



# POLITICAL PATHS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN CROATIA AND ABROAD

A handbook created by the  
Model European Union Zagreb 2023



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## 1. What is a Model European Union

A Model European Union (in short, MEU) is an apolitical simulation of the decision-making processes in the European Union. During a Model European Union, participants are gathered to discuss in moderated manner two legislative proposals, that are either created for the event itself based on contemporary European issues, or are already being worked on / have been worked on by the European Union itself. It is an event that takes multiple days and that sees the presence of a number of (usually young) people going from around 30 to more than 100. A MEU replicates the workings of the European Union, making them accessible to people who are not experts on either European politics or strictly on the debated topics. It is open to people of every background and level of knowledge, not discriminating against those for which politics is not the priority, but rather encouraging everyone to take part in order to see the importance of politics in the everyday life of European citizens.

Each MEU is an initiative led by youth, usually on a volunteer basis. A group of young people interested in politics and in sharing their knowledge by organizing a MEU for their peers, comes together to create such an event. Usually, MEUs are open to youth only, meaning for people aged 18-30, but the limit can vary: participants can be younger, older, or there can even be no limit.

**The goals of every MEU are, among others, to:**

- **Acquaint participants with European politics:** by taking part in different roles present at the European level, such as Ministers and Members of the Parliament, participants discover in a “learning by doing” methods how the European Union works, how laws are passed, the differences between many kinds of laws, and how European policies impact Member States. They gain an insight into the actual politics; a MEU is a simulation, but based on real-life processes and procedures. While participants need to research the topics of discussion and have very basic knowledge of the European institution, their learning process is greatly facilitated by the organizers, who put at the participants’ disposal an array of documents and guidelines to be studied.
- **Strengthening participants' knowledge of contemporary policies and issues that affect the European Union as a whole:** In a MEU, politics is treated by discussing two topics. Most of the time, these topics are taken from actual EU legislation, whether it is still in progress or a law that is

already approved and adopted by Member States. Sometimes, the pieces of legislation discussed during a MEU are made up, but always taking into account contemporary problems affecting the EU and its citizens. By debating and analyzing two topics in each MEU, participants gain in-depth knowledge about them.

- **Improving the debating skills of participants:** a MEU is a platform where participants can freely debate, impersonating the role of politicians and policymakers, in an organised and mediated manner. There is no saying something wrong, everything can be put up for discussion, as long as a peaceful and respectful environment is maintained. The focus of a MEU is on different types of debates where people of different background, education, and skills, bring forward new ideas and approaches to a certain topic. Every MEU has the advantage of being a place that is not formal, but not informal either, which helps create a “safe space” leaving it up to the participants to put their knowledge on the table.
- **Expanding the participants’ network:** a MEU counts anywhere from 30 to more than 100 participants, in an event that takes multiple days. Participants are therefore encouraged to meet new people, discuss together, and in general build ties with like-minded individuals. As every MEU is composed of both “simulation time” and “informal activities”, such as intercultural dinners, participants are presented with multiple occasions of expanding their network.



## 1.2 The roles and schedule of a typical MEU

A MEU can be more or less complex in duration, roles, and number of staff and participants. Still, each MEU needs the consistent and committed contribution of a team of organizers and of a minimum number of participants of around 30 people. Both the staff and the participants are usually recruited by open call, but there are different methods that will be explored in the next chapter. Here is an overview of the staff and participants' roles that every MEU needs, and some more optional roles.

*Participants' roles:*

- **Ministers in the Council of the EU:** they act as the representatives of each Member State's government. Ministers are specialized by policy topic, so they do not represent the Prime Minister or the President, but for instance the Minister of Agriculture of Croatia, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Sweden, and the like, depending on the topics discussed during the MEU:
- **Members of the European Parliament:** they represent the individuals in the 7 political groups that are present in the European Parliament, plus the non-inscripts (independent politicians). Therefore, they belong both to a party in their Member State, and in a political group in the Parliament.

The Council and the Parliament are the only roles that are strictly necessary in a MEU, as they are the co-legislators without which it would be impossible to create and pass new laws.

*Optional participants' roles:*

- **Press:** journalists are a common role in many MEUs. They do not discuss policies, but they follow the events, report on them, and interview politicians, just like in real life. Their role is to find scandals, inflame the debates, and keep politicians accountable to their word.
- **Lobbyists (or interest representatives):** they have the role of discussing with politicians and press, and promoting their interests. They represent companies, organizations, and citizens' groups. They are an important component of policymaking at European level, as they greatly influence the provisions in each law.

- **Political advisors:** differently from lobbyists, they represent committees and institutional organs that are involved in policymaking. They engage in discussions with lobbyists and politicians to direct the content of discussions.
- **Photographers:** very simply, photographers need to report the event visually. In some MEUs, professional photographers are hired; in others, it is one of the roles for participants; in others, they do not exist. They are important not only to get quality shots, but also for dissemination purposes if needed as they collect visual material to be published.
- **Interpreters:** proper only of the biggest MEUs, interpreters translate the speeches of politicians in different languages, depending on the languages that politicians speak. There are many ways of interpreting, from simultaneous to whispering interpretation. However, in general, all participants in a MEU are required to speak English to a level where they can discuss politics, and English is usually the only official language of MEUs.

As the European policymaking machine is very complicated, more roles can be added, but these are the most common ones.

*Organizing team roles:*

- **Director Generals (DGs):** usually two, they are the people coordinating and overseeing everything from start to finish. They are the leaders of the organizing team and sometimes the first point of contact of the participants. They may decide to organize their work however it's better for them, but it is more convenient if one DG is in charge of the Parliament, and one of the Council.
- **Logistics manager(s):** sometimes the role of logistics is taken up by the DGs. However, especially for events in presence, the logistics manager(s) are responsible for finding the venue, accommodation for participants, catering, and in general to overview all logistical aspects of a MEU.
- **Commissioners:** in number of two, one for each topic of discussion, they are the "treasurers" of European law: They explain the legislative proposals to the participants and try to direct discussions in the way that appeases them best. Although their role is mostly neutral in the simulation, they have the power to indirectly contribute to discussions by counselling politicians on the content of debates and by appearing on the media.

- **Chairs:** usually three per chamber (3 in the Parliament and 3 in the Council) they have no political role, but they moderate all debates. They know the rules of the flow of discussions, and keep order and peace. They are responsible for following and adapting to the schedule.
- **Legal advisors:** at least two, but ideally more, they advise politicians on the legal aspect of EU legislations: how to write amendments, how to be consistent with EU law, and writing proposals based on specific legal language.

Except for the Director Generals and Chairs, all other roles can be represented by a team of people, rather than just one or more individuals. For instance, for Commissioners there can be a “content team” composed of many people that works on writing and/or analysing the proposed topics, creating guideline documents, and organizing workshops and panel discussions for participants. Since MEUs are usually organized on a voluntary basis, the more people in the organizing team, the less work each one of them has to bear.

Based on all additional roles for participants that may be present during a MEU and on needs of the organizing team, more staff roles can be added:

*Optional organizing team roles:*

- **Marketing and partnership manager(s):** they are responsible for advertising the event and finding partners such as guests for guest speeches during the MEU, and creating social media content.
- **Grant manager(s):** if a MEU is funded, a grant manager is needed to find public and private grants, scholarships, and establish partnerships with companies in exchange for funds and other benefits, such as materials and food.
- **Editor in Chief and Assistant Editor in Chief:** if the MEU has a Press team, one or more coordinators of the team are needed, giving tasks to the participants in the Press, helping with articles and interviews.
- **Coordinators:** for each role, coordinators are needed. For instance, if there are interpreters, one or more Interpreter Coordinator is needed to lead the team of participants and help them in their role.

## Schedule

A MEU is a multi-day event usually gathering people from different countries, although it can also be organized at local or country level. It is typical to offer a good combination of formal (discussion) and informal (networking and intercultural events) activities.

In a MEU, discussions follow the European Union’s Ordinary Legislative Procedure (OLP), but in a simplified way; instead of taking months, it takes three or four days. The participants, representing their assigned roles, are provided with two *legislative proposals*, that is a draft law, one for each topic of discussion. Their goal during the MEU is that of debating on it and amending it, modifying its articles and content in a way that is still relevant to the central topic, but better reflects the wishes of the politicians and ultimately of the Member States’ governments and citizens. At the end of the MEU, two final proposals, one for each topic, which will be put to vote: if approved, they will be signed and become law, and if not, a conciliation process would start (although the latter is not part of a typical MEU).

Here is an overview of the schedule of the OLP, taking into account a MEU duration of three days. It can be extended and slightly modified, but this is the general structure of it.

DAY 1		DAY 2		DAY 3	
PARLIAMENT	COUNCIL	PARLIAMENT	COUNCIL	PARLIAMENT	COUNCIL
Commission speech on Proposal 1	Commission speech on Proposal 2	Parliament votes on its amended version of Proposal 1	Council votes on its amended version of Proposal 2	Parliament votes on its amended version of Proposal 2	Council votes on its amended version of Proposal 1
Parliament works on Proposal 1: debating and amending	Council works on Proposal 2: debating and amending	Exchange of information between Chambers on how discussions and amendments were		Exchange of information between Chambers on how discussions and amendments were	
		Commission speech on Proposal 2	Commission speech on Proposal 1	Final discussions	Final discussions
		Parliament works on Proposal 2: debating and amending	Council works on Proposal 1: debating and amending	Final vote on <b>both proposals</b>	Final vote on <b>both proposals</b>
Press conference		Press conference		Press conference	



After the end of each day, it is common to organize some kind of networking or intercultural event, such as a dinner, a party, an excursion, etc. Other than the OLP, a MEU usually also includes an opening and closing ceremony, and one or more guest speeches performed by experts on the topics of discussions. The more roles in a MEU, the more space needs to be allocated for their participation, and the longer the simulation will take. Moreover, before each MEU, a preparatory workshop is organized where participants get familiar with the rules of discussion (called Rules of Procedure, ROPs), the content of the MEU, the organizing team, and can set their expectations.

A MEU can be organized in different ways. As a rule of thumb, the less funds for the event, the simpler it must be. A MEU with an average funding (10 000€) is 4 days long: on the first day, participants arrive at their accommodation and settle down. In the afternoon, the opening ceremony takes place. The second and third days are fully dedicated to discussions from morning to evening. The fourth and last day, discussions end a bit earlier and the event ends with the closing ceremony in the early afternoon, so participants are free to leave back to their country.



### 1.3 How to organize a Model European Union

A MEU must be planned early in advance, at least 6 months, but ideally one year. Taking into consideration that organizers use their free time on a voluntary basis, the preparations for a MEU must be planned accordingly so as not to stress anyone in the team. Although the organization of a MEU may greatly vary, here is a list of the basic steps required for its success:

1. **Find the core team:** the Director Generals, Logistics manager, and, if needed, the Grant manager;
2. **Open the call / find the rest of the organizing team:** either by public call or by calling on students' associations or people of trust. You should also decide on what roles you want the participants to have;
3. **Communication is key:** it is important that the organizing team is compact and works well together; everyone must have their role description clear, and tasks to be carried out. Deadlines must be set and everyone must be held accountable. Establishing communication channels with the team (whatsapp, slack, teams, etc) and with participants (email, teams, discord, telegram, etc) proves useful;
4. **Find funding:** both private companies and public institutions support MEUs. Find more about funding below.
5. **Set a date** and, if possible, a provisional schedule;
6. **Find a venue:** universities and European organizations are generally welcoming;
7. **Find possible accommodation options,** to be confirmed after you have the final number of participants;
8. **Find possible catering options,** to be confirmed after you have the final number of participants;
9. **Open the call for participants:** consider that you need at least 15-20% more applications than the number of participants you decided on, as not all those who apply will actually decide on participating, and some of them will withdraw at the last minute. Having participants pay a fee is a means to better ensure their participation, but it might be impossible for some to pay a fee due to economical issues. It is typical for all calls to have an extension of one or two weeks;
10. **Select the participants;**

11. **Provide participants with documents and guidelines** they need for the simulation;
12. **Organize a preparatory workshop:** although it is not usually a compulsory part of the MEU and participants are free not to attend, it acquaints participants with the dynamics of the MEU and answers to many of their questions;
13. **Finalize all the details** with participants and the MEU can start;
14. If needed, **write evaluations, reports, disseminations**

## Funding

Funding is a delicate topic, as it is often difficult to get. Most likely, to receive funding, a MEU must be organized by an actual organization, meaning a formal group of people that registered an association. Most private and public bodies can donate only to associations, not to individuals. As an individual, you can ask an association you know to support your project and help you in getting funds, or you can reach out to one of the BETA branches (which will be talked about in Chapter 3). Although it is difficult to get funding, a lot of private and public bodies are willing to fund a MEU.

Here are the main sources of funding for a MEU:

- European and government funding: Erasmus+ and government tenders
- European agencies and organizations: for instance ECAS, the European Citizens' Action Service
- Non-profits, NGOs, charities
- Private companies and banks: these can be used both for funding and for in-kind donations (food, materials, accommodation, etc)
- Country representations in Brussels, embassies, politicians
- Private citizens: especially via crowdfunding platforms
- Participation fee: it is common for participants in MEUs to pay a fee to cover events, materials, food, and accommodation. The fee can be refunded

## 1.4 The Model European Union network

Model European Union conferences are organized all over Europe, even in countries that are not Member States of the EU. In some countries, MEUs take place yearly, while in some others they are organized more sporadically. Thanks to the popularity of MEUs, an informal network has formed that includes organizers and participants. Besides such informal connections, there is also an official network linking most of the associations that regularly organize MEUs in Europe. It was mentioned above that to get funding for any MEU it is necessary to apply through an association; this can be any association, but one in particular is dedicated to organizing MEUs: **BETA (Bringing Europeans Together Associations) Europe and its national branches**. BETA Europe is an apolitical, non-profit association aiming at strengthening European identity and consciousness based on plurality, tolerance and cooperation between individuals, as well as strengthening European civil society by further developing democratic processes on both national and international level. It counts 17 national branches, with more being added periodically.

BETA Europe offers consultations on how to organize a MEU, guidelines, materials, and advertises MEUs around the world to its audience and partner organizations. It can be useful as a contact point between organizers, associations, and possible partners; its members participate in yearly assemblies and international events, thus are able to connect with each other and strengthen the MEU network. Although BETA Europe does not directly organize MEUs, it acts as a supporting organization for its national branches to take the initiative. Members of BETA national branches are also automatically part of the European parent, and are part of its decision making processes in the general assemblies.

Being part of an extended network of associations is important for the organization of international MEUs, as it allows for more people coming from different countries to take part in the event, and it expands the possibilities of receiving funding from different sources. Moreover, the more partners one has early in the organization of a MEU, the more credibility it gains, and the more interest it will raise among possible partners and participants.

BETA Croatia is not a reality yet, but the association is being created and will hopefully start existing at the end of June 2023. Here is the website of BETA Europe: <https://www.beta-europe.org/>

You can check out some of the yearly-organized MEUs by following these links:

- France: [MEU Strasbourg](#) and [MEU Côte d'Azur](#)
- Bulgaria: [MEU Sofia](#) and [MEU Blagoevgrad](#)
- Spain: [MEU Spain](#)
- Portugal: [MEU Lisbon](#)
- Belgium: [MEU Brussels](#)
- Netherlands: [MEU Netherlands](#)
- Greece: [MEU Athens](#)
- Poland: [MEU Warsaw](#)
- North Macedonia: [MEU Skopje](#)
- ... and many more! The easiest way to find them is to google or search on Facebook “Model European Union”+the city or country you are interested in. Some MEUs are not organized every year.

### 1.5 Other kinds of political simulations

A Model European Union is not the only kind of political simulation. Depending on the place of the world where organizers live, and on the interests of the organizing group, other simulations can be organized. Here are some examples:

- **Model United Nations (MUN):** In a MUN, each participant or a team of individuals is assigned a country to represent, and must solve a problem from the perspective of the assigned country. They simulate the General Assembly of the UN and its decision making processes. It is generally an event that takes longer and includes more participants than a MEU, as the countries represented in the UN are 193, not including observer states and agencies that might be present in debates. Alternative versions of a MUN can include simulating specific organs of the UN, such as the Security Council. More information about MUNs can be found here: <https://www.un.org/en/mun>
- **Model G20 and G7:** A Model G20, or, much more rarely, a Model G7, is a simulation of the annual G20 Leaders’ Summit. Each participant represents a country, and works on two “tracks” which reflect current G20 priorities. A variety of roles, such as consultants, international organizations, and topic specialists.

- **Model NATO:** It is a simulation of debate and the decisions taken by the member countries of the NATO alliance. Each participant represents a NATO Member country and debates on hot topics with rules based on the North Atlantic Treaty. Discussions centre on NATO's priorities, such as arms' control, developments in technology, military issues, and energy security.



## 2. Involvement in public life as a young person

It may appear challenging to be involved in politics and policymaking as a young person, but there are ways in which one can expand one's knowledge and network and improve their involvement in public life.

### 2.1 Student associations

As a student, the preferred “launch pad” are student associations. There are many and of different kinds, so it is easy to find some that deal with politics and international relations. Nevertheless, involvement in public life does not only mean being involved in political matters; it also means contributing to different causes, from environment to sports.

Usually student associations are listed on university websites and they reach out to their audience on social media, mainly Instagram and Facebook.

In Zagreb, it is possible to find:

- **Diplomatski klub Fakulteta političkih znanosti:** <https://diplomatskiklub.com/>  
Active since 2016, it is very active in organizing events on the topic of international politics, and is one of the main contributors to MEU Zagreb 2023. It groups mainly students of the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb;
- **Diplomatski klub Libertas:** <https://www.libertas.hr/za-studente/diplomatski-klub/>  
Active since 2021, it began taking on many projects with regard to diplomacy. Its members come mainly from the Libertas University in Zagreb;
- **Hrvatska Akademska Zajednica:** <https://haz.hr/>  
Representing university students, it contributes to organizing many events from politics to culture and collaborates with many civil society organizations;
- **Hrvatsko Debatno Društvo:** <http://hdd.hr/>  
It has the goal of enhancing the debating and critical thinking skills of young people by organizing debates and conferences. It is part of the movement led by the International Debate Society.

Almost all student associations are not related to any specific political party, religion, and their members are all volunteers. Every University and Faculty has one or more student associations working on different matters.



## **2.2 Youth branches of political parties**

The bigger political parties usually have a youth section. Their youth section is open to people that may not be of voting age, until generally 29-30 years old, that want to take part in political discussions and develop their knowledge of politics. Although such youth sections are usually open to everyone, independently of their political views, it is common to join the one of the party that is closer to one's opinions. Youth sections of the party do not directly pass laws at State level, but debate current policies and party priorities and may have an influence on the outcome of the main party's discussions, especially when it comes to youth policies. Moreover, they are structured like an actual party, with a President, Secretary, and all its members in different functions, and hold party elections to determine their internal structure. Therefore, the youth section of political parties is a way to understand the workings of politics and political parties by being involved in them, to build a network, participate in events and discuss current affairs, and also to be involved in politics as a future career.



The main advantage of youth sections of political parties is that, in exchange for active participation, their members can be involved in a variety of activities: workshops, roundtables, lectures, discussions are supported by the main political party of reference. Moreover, being part of such sections gives youth the opportunity to experience politics first-hand, visit government buildings, and meet politicians on a regular basis. Moreover, they are generally part of more extended European or international umbrella organizations which gather all of the youth sections based on different countries, offering a more international outlook on the common issues discussed by all the sections and creating events to engage on an international platform.

In Croatia, there are youth sections of the main political parties. Here are some examples:

- **Mladež HDZ-a:** <http://www.mhdz.hr/>  
The youth section of the HDZ party in Croatia
- **Forum mladih SDP-a Hrvatske:** <https://fmsdp.org/>  
The youth section of the SDP party in Croatia

In case there are no youth sections of a certain party, there are also usually informal groups for most parties. They can be found in news and on social media.

As mentioned before, youth sections of national parties are, alongside other organizations, part of international networks and umbrella groups. International groups have more political leverage than national party sections, and sometimes hold active roles in international forums such as the ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council at the UN). Here are some examples of such organizations. Many more can be found based on one's particular interests.

- **International Young Democrat Union:** <https://iydu.org/>  
It is a global alliance of centre-right political youth organisations with the common goal of promoting ideals such as more freedoms for individuals and businesses, and less presence of the government.
- **International Federation of Liberal Youth:** <https://www.iflry.com/>  
It is an international platform linking liberal organizations and youth parties, united by the goal of advancing freedoms and human rights, and a market economy with fair government involvement.
- **International Union of Socialist Youth:** <https://iusy.org/>  
It brings together the socialist, social democratic and labour political youth

organizations from around the world. It is linked to leftwing ideals and promotes universal freedoms, social rights, and democracy.

- **Global Young Greens:** <https://globalyounggreens.org/>

It is an emerging global organization supporting and consolidating the efforts of young people working towards social justice, ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy and peace.

There are also youth representations of the parties at European Union level. Such groups collaborate with the main party, which often funds their activities, and share the ideals of their party of reference, but are independent in their structure and account of a wide membership of other organizations. When there is no youth group of a European party, other parties commonly fund and organize other kinds of activities, such as youth gatherings, conferences, and networking events, as well as creating campaigns and opportunities dedicated to youth. Here are some examples of youth representations:

- **Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP):** <https://youthpepp.eu/>

It brings together centre-right youth organizations. They maintain contacts within our political family, provide ground for training, discussion and cooperation, while promoting their ideals.

- **Young European Socialists (YES):** <https://youngsocialists.eu/>

It unites young socialists and social democrats from all over Europe to campaign and organise at the European level and to provide a forum for debate, advocacy, capacity-building and exchange for all European young socialist activists.

- **Young European Greens:** <https://fyeg.org/>

It is the European umbrella organisation for Young Green organisations from all over the European continent, working on building a more sustainable, social, feminist, welcoming and inclusive Europe.

### 2.3 The European Youth Parliament

Established in 1987, the European Youth Parliament (EYP) is a platform for civic education where young people can exchange their ideas. It is a forum that encourages the participation of many young people with different ideas and coming from different regions and backgrounds. Everyone in the EYP is a volunteer: volunteers shape its program and activities, and they are also its members. The goal of the EYP is that of engaging young people in policies, providing them with a

platform to discuss issues, network among themselves, and with guidance in giving life to new projects. The end goal of the EYP is for young people to become more active in public life and gain experience in the world of public affairs. The EYP has great visibility and branches established in all Member States and beyond, counting 40 of them. From national assemblies to international conferences and trainings, the EYP offers a variety of events for its members and for the general public to attend.

The EYP encourages diversity and participation; despite being called “parliament” it is non-partisan, and its activities aim at promoting discussion and peer-by-peer learning in a democratic and inclusive way. Its projects are centred around contemporary issues, such as climate, health, creating intercultural communities, and building strong institutions. It is supported by institutions, organizations, and people. Among them, we can find the [Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe](#), Ursula von der Leyen, and Roberta Metsola. In particular, the Schwarzkopf foundation aims at empowering young people to be active European citizens who contribute to a pluralistic, democratic society of mutual understanding, solidarity and peaceful collaboration across Europe, in order to foster a European sentiment and combat any forms of extremism.

The EYP has a branch in Croatia, too: the European Youth Parliament Croatia. It was launched in 1994, and since then it has hosted hundreds of conferences, national, and international sessions. Its mission is to inspire youth and support them in developing their roles in society through debates and international dialogue, in cooperation with the other EYP branches. They host outreach events so that you can get to know them!

Here is the website of the European Youth Parliament: <https://eyp.org/>, and here is the one of its Croatian branch: <https://eyp.hr/>



### 3. Education and internship opportunities in Croatia and abroad

Many institutions and organizations offer young people the possibility of developing one's knowledge in matters of politics and policymaking. Here you will find a list of opportunities divided by formal (academic) education, and informal education, such as internships and participation in international events.

#### 3.1 Formal education in Croatia and abroad

Universities are obviously the place where one should start looking if they want to advance their theoretical knowledge on matters of political science, diplomacy, and international relations. The view of universities should not be limited to studying, but one should also take account of the benefits that come with attending university: meeting new people, establishing new connections in the field of study, discussing with professors, and taking part in informal events and in students' associations. It is a great investment of time and money which, if done correctly, can pay back with knowledge, experience, and a strong social circle.

In Croatia there are multiple universities dedicated to studying politics and related disciplines.

- **University of Zagreb:** <https://www.fpzg.unizg.hr/>  
The Faculty of Political Science and Journalism at the public University of Zagreb (FPZG) offers bachelor's, master's, and doctorate studies with focus on two directions: politology and journalism. One can choose one of the two branches, but some of the courses are common to both. Its offer of courses is wide, both in Croatian and English language, and it offers to its students the chance to go abroad in an Erasmus for Study experience in one of the partner universities. It also receives international Erasmus students.  
Similar faculties are also present in other Universities in Croatia and scholarships are available, especially from the government of Croatia.
- **Libertas International University:** <https://www.libertas.hr/en/>  
The Libertas University in Zagreb and in Dubrovnik is a private university offering undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate courses in international relations, diplomacy, and economics. Its main qualities are the teaching staff composed by distinguished and experienced professors, and its internationality, hosting students from more than 30 countries. It has a vast

Erasmus network and students are followed carefully throughout their entire career. The University offers scholarships to some of its students.

- **RIT Croatia:** <https://www.rit.edu/croatia/>

Although not directly connected to politics, the private university RIT Croatia offers an array of interdisciplinary courses with focus on fostering the talents of its students and preparing them for the job market. It has campuses in Zagreb and Dubrovnik, and welcomes students from all over the world. In particular, its Global Business Management bachelor's and its Organizational Leadership and Innovation master's programs could be interesting for people with a background in political science. RIT Croatia's parent campus in New York offers a wide variety of courses, from humanistic to STEM studies.

RIT Croatia hosted the Model European Zagreb 2023. They are very receptive to initiatives by students and encourage them by giving everyone tools and attention. Here are some links that might be useful to the reader in order to pursue education at RIT Croatia.

[MS Program in Information Technology and Analytics;](#)

[MS Program in Organizational Leadership and Innovation;](#)

[Information for students who are considering to transfer;](#)

[Information for international students;](#)

[Financial aid and scholarships](#)

Universities abroad also have a lot of programs concerning political science, but there are some institutes of excellence that are worth mentioning below:

- **Global Campus of Human Rights:** <https://gchumanrights.org/>

The Global Campus of Human Rights is an interdisciplinary centre of excellence supported by the EU. Its mission is to promote human rights and democratisation through education, and collaborates with a vast network of partner universities present in all regions of the world and focusing on regional issues. It offers a wide array of education possibilities, from “standard” master's programs to internships and summer schools. Moreover, it also regularly publishes free online resources such as MOOCs. Its approach is not only about interdisciplinarity; it also promotes interculturality and professionalism, offering internships and study trips during each program. Scholarships are available for all programs.

- **College of Europe:** <https://www.coleurope.eu/>

The College of Europe is the oldest postgraduate institute of European studies. During the course of the years, its academic offer greatly amplified and its two campuses, in Natolin (Poland) and Brugès (Belgium) focus on European and international politics and economics. It aims at best preparing students for their international and diplomatic career. It is one of the most recognized institutes in Europe, counting excellent professors and visits from guests such as diplomats and European officers. Its academic approach combines theory and practice with focused courses, study trips, workshops, guest lectures, and practical involvement of students in internships is encouraged. Its two campuses are very lively, offering the chance to students to network and learn at the same time, and to be involved in current projects of the College. Scholarships are available for all programs, and public institutions and governments also offer partial scholarships to prospective students.

### 3.2 Informal education in Croatia and abroad

Informal education consists of internships, traineeships, participation in conferences and events. Universities usually support extra-curricular internships and may advertise informal education possibilities to students. The program Erasmus for Traineeship can also be exploited to pursue an internship in another country, and universities may also support a period abroad for the purpose of researching and writing the final dissertation.

Here are some opportunities in Croatia:

- **Gong:** <https://gong.hr/en/>  
Gong is a civil society organization focused on enhancing democratic processes and institutions as well as developing democratic political culture and encouraging active and responsible participation of citizens in political processes, particularly in decision-making processes related to good governance of public and collective property, protection and promotion of the rule of law, human rights and solidarity. They accept interns for long and short term projects.
- **Foundations:** Foundations are a great way to get into civil society. They aim at promoting democracy and inter-political dialogue. Foundations of different countries are present in Croatia; most commonly, from Germany, but also

from other countries surrounding Croatia or working closely with it in European strategies (such as mediterranean countries). They accept interns to help coordinate their activities and for administrative work. Here are some examples:

[Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung](#)

[Konrad Adenauer Stiftung](#)

[Anna Lindh Foundation](#)

- **Other organizations:** There are many other organizations, institutes, and clubs concerned with politics that may offer internships and volunteering positions to students and young people. The most prominent ones in Zagreb are:

[Human Right House Zagreb](#): part of the bigger network of Human Right Houses supported by the homonymous foundation, it groups civil society organizations for the advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

[Rotary Club Zagreb](#): coordinated by its parent organization Rotary International and supported by its foundation, the Rotary Club in Zagreb gathers people to work on projects spreading goodwill, mutual understanding, and ethics in public and private life.

[Europe House Zagreb](#): the Europe House in Zagreb welcomes organizations and individuals that want to strengthen European values in Croatia. It informs the citizens about the European Union, manages projects about the EU, and promotes values such as democracy and tolerance in the region.

[Institute for Political Ecology](#): the Institute for Political Ecology (IPE) is a research and educational organisation in Zagreb (Croatia) which aspires to shape alternative development models and innovative democratic solutions for political and economic transformations of society.

[Academy for Political Development](#): the Academy for Political Development offers education programs and courses to build the leaders of tomorrow. It cooperates with the Council of Europe and engages young people in activities revolving around politics and economics.

International opportunities can be found everywhere. Any international organization seeks to regularly recruit interns, and some of the internships are paid. They are excellent opportunities for learning and career advancement, and can easily be found just by doing research on the internet. Here are the most famous ones:

- **Traineeships at the European Union:** the enormous machine that is the European Union offers a variety of traineeships, generally paid, at its offices. The most common types are the Schuman traineeship and the Blue Book traineeship, respectively at the European Parliament and at the Commission. However, the Council of the EU, the European Council, and local, regional, and Brussels-based offices also offer traineeships for young graduates. The selection is highly competitive, but open to everyone under certain criteria; usually, there are two yearly intakes of trainees, one is in September and one in March. Here are some links that might help find a good opportunity:

[Schuman \(European Parliament\)](#)

[Blue Book \(European Commission\)](#)

[GSE \(European Council and Council of the EU\)](#)

[EU bodies and agencies](#)

[Council of Europe \(not an EU institution\)](#)

- **NATO internship:** NATO offers six-month internships to applicants in the third year of their university studies, or recent graduates of a bachelor or master's programme. Internships apply to a broad range of expertise and skill sets, providing opportunities in areas like political affairs, defence and security, innovation, operations, communications, business support and human resources, finance, science and technology, and infrastructure and facilities. It is a paid internship for citizens of NATO Member States, taking place in Brussels.

[NATO internship program](#)

- **UN internships:** In an internship at the UN, you will take care of day to day activities and participate in the life of UN officers. It is the first step into the world of the United Nations and offers chances of career development. Selection is, again, highly competitive, and open to all people with at least a bachelor's degree. UN internships are not paid. They take place both at the UN headquarters in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi, but also in regional offices in other parts of the world; UN agencies (such as UNESCO, OHCHR, FAO, etc) also offer internships. You must find them on the agency's website and make sure you meet the eligibility criteria.

[General website for UN internships](#)

For young people excelling in their area of work and/or study, the UN also offers an early-career opportunity called the Young Professionals Program. Find more about it [here](#).



- **European Solidarity Corps (ESC):** An ESC experience is an international volunteering experience with all expenses reimbursed, taking place in the European Union and its partner countries; it can last from 2 weeks to one year. Projects are managed by local organizations and can greatly vary in kind, from administrative to social and environmental work. It is a good opportunity to discover one's passions and develop one's skills, as well as to get to know the world of civil society and NGOs. ESCs are open to all citizens of the EU and partner countries aged between 18 and 30. Find more about it [here](#).



#### 4. Useful links

Here are some useful platforms to find internships, paid opportunities, conferences, summer schools, international education possibilities.

- [Opportunities for Youth](#): gathers everything from scholarships to early-career jobs, divided by kind of opportunity, region, and interest;
- [Human Rights Careers](#): advertises newly opened positions for internships, programs, and jobs;
- [IntJobs](#) (International Affairs jobs): lists all jobs related to politics, international economics, human rights, and international affairs, from junior to senior positions;
- [EuroBrussels.com](#): publishes job openings divided by kind, all in the field of European affairs, thus mostly based in the European Union;
- [UN jobs](#): gathers all job openings in the UN and its offices; they can be filtered by kind, time, and keyword;
- [Eurodesk](#): publishes all sorts of opportunities for youth and young professionals. Thanks to its extended network, opportunities are available in the EU and beyond;
- [Top Universities](#): helps you find good local and international education opportunities and scholarships, gathering information about many universities around the world and information on application processes and career advice;
- [Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters scholarships | Erasmus+](#): The Erasmus Mundus is a joint master's program financed by the European Union. It allows students to study at different universities in Europe each semester, following a masters' on one of the proposed topics.  
[Here is more information](#);
- [Opportunities around the world | Facebook](#): Facebook groups are dedicated to MEUs, scholarships, fellowships, and international events. This group gathers a lot of different opportunities for young people.
- [MEUniverse](#): A group for MEU enthusiasts. Most of the MEUs that are looking for staff or participants post their opportunity there.

## 5. MEU Zagreb in short

MEU Zagreb took place on April 21-22-23 2023 at RIT Croatia in Zagreb, Croatia. It was organized by Udruga Amazonas and Diplomatski Klub Fakulteta Političkih Znanosti, with the collaboration of RIT Croatia. It was supported by the MEU guests Staša Puškarić and Igor Vidačak. It was financed by the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia and by the European Solidarity Corps.

**18 people participated in the organization of MEU Zagreb.** All 18 members of the staff team are aged between 18 and 30, and five nationalities are represented. In addition, they are equally divided by gender. Most of them are political science and journalism students, but some are international volunteers and others work. The common interest of all of them is to be part of an international event with the aim of promoting politics among young people. The staff team worked together and in teams under the supervision of the Director Generals to prepare all the materials and acquire the necessary knowledge for the simulation.

**A total of 54 participants joined the three-day simulations.** Just over half of them also participated in an online preparatory workshop, where participation was highly encouraged but not mandatory. Of the 128 people who applied for the event, 67 were initially selected. Unfortunately, last-minute cancellations and no-shows caused a disparity between the expected number of participants and the actual number. The smaller number of participants did not cause any problem in the implementation of the event. Although the majority of participants live currently in Zagreb, people from outside Zagreb and abroad also applied. Of the 54 participants, 15 are not from Croatia, which represents a total of **10 different nationalities**. The call for participants was open only to people aged 18 to 30. Most participants are students, generally of political science and international relations. Some study economics, social sciences, sociology, medicine, while some work or are involved in internships or volunteer experiences. **Three roles were open for participants:** Minister in the Council, Member of the Parliament, and Journalist.

For most of the participants, this was their **first time participating in the EU Model**. All are interested in politics, although some stated that they do not have much knowledge about it. The MEU was therefore an opportunity for them to learn more about European policy-making. The three main reasons people signed up were: to apply their studies by participating in a political simulation; to expand your

knowledge about the European Union and its politics; gaining experience and a network for a future career.

The Model EU Zagreb project was designed not only on the basis of the desire of a group of people to create an international event about politics in Zagreb, but also on the basis of research that showed that young people in Croatia have relatively low levels of political engagement and knowledge about the European Union. The three main facts on which MEU Zagreb is based are the following:

- **The political literacy of young people in Croatia is limited:** this means that young people in the country do not understand the role of political institutions, limiting their role in the public space as active and responsible citizens and confronting them with indifference to politics;
- **Croats have mixed feelings about the EU:** after 10 years of membership, they generally expected more from the EU in terms of economic and political changes. In addition, values in Croatia and the EU sometimes differ, especially regarding minorities such as the LGBTQ+ community;
- **The level of active citizenship among Croats, especially young people, is low:** this negatively affects the dialogue between institutions and citizens and their representativeness, also due to low voter turnout.

In accordance with the mentioned problems, the organizers of MEU Zagreb have set three main goals in this regard:

- **Increasing the level of knowledge of young people in Croatia about the EU and EU politics:** by simulating the roles that exist in EU institutions (members of the European Parliament, ministers, journalists, commissioners, legal experts, etc.), as well as by discussing current EU policies and/or reporting on them, participants would have the opportunity to increase their knowledge based on the "learning by doing" approach;
- **Increasing confidence in debating skills, especially on EU policy topics:** during discussions moderated by staff members, participants would have the opportunity to discuss current topics relevant at EU level, in a "safe space" where they can interact with people from different countries and backgrounds;
- **Increasing the desire to participate and create similar projects in the future:** participants and staff members have the opportunity to expand their network and learn about similar projects, which will hopefully encourage them to be more active in society and in their communities.

The fulfilment of these objectives was monitored through an evaluation form that had to be filled out by participants and staff members. 60 responses were received. The questions in the evaluation form included the level of satisfaction and self-assessment of the level of knowledge about EU institutions. Here is an overview of the questions:

- **Almost everyone is satisfied with the organization, staff members and content of the MEU.** When asked what could be improved, most respondents pointed to the schedule and preparation of the participants.
- **Knowledge of European institutions and procedures of EU legislation improved significantly:** if there were participants with little or no knowledge before the simulation, all of them afterwards declared that they had at least some knowledge about them.
- A similar result was achieved in the assessment of **knowledge about the influence of the EU** on Member States.
- The vast majority of respondents also **improved their confidence in public speaking** and discussing EU politics and policies.
- **51.7% of respondents were also inspired to create a similar event in the future.** Most of them mentioned organizing another Model EU or simulating some political institutions such as national parliaments, but there were other ideas as well.

A space was left open to comment on what the participants learned during the experience. Most of the answers mention the process of adopting EU legislation, debating and negotiating skills, and the internal functioning of the Parliament and the Council.



## **DISCLAIMER**

*This document is created with the financial support of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The content of this document is the entire responsibility of the MEU organizers and under no circumstances can be considered as a reflection of the Ministry's position.*

*With this document, the organizers, participants, and guests of the Model European Union Zagreb 2023 are not promoting any political views and opinions. The purpose of the handbook is merely to inform and present opportunities in civil society and education while not reflecting in any way the personal views of the authors.*