

Report | YourEP – Erasmus+ KA2

1st Blended Learning Mobility | Brussels, Belgium | 20 – 24 November 2017

Summary

On 20-24 November, the YourEP Project held its first meeting involving all its participants, with a majority of young people experiencing their first trip abroad as well as their first Erasmus+ experience.

The meeting had two main objectives:

- **Giving all young participants the necessary knowledge to prepare the following** steps of the project themselves, with a focus on Europe, the European Union and EU citizenship, the European Parliament, as well as all the learning happening in such an intercultural exchange!
- **Brainstorming about their future “inclusive” simulation of the European Parliament**, in order to let the young participants decide on as many aspects of the simulation as possible, until they implement it in Strasbourg in 2018.

Activities

During the first three days, the activities focused on giving the young participants, supported by the partners’ youth workers, multiple opportunities to learn about the issues at stake, with a focus on how – and why – the European Union and the European Parliament in particular work.

A wide variety of methods were used. Energizers and ice-breakers created the right atmosphere to learn about such complicated issues, followed by discussions on the nature of politics through various examples of how politics can be materialised in a city. They also tried a new **board game on the European Union legislative process, “Legislativity”**, which was translated in English by the young German participants themselves before the event!

In addition to multiple visits – of the **European Quarter**, the **European Parliament** and the new (and very successful!) **House of European History** especially – the participants could also meet and exchange views with three Members of the European Parliament: the passionate **MEP Julie Ward** (S&D, UK), the young **MEP Brando Benifei** (S&D, IT) and the experienced Vice-President of the European Parliament **MEP Rainer Wieland** (EPP, DE).



During the two last days, the young participants focused on the future of the project. They began by their **first “EU roleplaying” experience** by negotiating common positions on several societal issues (e.g. education, healthcare, migration, climate change), and becoming **“youth lobbyists”** for an entire day (some of them even managed to convince MEP Rainer Wieland to sign their petitions!).

Finally, a **World Café** concluded the week by letting them sharing all their ideas about the future YourEP simulation of the European Parliament: what topics do they want to talk about? How? And how to prepare the simulation itself online, before meeting in Strasbourg next year? (The outcomes of their brainstorming is enclosed in Annex 1)



But it was of course only the start of their European experience! The YourEP project will now continue, at first online in order keep preparing the future YourEP simulation – by negotiating the final topic(s) selection, distributing roles, holding “YourEP elections” ... – and finally in Strasbourg itself in May-June 2018, to implement the young participants’ own simulation at first, and then take part in the European Youth Event 2018!

To have a look to the pictures taken during the whole week, just click [here](#)!

Evaluation of the 1st Blended Learning Mobility

As shown below (Annex 2), participants report on average a significant improvement in many aspects, whether on EU and political knowledge or on more personal aspects (self-confidence, social & intercultural skills in particular). The **average improvement all aspects considered is 3.89/5** (5 – “A lot” | 1 – “Not at all”).

The aspects to be improved in the future, based on participants’ feedback, are of a more logistical nature (food, accommodation and breaks). The objectives of this first YourEP “Blended Learning Mobility” in Brussels are therefore officially met!

Here are also some quotes from the evaluations filled by the participants to share more about the both positive and productive atmosphere during the meeting!

“I liked the petition activity, because I tried to act like a lobbyist”



“I enjoyed talking with the MEPs, for the opportunity”

“The museum (no words needed <3)”

„Most of the event was really good & really well organised. It was also fun which is important.“

Annex 1. Designing the YourEP Simulation | World Café's Outcomes

What to TALK about during the simulation?

Topics

- **Immigration**
 - "Be aware of the stigma"
 - Reinforcing controls at the entry in the European Union
 - Creating permanent visas after migrants/refugees are considered integrated into society
 - "Spread refugees out" instead of isolating them
 - Stronger role for social workers in helping refugees in their transition in a new country
- **Gender equality / Feminism**
- **Education**
 - Education to the European Union: "All people should be informed about the EU"
 - Learning through mobility: Traveling, Learning trips (about culture, language etc), Guidelines when in another country
 - Free education, including free learning resources and materials
 - Developing opportunities for everybody, adapted to the learners' needs, through non-formal, informal and formal education
- **Transparency**
- **Culture**
- **The future of Europe**
 - Difference of life standards in the European Union, Relationships between countries
 - Transparency in the European Union
 - The political situation in Europe (right now)
 - Reflecting on politics in the past, to identify what went wrong and what we can learn from it for the future
 - Brexit ("Bring back UK")
- **Environment / Climate change / Global warming**
 - Reducing all EU Member States' carbon footprint by 25% in the next 10 years
 - Solar panels installed in 50% of new houses in the EU
 - Reducing meat consumption through veggie days in schools
 - "Sell air to China"
- **Healthcare**
 - Totally free for pregnant women, children 0-18, over 65, long term sickness/disabilities
- **Equality**
 - Guaranteed youth services (Disabilities, disadvantaged, difficulties etc)
 - LGBT issues
- **Wars in the world** (How can we stop it?)

Nature of the issue to be discussed

- **"Serious"**, like creating a new "real" EU law
- **"Not so serious"**, to have fun, avoid confrontations, and focus on the process. "How, not what".

WHO and HOW to roleplay at the simulation?

Roles:

- **President of the European Parliament**, to lead the simulation/debates
- **Lobbyists**, to try to influence the debates
 - o Civilians can also lobby!
- **Rapporteur(s)** to find a compromise
- **Secretaries/Assistants** to take notes and help the rapporteurs, President etc
- **Interpreters**
- **Journalists** to report “live” about the simulation (Facebook, Instagram etc)
- **Researchers**

Political parties/groups:

- **3 to 5 political groups**
- **Left and right**

Participants should have the prominent role, **staff should just support them** and not lead discussions.

What ONLINE activities to PREPARE the simulation?

To prepare the debates

- **Voting for the most important topic(s)** that will be addressed during the actual simulation in Strasbourg
- **Sharing videos on the selected topic(s)**
- **Online discussions/debates** prior to the actual simulation in Strasbourg

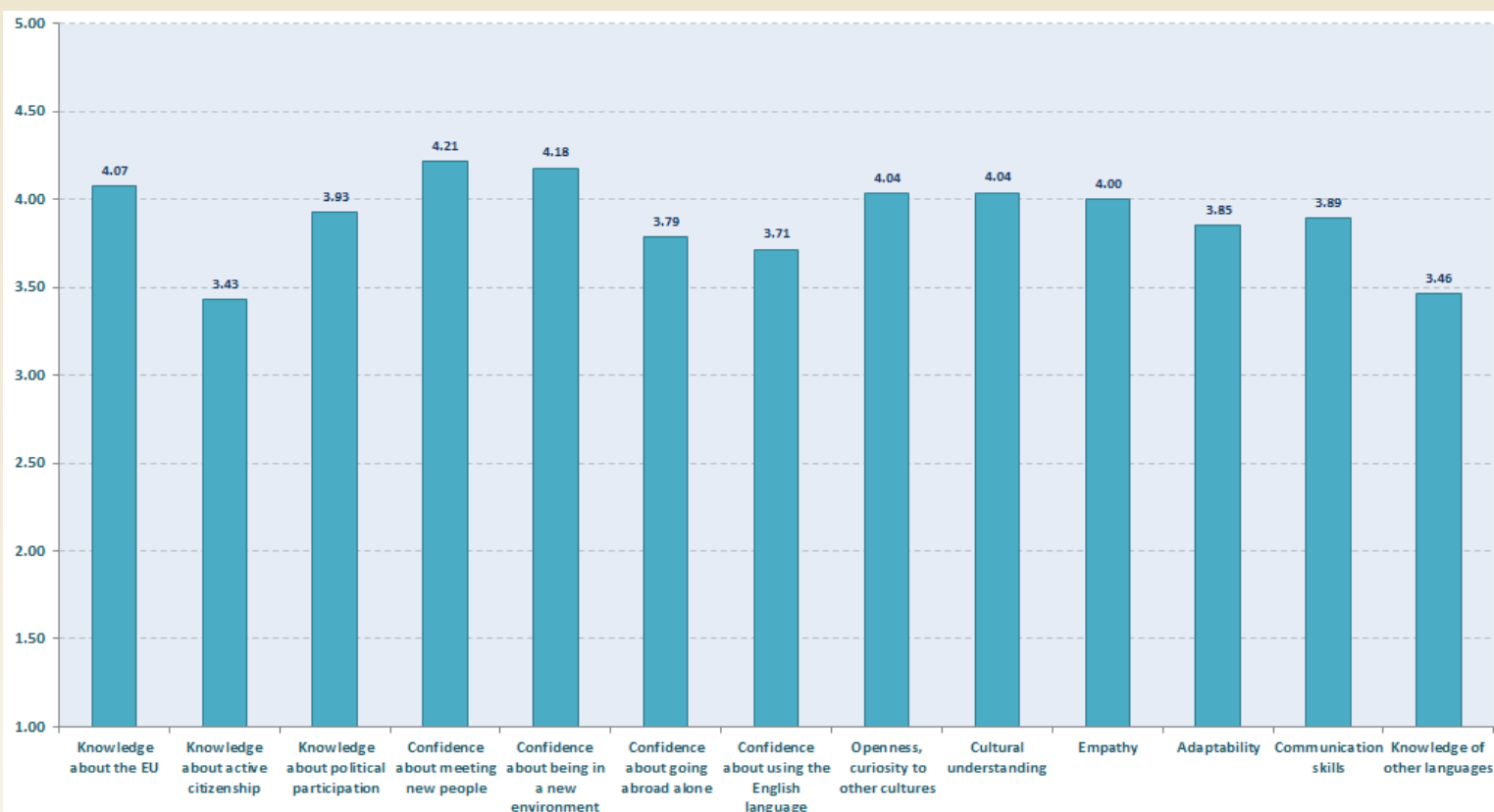
Distributing roles, Creating the political groups

- **Survey to let participants choose their roles**
- **Online quiz to help all participants identifying their “political family”**
- **Voting for the political parties** and their (creative) names
- **Electing a President for the European Parliament’s simulation**

Others

- **New videos made by the participants**, focusing on sharing their thoughts on the EU
- **Simulation activities at home** (Starting roleplaying in smaller groups through local meetings)
- **More local meetings**
- **Sharing about the preparatory activities** done during the local meetings at home

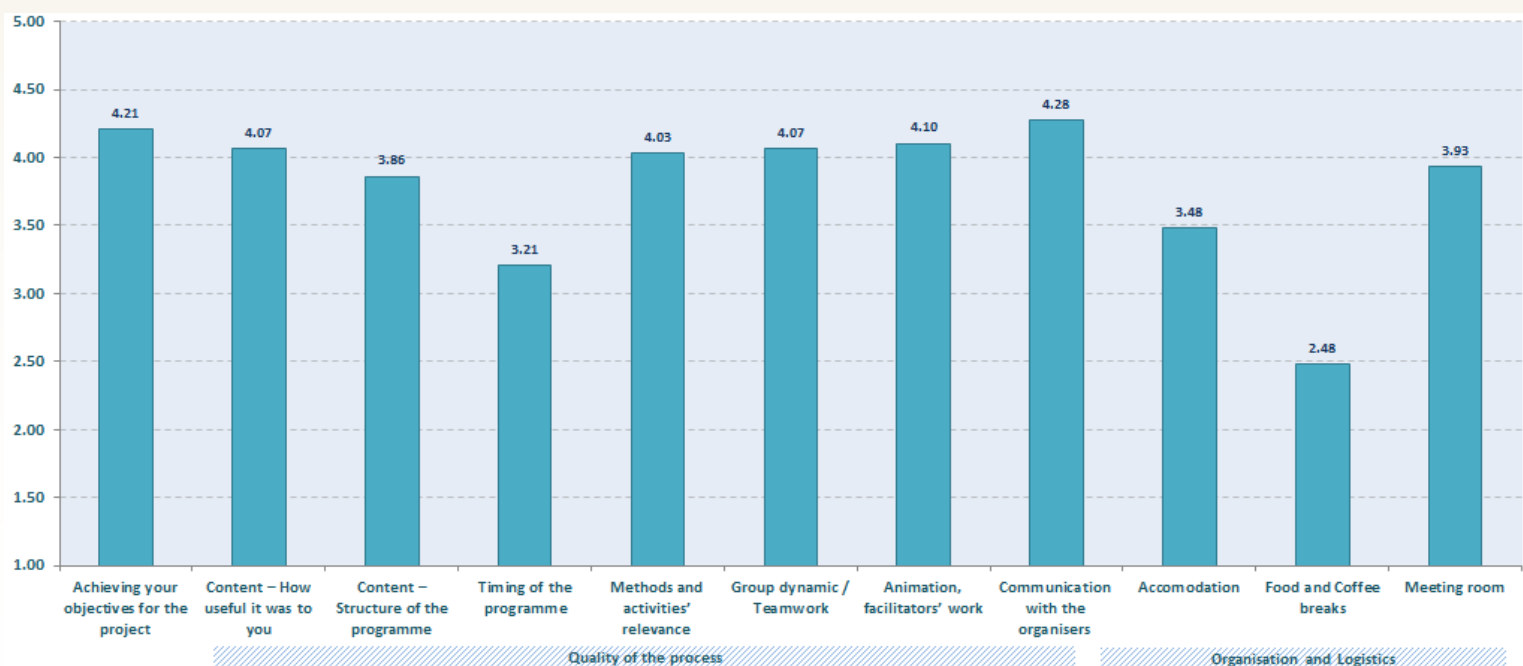
Annex 2. Results of the 1st Blended Learning Mobility's evaluation by participants



Participants Knowledge and Skills Self-evaluation

Average, based on all participants self-evaluation forms at the end of the week, replying to the questions "Compared to the project start, have you learnt about ... /are you now more confident about .../ have you improved your...?"

(5 – A lot | 1 – Not at all)



Average answers to the Evaluation - "Project Organisation"

(5 – Very good | 1 – Not good at all)

Annex 3. Programme of the 1st Blended Learning Mobility

Day 1 – Monday 20 th November		
Afternoon	Welcome and Project Presentation	YES Forum (EU)
	Name Games	Nevo Parudimos (RO)
	Expectations, Fears, Contributions	YES Forum (EU)
	Get to know each other & Ice-breakers	Pitea Kommun (SE)
	What is politics? Reflexion on the nature of politics in general	Pitea Kommun (SE)
Evening	Welcome Dinner with an exceptional VIP: MEP Julie Ward (S&D, UK)!	
Day 2 – Tuesday 21 st November		
Morning	Energizer	Inclusion Network (UK)
	What is (European) politics? Intro with the EU Board Game “Legislativity”	Caritas (DE) and YES Forum (EU)
Afternoon	Visit of Brussels	JEF Europe (BE)
	International Dinner	Nevo Parudimos (RO)
Evening	Intercultural Night	AJP (FR)
Day 3 – Wednesday 22 nd November		
Morning	Energizer (<i>Outdoor!</i>)	Zefiro (IT)
	Visit of the House of European History	JEF Europe (BE)
Afternoon	Visit of the European Parliament & Meeting with MEP Brando Benifei (S&D, IT)	YES Forum (EU)
	Tour of the European Quarter	JEF Europe (BE)
Evening	Dinner at a Belgian Restaurant	
Day 4 – Thursday 23 rd November		
Morning	Energizer	Nevo Parudimos (RO)
	Starting Roleplaying & Designing the simulation Creating fake political parties	Inclusion Network (UK)
	Starting Roleplaying & Designing the simulation What is lobbying?	JEF Europe (BE)
Afternoon	Meeting and Discussions with EU politicians (EP, EC, EESC, Social Platform, JEF Europe)	YES Forum (EU)
Evening	International Party: YES Forum’s 15 th Year Anniversary	YES Forum (EU)
Day 5 – Friday 24 th November		
Morning	Energizer	Activa (SE)
	Designing the YourEP simulation: World Café	YES Forum (EU)
	Evaluation of the week	YES Forum (EU)