



# EUropa.S. 2022

# POLICY PAPER

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Developed in the Framework of  
Europa Simulation: Promoting Excellence,  
Political Innovation & Leadership for Europe

EUropa.S. 2022

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# About Company

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## What we do?

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# EUropa.S. 2022 Policy Paper



## **Disclaimer**

The present document constitutes a result of the Activities that took place within the framework of the Erasmus+ Funded Europa Simulation: Promoting Excellence, Political Innovation & Leadership for Europe. The document is drafted with the contributions of participants at the EUropa.S. 2022 Conference.

This document does not reflect or match the opinions of the European Commission and does not constitute an official document of the European Union institutions.

# INTRODUCTION

The Conference EUropa.S. - **EUropa Simulation** is a Simulation of the European Union's Institutions, organized by the Institute of Research & Training on European Affairs (I.R.T.E.A.), which gives college students the chance to get acquainted with the role and function of EU bodies and also contributes to the acquisition of soft skills, which will be useful in their career.

It has been organized at the University of Piraeus annually since 2010. After a short "break" due to the COVID-19 pandemic, EUropa.S. returned dynamically for its 11th edition, from the 15th to the 18th of April 2022 to address major European Union-related issues. Greek and international college students gathered to discuss topics about environmental politics, foreign affairs, education, as well as the technological evolution in Europe.

Using the game of Simulation as a main non-formal learning tool, the EUropa.S. gives young people the opportunity to "step on the shoes" of EU officials, discuss and find solutions to important topics that affect the European Union structure directly and greatly.

During the 4 days of the conference sessions, the participants got the chance to experience the function of each European Institution and put themselves in the "spotlight" of the latest EU developments. Each Institution simulated held a separate and unique agenda from which the participants can choose, the ones that interest them more and are aligned to their discipline of studies. Furthermore, the fact that the languages of conduct are English and French, allowed participants to practice and improve their language skills.

More specifically, the young participants simulated:

- four Committees of the European Parliament (AFET, CULT, TRAN, ITRE),
- the European Council,
- the Council of the European Union, under the ENVI formation (Ministers of Environment),
- the European Court of Justice,
- the supplementary teams of Crisis Group, Journalists Team, and the Staff Members

## FUNDING

The Conference EUropa.S. is organized within the framework of the Project Europa Simulation: Promoting Excellence, Political Innovation & Leadership for Europe, a Key Action 3 Project, funded by Erasmus+ Programme on Youth of the European Union via INEDIVIM (Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation).

## PATRONAGE DEDICATION CELEBRATION

This year's Conference was implemented under the Patronage of the European Parliament, and the flag of the European Citizens' Initiative, it was dedicated to the Presidency of France on the Council of the European Union for the first semester of 2022. Moreover, the Conference celebrated 2022 as the European Year of Youth, by giving young participants the opportunity to give their opinion, suggestions and comments on modern topics that are important for the European Union and policies that are currently implemented, drafted, or revised by the European Institutions.

## SIDE EVENTS

The EUropa.S. 2022 Edition, within the framework of the funding by the Erasmus+ Programme, included, aside from the Main Simulation Event, five Informative Events, and three Structured Dialogues, which aimed at informing the young students around Greece about the Conference's history, objectives, content and agenda, discussing important topics about our European society with experts on the discipline, as well as at promoting the Erasmus+ Programme, and the opportunities the European Union offers young people within the framework of 2022 as the European Year of Youth.

## SCHOLARSHIP

As a means of celebrating European Youth Year and promoting beneficial, educational opportunities to young people who face economical and geographical barriers as well as barriers linked to discrimination, as defined in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, EUropa.S. 2022 granted 28 scholarships to young students in the form of covering their transportation and accommodation expenses for the days of the Conference. The scholarships were distributed for students from the cities of Thessaloniki (10 young people), Komotini (9 young people) and Rethymno (9 young people).

## AWARDS

Moreover, in the spirit of promoting excellence and rewarding the active participation and outstanding performance of some participants, the Conference awards the participants that did an excellent job at their Committee and Position by giving Best Participant Awards, Honorary Mentions and Verbal Mentions.

However, this year's Conference was even more important since it had the honour of receiving the support of the MEP with the European People's Party, Mr. Stelios Kypouropoulos. Mr. Kypouropoulos as a firm supporter of the young people, and as a person who believes strongly in their positive effect in the progress and evolution of our society, rewarded this year's best participants with a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels, a trip to the "heart" of the European Union itself.



## ACTIVITIES

During the project's lifecycle a total of nine major activities took place, including the Main Event of the Simulation. This year's Edition of EUropa.S. was extremely important since it took place after a "break" of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, all of the activities took place as designed, following the hygiene protocols suggested at all times by the authorities.

These activities could be described as side events that led up to the Main Event of the Simulation, by preparing the participants and setting the grounds for the topics of this year's agenda. Info Days and seminars about the project took place in Athens, Thessaloniki, Rethymnon, and Komotini, along with structured dialogues, and a special event of presenting the results after the Conference. These side events aim to inform college students about EUropa.S.: its history, its role, and the opportunities offered from the participation in it, as well as other EU-funded projects.



## INFO DAYS

EUropa.S. 2022 was enriched with a variety of Side Events aiming to promote the Conference itself as an opportunity for young people to broaden their horizons, to understand the importance of active participation in the decision-making processes, as well as to deepen their knowledge on topics that are important for the European Union nowadays. Naturally, a secondary goal was to also highlight the benefits of Erasmus+ for young people especially under the cadre of 2022 as the European Year of Youth.

One form of Side Events implemented were the Info Days. In total 5 Info Days took place at the following order:

- Komotini - 30/11/2021 - Democritus University of Thrace
- Piraeus - 02/12/2021 - University of Piraeus
- Athens - 13/13/2021 - Law Library of Athens
- Thessaloniki - 16/12/2021 - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- Rethymno - 18/02/2022 - University of Crete/Rethymnon Campus

Each event managed to gather more than 20 young participants who got the opportunity to get acquainted to the Conference, learn more about its methodology and function, discuss the Erasmus+ Programme under the cadre of 2022 as the European Year of Youth, as well as ask questions about any concerns they had.



The poster features a blue background with a stylized map of Greece and the European Union flag. It lists five Info Days with their dates in orange rounded rectangles. Logos for the Institute of Research and Training on European Affairs, the Erasmus+ Programme, and the European Union are at the bottom.

Event Name	Date
KOMOTINI INFO DAY	30/11/2021
UNIPI INFO DAY	02/12/2021
ATHENS INFO DAY	13/12/2021
THESSALONIKI INFO DAY	16/12/2021
RETHYMNO INFO DAY	18/02/2022

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INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH & TRAINING ON EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union  
ΙΡΡΥΜΑ ΝΕΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΜΑΘΗΤΩΝ

Even more specially, the Info Day at Thessaloniki, had the honour of hosting Ms. Natalia Varsami, who at the time held the Presidency of the Community Enterprise of the Municipality of Thessaloniki (KEDITH). Ms. Varsami using the work of KEDITH as a prime example of supporting young people and promoting young people's active engagement at a local level, discussed the benefits of Erasmus+ funded Projects for young people.



## STRUCTURED DIALOGUES

The Structured Dialogues were Events that combined a discussion with experts on the topics of this year's EUropa.S. Agenda, along with a Mock session presenting the Committee's simulated and their respective Topics.

In both parts of the events, the young participants had the opportunity to socialize with the experts, members from other Committees as well as the respective Boards, the Secretariat and Organizing Team. They also had the chance to ask questions about the topics, the Rules of Procedure as well as clarify any type of issue in order to be better prepared for the Conference itself and ensure their best and most active participation.

The Structured Dialogue at Thessaloniki was implemented in the format of a Mock Session which allowed young participants from the city and other people interested in the Conference to get acquainted with the Simulated Committees, their respective Rules of Procedure as well as the topics of the agenda and the various aspects the participants will be called to address and resolve during the Simulation Game.

The Event also served as an opportunity for the young participants to socialize before the Conference with other young participants, the Boards of the Committees, and members of the Secretariat, ask questions about the simulation experience and have an overall easier and more harmonious introduction to the Event itself.

### Thessaloniki 01/04/2022



The second Structured Dialogue Event took place in Athens to respectively cover the audience of young students in the capital of Greece.

This event was considered of added value to the young people in the audience since aside for the Mock Session, it also included a Structured Dialogue Panel of esteemed experts in the field of European, International and Economic Affairs under the topic "International Developments, the war in Ukraine, the role of the European Union and NATO and the economic impact".

More specifically, the event had the honour to host:

- Dr. Konstantinos Filis, Associate Professor of International Relations and European Studies at Deree, the American College of Greece,
- Dr. Nikolaos Lampas, Assistant Professor of International Relations and European Studies at Deree, the American College of Greece,
- Dr. Konstantina Kottaridi, Associate Professor at the Department of Economic Studies at the University of Piraeus

**Athens, 04/04/2022**



The 100 young participants in the audience had the opportunity to learn from the expertise of the excellent guests and pose their own questions to them regarding a topic that is of paramount importance nowadays and deeply interconnected to the audience's discipline of studies, as well as the agenda in the simulation Conference. Naturally, the young participants also had the opportunity to socialize with both the experts and the other members of the audience to ask questions, exchange opinions and experience and get better prepared as the Conference days approach.

# MAIN EVENT

## OPENING CEREMONY

The Main Event consisted of the four-day Conference which took place in Athens, Greece from the 15th to the 18th of April 2022. 160 participants from various universities all around Greece, including the 28 randomly selected people that received a scholarship to participate, were gathered and participated in the Simulation Game, each on their own way.

The Event started on the 15th of April with the Opening Ceremony which included a Structured Dialogue Panel by esteemed experts and policy makers on the field of European Affairs and Youth under the topic: "Youth and employment opportunities".

The panel was moderated by Mr. Stavros SAMOUILIDIS, Public Relations Director of the European Parliament in Greece and hosted the following speakers:

- Mr. Stelios KYMPOYROPOULOS, Member of the European Parliament, with the European People's Party "Youth Employment, Policies and EP priorities",
- Ms. Anastasia FILINI, Coordinator, National Agency for coordinating the EU ERASMUS+ Programme for Youth and the European Solidarity Corps, Youth & Lifelong Learning Foundation, "Emblematic EU Initiatives, the ERASMUS+ Programme",
- Mr. Nikolas MORAITAKIS, Europe Information Center Europe Direct, Region of Crete, "Skills and Competences in the modern World",
- Ms. Athina Polina DOVA, COO & Co-Founder, Start-up OWIWI, "Entrepreneurship for youth".





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The Structured Dialogue was followed by the Awarding of General Mr. Michail Kostarakos, former Chairman of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC), Honorary Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff, and retired General of Artillery.

Welcoming speeches by the Project's Manager and Secretary General of I.R.T.E.A., Mrs. Despina Papadaki, and Mr. Philippe Kamaris on behalf of the European Parliament followed along with the official initiation of the Conference itself by members of the Secretariat Team.



## MAIN EVENT

### SIMULATION ACTIVITY

From the 16th to the 18th of April, the young participants followed the debating sessions of the Conference that took place at the premises of the University of Piraeus. Each respective Committee and Institutions followed their Rules of Procedure accordingly in order to deliver their voted Final Working Paper with the proposed policies on the last day of the Conference. During the debates the young participants had to follow the policy of the part they simulated as set by the Party or the country they were assigned to. Along the way, various crises arose, directed by the complimentary Crisis Team of the simulation, which aimed to bring obstacles and sideways to the sessions, and challenge the participants in a creative and productive way.

Finally, on the last day, the Closing Ceremony also took place, where the respective Boards of each Committee announced the awarded participants of each Committee.



# FINAL STRUCTURED DIALOGUE

The final Event of the EUropa Simulation Project took place on the 5th of May 2022 in Athens where within the framework of the Presentation of Results, 100 young participants gathered to discuss the Results of the Conference, as they will be presented in the next sections of this document. The Event was held as a Structured Dialogue under the topic: 2022: European Year of Youth, Challenges and Opportunities for Young People in Europe, Building the Identity of the European Citizen.

Mrs. Despina Papadaki, Secretary General of I.R.T.E.A., moderated the discussion which was between the following speakers:

- Mr. Haris Kountouros, Public Relations and Communication Officer, Information Office of the European Parliament in Greece, "Between peril and opportunity - quo vadis Europe?"
- Mr. George Panagopoulos, Mayor of Salamina, "Youth in local government, initiatives, priorities and Challenges"
- Mr. Kyriakos Kareklas, Mayor of Athienou, "AGORA project Priorities, Goals and Actions"
- Presentation of EUropa.S. 2022 Conference results, EUropa.S. 2022 Secretariat Members, "The voice of young people in policy-making within the European Institutions"

After the discussion, the young participants had the opportunity to set their questions and comments to the panel members and voice their own opinions on the addressed topics.





# KEY FINDINGS

## European Council

This year's EUropa.S Agenda for the European Council focused on the topic "Maintaining Peace and Stability in the European Region: EU's Response to the Afghanistan Crisis". As such, the committee's main responsibility lied in finding a viable method of combating those that violate basic human rights principles and at the same time protecting adequately, the overall population from any form of violation and discrimination, especially women and children.

All in all, the experience of simulating the Institution of the European Council has contributed a lot in deepening the understanding and knowledge on how the Institution functions and more importantly in shaping communication, debating and negotiation skills of all the participants who were actively engaged. Additionally, crisis management skills were addressed since the various crises that occurred during the sessions, required equal attention as the topics under discussion.

### ·Protection of Human Rights in Afghanistan / Civilian Mission

This section concerned the most important issue of Human Rights violations. Most concerning were observations made regarding the situation of women in Afghanistan and the backsliding of progress made in the last 20year-long stay. As of the following day of the fall of Kabul, Women and girls face denial of access to education, restrictions on their movement, vulgar violence, and violations.

For these reasons, during the committee work, it was suggested in accordance with international law and based on the good faith ongoing negotiations, the EU to urge the present de facto government in Afghanistan to keep their, past-published through the international media, promises to respect women's rights.

Subsequently, to ensure that no rights will be violated and that democratic values will be upheld, the EU is to create a new Civilian Mission with executive mandate under the CSDP framework and possible complementarity with NATO as highlighted by Article 42 of the Treaty of Lisbon. The main field of action for this mission will be direct humanitarian assistance in the form of medical, alimentary, and financial aid for the victims of the Afghanistan crisis, distributed from special supply receptor centres and with special envoys working under EU allegiance. In addition, job opportunities for Afghan Women will be provided by the micro-economy of the civilian mission.



### ·Management of Refugee Flows

The following section concerned the controversial issue of refugees' flows. The conclusion reached was under the principle of harmonizing immigrant quotas between EUMS to avoid asymmetrical immigrant pressures and further help in the effective management of refugee flows. Therefore, in accordance with Article 241 of the TFEU, the Commission Directorate-General HOME (DGHOME) is to submit a proposal on effective ways of better enhancing EU Member-State's capabilities of integrating Afghan refugees. Also, in complementarity with the UN WOMEN Initiative, the necessary educational framework is to be applied to ensure that human rights are upheld to their full potential through developing special educational centres. concerned the most important issue of Human Rights violations. Most concerning were observations made regarding the situation of women in Afghanistan and the backsliding of progress made in the last 20-year-long stay. As of the following day of the fall of Kabul, Women and girls face denial of access to education, restrictions on their movement, vulgar violence, and violations.

### ·Economic Pillar of Humanitarian Aid to Afghanistan

Subsequently to what has already been stated, this section covers ways that those instruments will be financed. The committee, understanding the 2015 reality which proved to be destructive for the effective externalization of the Syrian Refugee Crisis and so as to maximize effectiveness, suggested that Financial Assistance be given directly to the Civilian Mission in Afghanistan and under a strict accountability mandate. More specifically, a Macro-

Financial Assistance Pack which will be included in the Afghanistan Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF). The ASTF will be the main mechanism for funding of humanitarian aid and migration control in Afghanistan. In continuity, the ECB, the EUROGROUP and the ECOFIN are to release consultations on the proper funding of this mechanism, to avoid further inflation of the euro and national currencies and asymmetric pressures between Eurozone and non-Eurozone Member States.

### ·EU's Strategic Framework

Finally, in the last section of the draft after a long discussion on viability of proposals, an amendment was added concerning a more unified strategic approach. Such clause was proposed by understanding the outstanding integrational momentum that the Union has finally managed to achieve under the face of the crisis. As such, and in full compliance with the current presidency's priorities it was suggested that the Commission Directorate-General DEFIS (DG DEFIS) and EDA, in full compliance with the strategic compass, will shape a new Strategic Framework that will secure EU interests and protect European Citizens by harnessing the full potential of PESCO as to ameliorate military mobility across EU member states and further shape a common strategic culture; encourage investment advancement in the energy, space, and defence sectors via the increasing of defence expenditures; and strengthening the European Security Defence College (ESDC) with an additional budget of 1 million euros per year for the realization of more interdisciplinary actions, seminars, and research towards the enhancement of a common strategic culture among others.

## Council of the European Union (ENVI)

This year the Council of the European Union worked under the formation of the ENVI, meaning that the Ministers of the Environment gathered in the Council and discussed under the subject of the “European Green Deal: Assessing the new Opportunities, Threats and Risks for the Environment”.

The Council of the European Union had the task to discuss, taking into consideration recent global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, the difficulties and challenges member states are facing while transitioning to environmentally sustainable practices and energy, while also discussing further improvements and measures that need to be implemented in order to ensure the effectiveness of the Green Deal.

·Short introduction on the European Green Deal

The European Green Deal sets higher, but necessary, environmental goals for the EU member states to reach. Specifically, all members states must reduce their emissions at least by 55% till the year 2030 compared to levels by 1990, and to become the first climate neutral continent by 2050. These goals are far stricter than those set by the Paris Climate Agreement, which the EU ratified on October 5th, 2016, which only requires a 55% decrease of emissions by 2050. The European Green Deal includes the European Climate Law, the European Green Deal Investment Plan, the Just

Transition Mechanism, the Renewable Energy Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Land Use and Forestry Regulation, and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. It has a substantial role towards the protection of the environment, since it will make Europe an example to the rest of the world concerning transitioning to renewable and green energy.

·Crisis

The Council also faced an unprecedented crisis in the Spanish river Guadiana, where large amounts of hazardous industrial waste were traced, putting in danger the *Anaocypris Hispanica*, an endangered species of fish located in the river and creating fears of a possible water shortage and harm to the local economies of Spanish and Portuguese communities. While Spanish authorities tried to cover up the environmental disaster, the EU members showed solidarity and support for the populations harmed, coming together as a whole to effectively respond to the crisis as it unfolded.





The results of the Council's combined effort addressing what the EU's next steps should be concerning the implementation of the European Green Deal by encouraging member states to collaborate on the development of advanced and safe nuclear energy reactors, as well as to further promote research on the subject, investing in modernization projects adhering to environmental standards, enhance the verification process for imported material in order to keep track of the ecological impact they may have on Europe, utilizing pandemic recovery plans to further transition to renewable energy resources, enhancing the role of educational programs towards the sensitization of the Populus about climate change and its relevance, cooperating with European Institutions to invest in eco-friendly activities, such as lifelong learning opportunities and a focus on sustainable "life skills" and to provide high-quality and all-inclusive education and training on the relevant subjects accessible to all of their citizens.

As far as the occurred crisis in Spain is concerned the Council decided that the EU must also coordinate its actions with Spanish authorities for the possibility of an evacuation of locals and animals from the afflicted region, ensure the proper classification of the afflicted fauna and flora of the region, support the work of European NGOs providing their expertise and aid in the crisis, and include environmental organizations in the investigations and assessment of the damage.

The conclusion continued with an urge for the EU to utilize its technical expertise, in order to aid member states, reach the goals set by the European Green Deal, and to promote

ethical and sustainable agriculture with the usage of metal free battery platforms, while remaining competitive, to reinforce of Directive 2004/35/EU concerning major environmental principles, such as recycling, sustainability, and the blue economy, and expand the Natura 2000 Network to other fields of interest such as coordination among member states and social awareness. Moreover, the participants felt the need to add an urging to the EU to further promote and fund already existing European organizations and instruments concerning recycling and reusage of materials, as well as a suggestion that the Ministries of the Environment and Development in each EU member state hold national and regional competitions with the goal of developing an effective food waste management system, with the aid of experts provided by the EU.

All of the above were voted unanimously by the Council on the last day of the Conference, signalling the end to a wonderful and most beneficial experience. Simulations such as EUropa.S. and many others are a sign that the youth is concerned about societal issues and that there is an interest for the EUs institutions. The Council of the European Union of EUropa.S. 2022 hopes that you will take into account the achieved results, because it is the participants' sincere belief that the European Green Deal can create a better and stronger.

## European Parliament – AFET Committee

The Parliamentary Committee AFET of EUropa.S. 2022 was called to discuss the topic of “EU's Relations with China, following the new EU Indo-Pacific Strategy”.

The European Union, aware of the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific Region and its promising benefits, has officially declared its approach to the area. In order to accomplish this aspiring goal, the EU has adopted a promising strategy; strengthening relations with the countries on the region and especially China. However, the People's Republic of China, might, on the one hand, be a flourishing economy, a very important trade partner of the European union and a considerable factor of international affairs, but on the other hand is also responsible for serious crimes against humanity, violations of human rights and international law and a supporter of an aggressive policy that doesn't comply with European values. The Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament, held a heated but substantial debate on the issue, followed by various comments, strong points, and disagreements, but eventually managed to conclude to one common report.

### ·The Procedure – Discussions

Chinese aggressive leadership had been at the top of the discussions. Strange as it might appears, putting European values, individuals and rule of law, above economic interests was

not, at least at first, out of the question from all political parties. It was very clear that the parties were divided into two major sides. In General, the Greens-EFA, the S&Ds, and the Renew Europe's participants, had set human rights at the center of the agenda, emphasizing on the importance of defending European values, and were more severe regarding cooperation with China, while on the other hand the EPP, the ECR and the GUE/NGL's participants refused to adopt a distinct confrontational stance, considering the financial aspect and the dependence of the union to Chinese factors.

More precisely, on the field of human rights all parties but the ECR (which adopted a natural stance towards the issue), condemned Chinese aggression and the crimes against humanity with Greens-EFA and the S&Ds highlighting that human right violations cannot accelerate cooperation with China, and the latter under such conditions, would mean a sell off of European beliefs. Furthermore, the Greens-EFA underlined the importance of the renewal of the sanction list of the EU Global Human Rights Regime, a proposal that found great support from the S&Ds and the Renew Europe party.



On the contrary, discussions were heated regarding the union's dependency on China and the financial factor. The ECRs party members were very welcoming towards the EPP's proposal about maintaining open trading routes with China, while the GUE, the Greens-EFA, the S&Ds and Renew Europe, supported the idea of a limited cooperation with China, mostly on matters of environmental and technological issues. Furthermore, the topic of the union's dependence was also examined in depth with S&Ds, the Greens-EFA, GUE and Renew Europe parties being highly supportive of green initiatives such as renewable sources of energy that increase the union's autonomy and at the same time respect the climate. Eventually, common ground among all parties, was found on the proposal of establishing connections with other countries of the Indo-Pacific apart from China. As all parties were in favour of this initiative, ground for further discussion was created.

### ·Crises

The crises that erupted during the debates were really beneficial for the flow of the discussions as they encouraged us to see things more clearly and understand where the Committee stands on common ground. The first one occurred at a very divided Committee in the form of China's approval statement of the Russian invasion by legitimizing its force entry as the only effective way to protect the rights of Russian-speaking minorities in Ukraine. After heated discussions and major points from all sides of the parliamentary spectrum all parties finally responded to China, the best way possible, taking into consideration their point of view on the importance of Chinese statements.

Later on, China's positive response to Russia's request for economic and military aid, resisting the sanctions imposed on Russia from the International community came to shake the committee's balance. As the time went by, it was becoming clearer and clearer that Chinese aggression could not allow further cooperation and the Committee strongly opposed to the escalation of the conflict and the Chinese assistance to Russia's aggressive violation of international law and took different measures to face the new reality.

In the last crisis, Chinese invasion of Taiwan, the Committee was more united in its beliefs and opinion as all parties once again strongly condemned Chinese aggressiveness and violations of human rights and international law and agreed on the fact that there was great need to adopt one, common and clear response towards China, as a united foreign affairs committee.

The three phases of the crisis had brought together all the parties of the committee. Beyond any doubt, Chinese aggression had led the AFET Committee to a united and clear stance. By the end of the session, it was very clear that the AFET Committee's participants had managed to defend European morals, talking about a significant victory of European identity. The paper was adopted with great majority.



## European Parliament – CULT Committee

2022 has been declared the European Year of Youth, a milestone in a process of reflection on the future of young people and their active participation in building a greener, more sustainable, and more inclusive Europe. On the occasion of this initiative and in the context of the Europa.S 2022 Conference, the Parliamentary Committee CULT, simulated in French, was engaged in the topic «Offrir des Opportunités Éducatives et Culturelles aux Jeunes» (Offer Educational and Cultural Opportunities to the young generations).

Despite the different ideological perceptions between the political parties, we managed to find common ground and focus more on the finding of concrete and creative solutions. We all together agreed that there is an urgent need to shift focus from the mere access to education to quality education, including adequate facilities, qualified teachers, promotion of innovation and civic-mindedness as well as measurable learning outcomes. The same applies to the need for free and equal access to education for all, including people with disabilities, children living in remote rural areas, and marginalized groups. The importance of lifelong learning was also raised.

We came to the conclusion that practice is the key. As a result, Erasmus +, youth exchange programs in general and the intercultural dialogue conducted through the holding of pan-European conferences,

Often represented by the young generations, aim to provide young people with opportunities to become active and engaged citizens, thus elevating their sense of belonging.

Our committee also pointed out the importance of art as a crucial factor for the protection and promotion of the European and national level cultural heritage. For that reason, we proposed the establishment of a program named «European Creative» in order to support young artists. We realised that art and volunteering are determinant elements for a conscious European citizen. Last but not least, we underlined the necessity of modernisation and consequently the equal access and gain of necessary technological skills on the basis of the creation of a mechanism for the interconnection in Europe and the financing of digital equipment.

The Committee's topic became even more interesting and challenging when it was time for the first phase of the Crisis. All 4 parts of the Crisis were dedicated in the urgent necessity to include unprivileged kids to the educational system. In particular, given the current crisis in



Ukraine many kids end up unaccompanied in foreign countries, in their attempt to save themselves. Although it should not be forgotten that education is a fundamental right that should not be deprived from any kid. Therefore, we suggested the creation of an inclusion program aiming the steady and effective integration and psychological support of kids through social services and volunteering. More specifically, we came up with the idea of an «horizontal» education which includes the simultaneous projection of educational and

cultural videos to the refugee shelters, supervised by specially trained teachers, common to everyone and both in the language of the host country and their mother tongue. After a fruitful and laborious debate, thanks to collaboration, understanding and compromise but especially amendments, a unanimous vote was achieved, realising our main goal is a brighter future.

As Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education, and Youth, explained, it is of our utmost responsibility to bring up “the importance of putting young people in the spotlight and celebrate their resilience after two very challenging years”. We often say that young people are the leaders of tomorrow, but recent events have shown they are the leaders of today.

We hope more and more young people have the same opportunity that the participants of EUropa.S. 2022 had, to experience from a practical perspective the functioning of the European institutions and let their voices be heard.



## European Parliament – ITRE Committee

Throughout the Conference days, the Parliamentary Committee of ITRE discussed under the subject of “Towards a Sustainable European Future: Accelerating the Digital Transformation”, which in turn was under the thematic umbrella of the European Green Deal.

The ITRE Committee had the task to discuss the struggles and difficulties of the member-states to integrate digital technologies in various sectors such as the economy, data protection, energy, and AI, as well as the implementations of improvements to the current digital systems, while taking into account the ongoing global pandemic of the COVID-19 virus as well the recent conflict between Ukraine and Russia. The committee also faced a series of unexpected crises, including the discovery that certain MEPs had been bribed from Russia to block the green transition and the plans of the renewable resources, a Russian cyberthreat that was supposed to hit the ECOFIN Council and led to the publication of many financial data of MEPs coming into light. The MEPs responded swiftly in order to find the culprit as well as implement measures to strengthen the EU’s data protection services.

The participants of the ITRE Committee, focused their suggestion on the following 3 pillars:

### Education and digital literacy

- urged educational institutions to integrate the acquisition of digital skills into school curricula and lifelong learning and to educate the elder European population on digital issues via offering digital literacy courses and creating digital training programs for them,
- suggested the funding of experts by the private sector such as companies and public institutions in order to reskill the workforce of educational institutions which contribute to digital literacy of the public and the businesses owners,
- encouraged all European non-governmental organizations and the member-states’ Ministers of Education to raise awareness to the international community concerning cybersecurity, the importance of IT and ICT learning in educational institutions





### . Energy issues

- proposed the replacement of the traditional energy sources such as nuclear energy and fossil fuels, which are to be replaced by renewable energy sources such as wind power, solar energy, geothermal energy, biomass, hydropower, and hydroelectricity,
- proposed to exclude traditional energy sources, albeit being obliged to use them for a transitional period. The renewable energy sources will need a specific time and capital in order to be created,
- promoted independence in the energy field, as the Russia-Ukraine conflict has made abundantly clear that The EU member's states must have a state adequate amount of energy sources and energy supply Stresses the importance of the EU green Deal and foster sustainable and viable solutions for the EU and in further extend the environment, since it provides us with the opportunity to have access to energy sources which will be low costed for all citizens along with a sustainable solution.

### Data protection

- encouraged the usage of HTTPS encryption method throughout all websites as there is no benefit for ISPs or other third parties to track websites when there isn't a need to do otherwise under a legal subpoena,
- suggested that there is an adequate automatic removal period when it comes to website trackers which contains information that can be easily tracked to a certain user (i.e., cookies),
- supported the actions of organizations such as INHOPE, who protect and secure the

- data of minors against predators, as well as the actions of Europol and all LEAs across Europe which tackle cybercrime,
- provided incentives to appropriate services to the private sector which provide consumers with data protection software,
- encouraged the exchange of expertise between European LEAs with a greater focus on cybercrime, data protection and the protection of women and children coupled with the provision of expertise and incentives to LEAs to further tackle the phenomenon of CSAM,
- wished for the spreading awareness over the phenomenon SAM especially the one that is being spread without that person's consent (i.e., revenge porn) by organisations specialized in anti-violence through the use of the internet and the creation of workshops.

The experience of EUropa.S. 2022 was a truly enlightening one, as it gave us the opportunity to explore, research and discuss such an interesting topic under a common framework of mutual interests and willingness to contribute our personal opinions in the decision-making of important topics.

## European Parliament – TRAN Committee

The European Union, in its attempt to pioneer in the Transportation and Tourism area, and therefore to promote an eco-friendly and consumer-friendly environment, nominated 2021 as the 'European year of Rail'. However, the unexpected second outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic all around the world resulted in numerous difficulties regarding the implementation of all the innovative initiatives taken by the E.U. in order to establish a relationship of trust between its citizens and its Railway Network.

This background set the main topic discussed in the Parliamentary Committee TRAN under the title "Modernisation of the European Railway Network". During the debate, the MEPs disagreed on several points, but eventually realised that through our collaboration we could find common ground on which to compose our final resolutions. And even when multiple crises (such as the creation of a bottleneck in the most important European ports and the inefficient reaction of the E.U. to it, as well as the damage caused to the railway network due to a huge storm) occurred, we put aside our conflicts and once again worked together in order to serve the citizens of the E.U. and promote sustainability in the sector of European transports. As a result, the final Committee Report was drafted and voted unanimously from all the MEPs of our Committee.

The main points stated included:

- The promotion of more frequent, consumer-friendly itineraries and the availability of valuable information about them in order to facilitate the passengers and promote the idea of travelling by train to them,
- The establishment of a wide-spread, single, state-of-the-art, and of course environmentally friendly European Railway Network all across Europe, with renewable energy being the main source of fuel for its trains -in accordance with the 'Green Deal' which plans to reduce CO2 emissions in the area of transport (and not only) by 2030 and, annihilate them by 2050,
- The call upon the E.U. to hire well-trained and highly knowledgeable in the area of transport young Europeans and at the same time give the opportunity to railway-workers familiarise themselves with new technologies through training programmes,



- The support of the idea that not only should the E.U. fund initiatives in order to modernise the rail network and establish plans for emergency situations but that it should also encourage the private sector to take action and pioneer in this ambitious -but much needed- project. The adoption of new legislation/guidelines from the E.U. regarding this project is also considered very important.

The Draft Paper was voted unanimously "in favour", an accomplishment which couldn't have been done without the strive of the MEPs in order to succeed in finding new methods to modernise the European Railway Network and of course the participation of each and every MEP in the debating process.





## European Court of Justice

The European Court of Justice as the supreme judicial institution whose main role is to ensure that the EU law is interpreted and applied the same in every European member state was responsible, was simulated in the framework of the EUropa.S. 2022 Conference to settle the case: "Poland is referred to the ECJ for not complying with EU laws".

- Introduction

In October 2021, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal in a judgment with 10 votes in favour and 2 against, concerning the principle of primacy of EU law, ruled that articles 1 and 19 of the Treaty on European Union were "incompatible" with the Polish Constitution and therefore not legally binding in Poland.

At the same time, it accused the EU of exceeding its given competence regarding Poland's judiciary system under the Polish rule of law. This followed the ruling by the ECJ which condemned the Polish "Law on the Supreme Court", as it undermines the judicial independence that applies to every European democratic state and ordered its immediate suspension.

After Poland's failing to comply with the EU law by dismantling the Disciplinary Chamber for judges, the ECJ imposed, a fine of \$1 million a day during the period from 3 November to 10 January. The ECJ's aim was to ensure that the primacy of EU law was being respected by each and every member state, as well as principles, such as freedom, democracy,

- equality, and the rule of law as expressed in Article 2 TEU. Another essential aspect was that Poland was one of the states that signed the Treaty of Accession (2003) and thus agreed to comply with the EU provisions, given that it met the Copenhagen Criteria, such as having a stable democracy and the rule of law, so as to join the European Union in the first place.

- The Judgment

During the Sessions the Court discussed topics, like the "ethicality" of the imposed financial penalties, the Ukrainian crisis and Poland's contribution to the refugee flows into account, as well as the possibility of the creation of an additional institution with jurisdiction over ad hoc disputes and even an organ responsible for the expulsion of member states, in case they disobey the EU law and violate fundamental principles, like those mentioned in Article 2 TEU, among others.



The final proposals included a proposed amendment to the Treaty of Lisbon, through the addition of an article, so as to elucidate and explicitly express the primacy of EU law among the European countries, along with a request to Poland to comply with the Court's previous rulings, including the judgments of the European Commission v Republic of Poland case, the immediate dismantling of the Disciplinary Chamber and the re-examination of the criteria for the assignment of public judges, based on the democratic principles of separation of powers and the rule of law.

- Conclusion

The European Court of Justice while strongly supporting the primacy of EU law over national constitutions, in the cases where a conflict between aspects of them arises, it wishes to promote the harmonization of national politics, the cohesion among member states and provides the basis for further integration, while eliminating any acts that might infringe human rights, as guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, or inhibit political stability, separation of powers and the effective functioning of the judiciary system. Moreover, it was decided that it shall act decisively, in order to prevent any further undermining of the European fundamental principles, such as the precedence of its legal framework, and restore justice and stability among the EU member states.



# Supporting Groups

## Crisis Group

The Crisis Group was responsible for the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of the crises that took place per Committee, as mentioned in the Key Findings section. Each member took over a Committee and after carefully studying the Agenda, they created a Crisis Scenario that included a variety of stages and “evolved” as the debate progressed.

Under the guidance of the Head of the Crisis Team the young participants had the opportunity to practice their planning, management, communication, and team-working skills as they had at times to cooperate and coordinate their actions with the Boards of each Committee and sometimes the participants themselves. Also, seeing that their participation was based on the progress and evolution of work per Committee they were present during the sessions at all times, which also gave them the chance to see the reactions and crisis management skills of the other participants to their ideas, as well as to see how unexpected problems and obstacles affected the stances of the participants and influenced the final working paper delivered.

Naturally, due to the nature of their task, the crisis members had the opportunity to broaden their horizons on the topics they researched in order to prepare the crisis scenario and to harness their creativity into a productive result within the framework of their studies as well.





# Supporting Groups

## Journalist Team

The Journalist team's responsibilities included a variety of tasks aiming to the dissemination and communication of the Conference to the audience of social media.

Each journalist was assigned a different Committee or Institution and kept a record of all the different topics that were discussed. Their main duty was to keep the whole Conference and the rest informed for what was happening and where the different discussions were leading to. The team was also in charge of writing articles for the website, doing interviews, taking pictures, and managing the social media platforms of the Conference, including the engagement with the followers.

Through this observer status they had during the Conference, they had the opportunity to get a clear insight on the procedures followed on each committee, to look into the topics as third parties, as well as practice their social and communicational skills, by simulating the "eyes" of the Conference.



## Staff Team

The team of Staff Members played an important role in the Simulation by facilitating the process and working complimentary to the Organizing Team.

Their main responsibilities were to assist the note-passing in the Committees and support in technical and organizational issues. This position was deemed suitable for young people who did not feel comfortable enough to "step into the shoes" of a policy maker, but wanted to observe, and assist in general with the practical arrangements of the Conference. Nonetheless, after their experience for this year's Conference, many of them felt that their knowledge on the topics discussed was improved, and that they would be more comfortable participating in the simulation itself.





## SUMMARY

The Conference EUropa.S. – EUropa Simulation is a Simulation of the European Union’s Institutions, was organized for the 11th year by the Institute of Research and Training on European Affairs and was funded under the Key Action 3 the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union for Youth via the Youth and Lifelong Learning Foundation (INEDIVIM). The present Policy Paper was redacted as a presentation of the activities, results, and general impact of the project, and additionally, in order to give young people, the opportunity to voice their opinions, ideas, and concerns on matters of paramount importance and high interest for the European Union nowadays.

The Project included the following activities:

- 5 Informative Sessions
- 2 Structured Dialogue Events for the preparation of participants
- The Main Event that took place from the 15 – 18 of April in Athens
- 1 Final Structured Dialogue for the Presentation of Results

The Project aimed at giving young people the opportunity to learn through the “experiential Game” of Simulation how the Institutions of the European Union function, as well as to deepen their knowledge on European Affairs, to advance and practice their skills in a foreign language, specifically English and French, as well as to improve and develop a series of soft skills which are considered important for their lives and careers.

The young participants truly benefited from this opportunity by learning more about the role and function of the EU institutions, as well as the opportunities they have as young people within the European community. Furthermore, they understood the paramount importance of active engagement and the need of staying informed about the decision-making processes at the European level, since these affect their lives on a daily basis as well as the progress and evolution of the European society. Last but not least, the youth participating in this project got the chance to create a network of fellow young people interested in academia and European affairs and through the exchange of opinions and ideas to further strengthen their sense of the European identity.



# EUropa.S. 2022

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