



NOTE

DG COMM

22-07-2022

EUCO Simulation for students - pilot

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I. THE PROJECT

The General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) serves **two EU Institutions**: the Council of the European Union and the European Council (www.consilium.europa.eu and www.european-council.europa.eu, respectively).

The Council of the EU, informally known as the Council, is the House of the Member States. In it, government ministers from each EU country meet to discuss, amend and adopt laws and coordinate policies. Together with the European Parliament, the Council is the main decision-making body of the EU.

The Presidency of the Council rotates among the EU member states every 6 months. Currently, the Presidency is assured by the Czech Republic until the end of December 2022, and Sweden will hold it until the end of June 2023.

The European Council, instead, brings together EU leaders to set the EU's political agenda. It represents the highest level of political cooperation between EU countries. It is convened and chaired by its President (currently Charles Michel), who is elected by the European Council itself for a once-renewable two-and-a-half-year term.

Our communication strategy focuses on building **partnership and engagement** with our audiences to create, whenever possible, **long-lasting relations** that will contribute to building a European civic space and help Europeans understand the political processes within the EU.

The pandemic showed the **need to diversify** ways of reaching out to EU citizens and the need to **prioritise students** as a formative audience.

We have been doing simulations for a long time for groups visiting us, and now we are designing a project that would help us move forward to a **larger scale**. Therefore, we have created a new

simulation of the Council's work at **all levels**, to be carried out **in Brussels**. Depending on the results of the pilot session currently being organised, an annual frequency could be envisaged.

Teams of students, selected at the national level according to **agreed principles and criteria**, would simulate the work of the two institutions at all levels on a given file, each team representing **its own country**:

- **Working party**, the technical preparatory bodies
- **COREPER** - Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the EU
- **General Affairs Council** – usually composed of ministers for European affairs, responsible for ensuring consistency in the work of all Council configurations, as well as preparation and follow up to meetings of the European Council
- **European Council** – the heads of state or government of the EU's member states, together with its President and the European Commission President. It defines the EU's general political direction and priorities.

The first pilot will take place on the **first weekend of February 2023**. The Commission and the Presidency of the Council will be involved in line with their institutional roles, chairing the simulated meetings as it happens in real life.

II. OBJECTIVES

In line with our strategy, the objectives of the simulation would be to:

- enable young citizens to understand the role of Member States in EU decision-making,
- increase awareness of how the institutions of the EU, and in particular the Council, function,
- invite students to reflect on potential professional opportunities, traineeships in various EU institutions, job profiles, etc.
- create long-lasting partnerships with universities to extend our mutually beneficial cooperation in the future.

III. STRUCTURE OF THE SIMULATION

The simulation will be conducted in the **Council's premises in Brussels**, in the **same rooms** where the real work of the Working Parties, the COREPER, the Council and the European Council take place.

Participants - **6 students per Member State, ideally in their third year of study and with some knowledge of EU affairs** - will be divided into **four different groups**:

- **group A** (Working Party simulation) - 2 students
- **group B** (COREPER simulation) - 1 student
- **group C** (General Affairs Council simulation) - 1 student
- **group D** (European Council simulation) - 1 student

In parallel to the core simulation, 1 student will take part in the exercise with the **role of press officer**, covering the work of the Council/European Council (and notably the work of their delegation) also from this angle.

To coordinate the national groups, partner universities will have to identify a **national coordinator** that could accompany the students during their trip to Brussels and provide the necessary guidance for their preparation beforehand. Therefore, we suggest that the designated National coordinator should be a **professor, teaching assistant or researcher**.

Before and after the simulation, the students will receive the necessary training materials from the Council and some agreed training from the designated national coordinator to get a better understanding of the Institutions.

The structure of the simulation will be as follows:

ARRIVAL DAY	
Arrival of the participants and voluntary visit to the House of European History	
FIRST DAY	
Morning	
Initial debrief	<i>All the participants</i>
Simulation of the Working Parties	<i>Group A</i>
Afternoon	
Simulation of the COREPER	<i>Group B</i>
Networking and EU careers presentation	<i>All the participants</i>
SECOND DAY	
Morning	
Simulation of the GAC	<i>Group C</i>
Simulation of the EUCO	<i>Group D</i>
Wrap - up session and takeaways	<i>All the participants</i>

When not actively involved, students will participate as **observers** in the other simulation rounds.

During the wrap-up session, the participants, guided by their mentors, will assess the **outcome of the exercise**. In particular, achieving an agreement will be the criterion for success. As for the acting press officers, we will assess the winning against their ability to create coherent and high-quality press and information materials.

At the end of the simulation, all the participants, including the accompanying professors, will receive a certificate of participation. To ensure equal opportunities for participation of all students, the GSC intends to contribute to the travel costs for all selected students, in a proportion still to be determined. No financial contribution is required from universities.

IV. TIMELINE

As the simulation is intended to take place in Brussels at the start of February 2023, the preparatory work and the national selections need to be completed during the autumn.

We would like to involve our partner universities/ Conferences of the Rectors in the following steps of the project:

- identification of a **national contact point** that will be our organisational counterpart for the project, to receive all initial briefings and organise the selection (by end of September 2022)
- **selection** of participating students and national coordinator (by mid-November 2022)
- students to participate in the simulation in Brussels (February 2023)

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