

EU+ 2019

12-13 February 2019, Kaub

Description of the 2019 event:

During the simulation “Junior Campus EU+” 2019, held on 12-13 February 2019 in Kaub, Rhineland-Palatinate, 55 pupils from three courses of the Elisabeth Langgässer-Highschool slipped into the role of European Council members of the 28 member states of the European Union and its potential future member state Serbia. In preparation of the simulation, the students learned at school about the functioning of European Council and they selected a EU member state which they represented during the simulation as “their” country. The pupils prepared in class for their role as a delegate in the European Council. Staff from the Jean Monnet Chair attended the classes of the two schools and introduced the simulation to the pupils. Each pupil received a paper with detailed information about the selected country, for example, its system of government, national output, rate of unemployment and economic situation. The pupil’s aim was to internalize the interests and opinion of their country towards an accession of Serbia. During this process, they learned a lot about the 28 EU member states and the candidate country. Additionally, they could experience the process of search for consensus in the European Council. Furthermore, they had to cope with the difficulties concerning the process towards formal agreements with other states.

Through the first day of simulation, the pupils were familiarized with the rules of procedure in the Council by the academic staff. Afterwards, the member states representatives gave introductory speeches on the position of their country and Serbia presented its application for accession to the Council. During the following sessions and days, the member states discussed intensively on the conditions for accession and drafted a respective treaty. Meanwhile, they also gave interviews to the media, played by the teachers, and repeatedly had informal conversations within the Council, at lunch or with Serbian representatives. During their stay, the young Europeans learned how specific frameworks of the European Union work, how to find compromises in negotiations involving diverging interests and they had a first-hand experience on EU decision-making. In the European Council, the countries discussed different positions concerning conditions for the accession of Serbia. The allocation of refugees, the constitutionality of Serbia or the future relationship of Serbia and Kosovo were among the issues the 28 member states discussed. Furthermore, the economic and financial sector of Serbia needed to converge with EU conditions.

Finally, Serbia did not manage to convince the leaders of the EU member states. The Council did not vote in favour of an accession of Serbia to the European Union. During the final official statement, the delegates of EU member states declared the reasons for the negative decision. With regard to the negative outcome of the negotiations, the pupils mentioned that the two-day simulation has improved their understanding of the difficulties concerning the convergence of diverging interests and how to cope with them.

The “Junior Campus EU+” addresses in particular secondary schools in the Rhine-Main-Region (Grade 11-13), since an appropriate foreknowledge is necessary to comprehend the contained difficulties of European processes. As a unique programme, it interfaces between school and university and aims at generating interest and enthusiasm among pupils for various types of studies and scientific/academic fields. In addition, in order to help participants understand political procedures, the aim of the event is to introduce high school students to issues related to European politics and to make the public more aware of the subject of European integration. In 2019, “Junior Campus EU+” was held for the seventh time.