sung. A European flag is given to each school and participants all receive a certificate signed by the President of the European Parliament and a group photo.

"EUROSCOLA" programme

- 8.30 a.m. - Participants arrive at European Parliament Building "Louise Weiss" (IPE IV)
- Security check
- Welcome
- Badges and programme for the day distributed
- 9.15 a.m. - Breakfast with other participants
- Presentation and outline of programme for the day
- Participants split into multilingual working groups
- 10.00 a.m. - Transfer to the Chamber of the Building "Louise Weiss"
- Young people seated in MEPs' seats
- Short welcoming speech
- Introduction to the European Parliament and the European Union by officials of the European Parliament
- Each school is introduced by a pupil (one minute per school)
- Questions/debate on the development of Europe
- Photograph
- 12.45 p.m. - Lunch provided at European Parliament restaurant

- "Eurogame" begins with teams of four players (of four different nationalities)
- 2.00 p.m. - Working groups meet in committee rooms for discussion and exchange of views on European priorities, based on themes prepared at school. Each group selects a representative "executive" and a student to present their conclusions
- Round-table discussion between teachers and an EP official
- 4.00 p.m. - Return to the Chamber of the Building "Louise Weiss" for plenary session and presentation of reports adopted in working groups
- Conclusions and proposals
- Final of "Eurogame" and presentation of prizes
- Presentation of "Euroscola" certificate
- Presentation of European flag to each participating group
- European anthem
- 5.30 p.m. - Departure