WELCOME BOOKLET
&
ACADEMIC PREPARATION KIT



Regional Session Geneva 2017

01.04 - 02.04.2017

Geneva 2017 – Regional Session of EYP Switzerland will take place on April 1st and 2nd. The session will gather around 90 national delegates and 30 officials from all over Europe.

In case of any questions regarding the participation in the session or the organisational aspect, please direct your questions to Mallorie Ashton-Lomax at mallorie.ashton-lomax@eyp.ch or Solène Hababou at solene.hababou@eyp.ch.

EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA
SWITZERLAND

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EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT
SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SVIZRA
SWITZERLAND

WORDS OF WELCOME

Dearest delegates of Geneva 2017,

Let me start by thanking you for choosing to participate at the regional session of the European Youth Parliament Switzerland in Geneva. I cannot think of a better place to begin your journey in this organisation.

For many of you this may be your first contact with EYP, for myself even after five years of being involved, I still struggle with the question of "what is EYP?". I won't even endeavour to answer this question here, because the truth is we all experience this organisation differently. What I do however want to try to convey, is that by saying yes to this session you have opened yourself up to an endless amount of new opportunities: the opportunity to meet new people from all corners of Europe, the opportunity to use your voice to talk about things that matter to you, the opportunity to create new memories, the opportunity to try new things.

The chairs team, editors and organising team are working hard to make these opportunities become a reality for each and every one of you. The organising team physically facilitate all of our work and fun, the editors will be at the session to eternalise the memories we make. The chairs will guide you through the weekend, starting right now with the well-researched and informative overviews they have produced to help you get acquainted with your topics. I encourage you to build on their work, build on all of our work, and enjoy the session to the very fullest.

I cannot wait to meet you all and am very excited to welcome you on board,

Tuusa Eriksson
President

Dear Delegates,

We are delighted to welcome you to Geneva 2017, Regional Session of EYP Switzerland. Alongside our extraordinary team of Organisers, we have worked hard in the past months – and will continue to do so – to ensure that your first steps in EYP fully disclose everything a session has to offer.

In a few weeks, you will laugh, debate, and meet people who will turn out to be some of the best you have come across. EYP is not only a platform for academic discussions and exchanges: it is also a place where you can build friendships that will last a lifetime, meet young people that you will see again at the National Session and with whom you will go all over Europe to attend other EYP events – or simply because you became close enough to want to travel together.

Starting EYP does not mean that you have to keep on doint it but there is a good chance that you will want to, and from there the possibilities are infinite. In addition to attending a number of different sessions, be them regionals, nationals, internationals or forums, you will discover that there is a lot of roles that you can take on beside being a delegate: Chairperson, Journalist, Organiser, and maybe even Editor, Vice-President or President!

But before that, we want Geneval 2017 to be unforgettable. As Head Organisers, we planned the whole session with very particular people in mind: you, delegates. It will take less than 48 hours for you to meet your fellow delegates and gather with your committees, discuss together, create solutions and debate over ideas and opinions. If you don't know what to expect, know that it will be a wonderful and unique experience, and that if you are at all like us: you will be hooked.

We are impatient to meet you all and to see you enjoy Geneva 2017!

Yours,
Mallorie Ashton-Lomax and Solène Hababou,
Head Organiser

Dear Delegates,

Thank you for at least starting to read this text. We are Vivienne and Jan - the Editors of Geneva. We feel honoured to be a part of this amazing Session and are very much looking forward to it. We will be responsible for producing the media output of the Session, which we will focus on many pictures and a video, capturing the participants and the important moments of the Session. The main publication channel will be the Facebook-page „Regional Sessions of EYP Switzerland", so make sure to go like it!

We started our journey within this organisation the same way you did - at a Regional Session of EYP Switzerland. We did not know what was in store for us and what we should expect of the two-day Session and the organisation in general. We took the chance, threw ourselves into the cold water and got out of our comfort zone. It resulted in us learning a lot about ourselves and additionally, improved our skill sets such as English language skills, public speaking, political debating and our social skills. Additionally, both of us have made many friends around whole of Europe.

Our suggestion to you is: let yourself blossom during this Session, if it is your first EYP experience but also if you have been to other Sessions before.

We will try to capture your lovely faces and experiences by documenting the session with pictures and videos, maybe providing you with a new facebook profile picture and hopefully preserving the wonderful memories made during the two amazing days in Geneva.

We hope you will enjoy our work, see you soon in Geneva!

Editorially yours, Vivienne & Jan
Editors of the session

Dear Participants,

You have by now been informed by the organising team about your definite committee topic. You will spend most of your time at the session in your committee (AFCO, AFET, LIBE etc.), from teambuilding where you will get to know the other members of your committees (coming from other schools) over to committee work where you will debate about your committee topic and create a resolution until general assembly, where you will - as a committee - present your resolution in the plenary and have to defend it in front of the other delegates.

This booklet contains important organisational information about the regional session. You will find out about the programme, the dress code and a list of things you should not forget to bring along, along with more information about the session concept.

Only sufficient preparation for your committee topic will help you contribute substantially to the debates at the session and to create a successful resolution. For this reason, your chairpersons - these are the ones that will guide each committee through the programme and lead the discussion in your committee - have created topic overviews. Make sure to read the respective overview carefully and to further research the problems that are mentioned in there before coming to the session. We're sure that you will then take the most out of the session and can your voice make heard.

We are looking forward to welcoming you soon! If you have any questions, do not hesitate do get in touch with us.

The organising teams of the Regional Sessions 2017

OFFICIALS' PRESENTATION

The Session's Board



Tuusa Eriksson (FI)
President



Onur Can Uçarer (TR)
Vice-President



Tommy Mallen (IE)
Vice-President

The Organising Team



Mallorie Ashton-Lomax
Head-Organiser



Solène Hababou
Head-Organiser



Aijan Muktar
Organiser



Amnah Al-Anbaki
Organiser



Camille Bertholet
Organiser



Emilie Aebischer
Organiser



Natacha Fayad
Organiser



Nicolas Zazzali
Organiser



Sophie Ratcliff
Organiser



Tanguy Ciccone
Organiser



Timothée Seiler
Organiser

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Aurel Gautschi (CH)
Chair- AFCO



Bethany Appleton (UK)
Chair - CULT I



Elise Buis (FR)
Chair - CULT II



Elliot Syrén (SE)
Chair - ENVI



Erik Michalowski (CH)
Chair - LIBE II



Hannes Ahlvin (SE)
Chair - LIBE I



Judit Lladós (ES)
Chair - FEMM



Miriam Aitken (CH)
Chair - SEDE

The Media Team



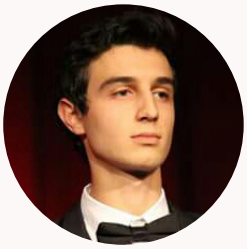
Jan Ruflin (CH)
Editor



Vivienne Heinzelmann (CH)
Editor



Eléonore Bleeker
Journalist



Romain Prina
Journalist

SESSION OVERVIEW

TEAMBUILDING

You will get to know your chairperson, an experienced EYPer guiding you through the session, and the other members of your committee by means of group exercises. We are not telling you exactly what to expect, but you can definitely look forward to this part.
Dress Code: Casual

OPENING CEREMONY

This is the official welcome event of the session. Many speakers, not only the President, but also the Head Organisers and guest speakers will make a speech before the event officially opens.
Dress Code: Smart Casual

COMMITTEE WORK

During committee work, you will discuss your committee topic with fellow delegates; this means a thorough analysis of the problems in question and summarising your suggestions how to tackle them in a formalised way, a resolution. As the time for committee work is very short, it is important that you prepared your committee topic at home before arriving at the session!
Dress Code: Smart Casual

EUROVILLAGE

During EuroVillage you will present the country that you were assigned to other participants. You will have to bring local food and beverages of the country and the event will constitute dinner on Friday. Be careful, though, it is not permitted to bring hard liquors or anything above 15% Vol.
Dress Code: Casual

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

During the General Assembly, all the resolutions will be discussed. The propo- sing committee will attempt to defend it, others will ask about unclear points and a er a heated debate, a vote will be taken to determine whether each re- solution has passed or not.
Dress Code: Formal

Dress Code

Casual

This dress code applies to informal activities such as Teambuilding. It gives you the freedom to choose any type of clothing you feel comfortable wearing.

Smart Casual

During Committee Work you will be required to dress smartly. You will not be expected to wear a suit, but worn-out jeans with sneakers do not quite fit the smart-casual clothing either. Preferably, wear something in between.

Formal

During the General Assembly, you will be expected to dress formally. This means suits with ties for men, and dresses, shirts and skirts or suit pants for women.

SESSION PROGRAMME

Day 1 (Saturday, 1. April)

08:30 - 09:00	Check-in at *Collège Calvin*, **2-4 Rue Théodore De-Bèze, 1204 Genève**
09:30 - 10:30	Opening Ceremony
10:30 - 11:00	General Teambuilding
11:00 - 13:30	Teambuilding
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 19:30	Commitee Work
19:30 - 22:00	Eurovillage
22:00 - 00:00	Evening Programme at *Geneva Youth Hostel*

Day 2 (Sunday, 2. April)

07:15 - 08:00	Breakfast
09:00 - 09:45	General Assembly preparation
09:45 - 13:00	General Assembly at *Auditoire Louis-Jeantet*
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 - 18:00	General Assembly at *Auditoire Louis-Jeantet*
18:00 - 19:00	Closing Ceremony
As of 19:00	Departure

Don't forget to bring

- Food and beverages from the country you were attributed to (see email received by the Head Organisers) that should feed at least 6 people. You will have the possibility to use the fridge.
- Printed preparation material (your own research and notes) since there are no printers available at the session!
- CHF 5.- deposit for the EYP cup
- Enough clothing for two days (mind the dress codes!)

GUEST SPEAKERS



Claudine Dayer Fournet

As assistant general secretary in charge of the sustainable development at the Public Instruction Department of Geneva, Claudine Dayer Fournet is a key actor in making sure that the protection of the environment is a main concern of the cantonal education authorities. Her extensive knowledge in her field and her years of experience as a project manager are bound to make her an interesting speaker.



Maurice Graber

A project director at the Ethics & Values Foundation, Maurice Graber has been promoting youth engagement and active citizenship in asssociation with youth organisations. One of his projects included the created of a *Practical guide to engagement in Geneva* for young people that summarises means and methods for those who want to act. We are sure that his incredible energy will captivate the participants.



Jean-Marc Guinchard

President of the Grand Council of Geneva until the end of March 2017, deputy and specialised in health law and labour law, Jean-Marc Guinchard is a prominent figure of the Genevan political scene. His engagement in several associations and charities, mainly in the medical and social fields, will allow him to enrich the participants' perspective on engaged citizenship and social involvement.



Bertrand Reich

Currently a lawyer in a notorious law firm of Geneva and a member of the Geneva Bar Association, Bertrand Reich is also the president of the NGO *Geneva Call*, which works on 4 different areas, from Landmine Ban to Gender Issues. Between his dealings with Geneva's economic and political issues and his work in the NGO, we hope he will be an inspiration for every participant of the session.

SESSION VENUES



Geneva Youth Hostel

Rue Rothschild 28-30, 1202 Genève

Located on a quiet street near the cultural district, the International Geneva and just steps from the lake and the Rhone, Geneva Hostel will be your accomodation during the night of the session.



Promenade Saint-Antoine

Prom. de Saint-Antoine, 1204 Genève

The teambuilding will take place in Promenade St-Antoine if the weather allows us to do so. It has one of the best view in Geneva since you can see the cathedral, the lake, the mountains and the rest of the city all at once.



Collège Calvin

2-4 Rue Théodore De-Bèze, 1204 Genève

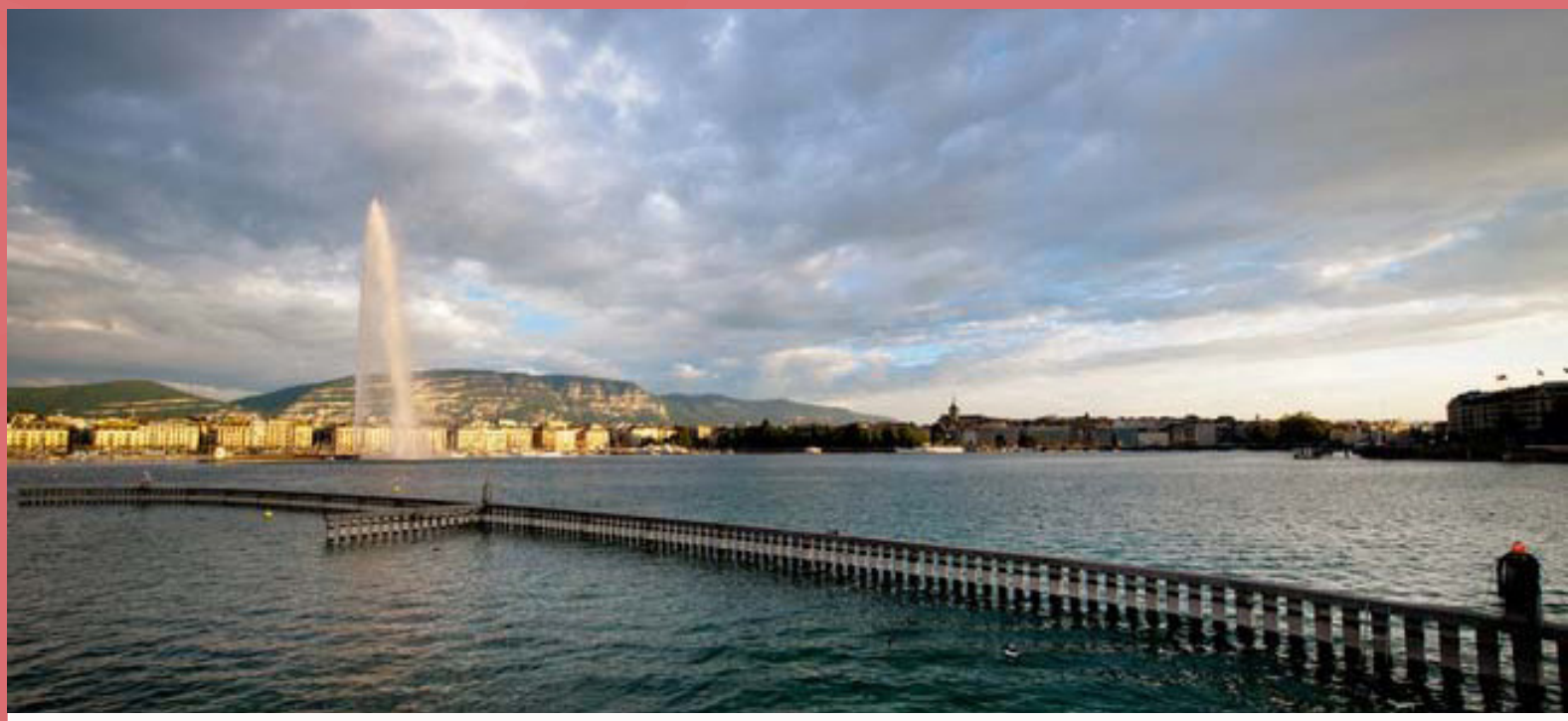
The oldest high school of Romandie, built in the 16th century, was founded by the well-known protestantist Jean Calvin. The newly renovated buildings kept all their charm and will welcome the Opening Ceremony, Committee Work and the Eurovillage.



AuditoriumLouis-Jeantet

77 Route de Florissant, 1208 Genève

The Louis-Jeantet Foundation supports biomedical research, both in its fundamental and clinical aspects. They work at a European level and on a more local scale in cooperation with the University of Geneva. The General Assembly will take place in the Auditorium.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Where do I have to go and when do I have to be there?

You have to arrive on the 1st April at 8:45 AM the latest at the Collège Calvin, **2-4 Rue Théodore De-Bèze, 1204 Genève**. Check-in is between 08:30-09:00.

You get there by taking a bus or tram (lines 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 25, 33, 36, 81, A, E, G) to the station Rive.

Afterwards, you will have to walk to the high school, situated above a large flight of stairs at the top of the **Rue d'Italie**. Once at the top, go to your right across the yard to the «Aula Franck-Martin» (second batiment on the right) , where the check-in will take place. Please note that we will not offer any pick-ups.

Which venues will we be staying at?

Participants will be accommodated at the Geneva Youth Hostel at **Rue Rothschild 28-30, 1202 Genève**. There is no need to bring a sleeping bag but you will need your own towel.

Teambuilding & Committee Work will take place at the Collège Calvin, **2-4 Rue Théodore De-Bèze, 1204 Genève.**

General Assembly will take place at the Auditoire Louis-Jeantet, **77 Route de Florissant, 1208 Genève**

Your already paid participation fee of CHF 45 will cover your accomodation, meals (except Eurovillage) and logistical costs thoughout the entire session.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do we need to take along?

Any material that you researched at home for your committee topic will be very useful. Take into account the dress code when packing your suitcase, and bring with you everything neede for personal hygiene, including a towel, a hair dyer (if needed), shower slippers and an umbrella. Beside that, you have paid have the respective participation fee per delegate. This will cover accommodation, participation of the session and all meals.

What is EuroVillage?

We will be in touch with you concerning the country that you will represent. All the participants from your school should work together to represent their respective countries by bringing along local food and drinks from that country; the amount should be enough to satisfy as many people as you are from your school..This will be a culinary highlight of the session.

What is General Assembly?

During General Assembly, all committees of the session will present the resolutions they have come up with during the previous day. They will be read out, debated and voted on according to the parliamentary procedures of the European Youth Parliament, which you can also find further below in this document. The president of the session will explain again general assembly procedure quickly before the debates start.

Who is addressed by our resolutions? What is meant by Europe, EU and Member States?

Taking a closer look at the topics debated at your session, this is a common and sensible question since Switzerland, whilst being part of international organisation like the Council of Europe, EFTA or the UN, is not a member of the EU. We should hence remember two things:

Firstly, the topics debated at our Regional Sessions are of relevance for Europe including Switzerland. When suggesting solutions to tackle these problems, we need to take account of the various ways how all of Europe can be addressed – by suggesting measures for EU member states which third-party-countries which non- member states are invited to undertake as well? By writing a resolution which rather calls upon individual countries to take action together? By calling upon international organisations which include more than the EU's member states?

Secondly, the European Youth Parliament is a simulation. By submitting a resolution, you and your committee indeed make a political statement and politicians also have a look at our resolutions and may integrate them into their political work. But also be aware that one of the most important experiences we can make is experiencing debates in a parliamentary format and to debate European politics by which Switzerland is inevitably affected as well.
We as an organisation are politically neutral and seek to live politics, made up of young people

from all over Europe. The EYP is made up of over 37 countries – including several who are not members of the EU.

How should we prepare for the session?

You can find topic overviews for all committees at your session further below. Read the overview of your committee to get a first idea what your topic encompasses and where the potential conflicts are.

This is the starting point for your own research. Before the session, you should invest some time in finding the underlying documents, statistics and public opinions of your committee topic. Check the media whether there has been a recent debate related to your committee topic; check on statements on politicians in the area of your committee topics and have a look at expert statements relating to your question. Before arriving at the session, you should have at least answered the following questions for yourself:

- What is the core problem?
- Has someone already addressed this problem? How?
- Why is this issue relevant in Switzerland?
- Who are the players - who can change the current situation?
- What are the diverging opinions of the public concerning solutions to your committee topic?
- Which measures can be taken in order to tackle this problem?
- What is your personal opinion how the problem described in your committe topic should be addressed?

Also try to familiarise yourself with the general assembly procedure already in advance. Your chairperson will get in touch with you concerning your academic preparation and you can direct any questions you have at him or her.

COMMITTEE TOPICS

AFCO – Committee on Constitutional Affairs

From Brexit to Remainia: Following a wave of regional secessionist movements and the possible withdrawal of further Member States from the EU, how can pan-European cooperation be sustained while respecting nations' right to self-governance and independence?

CULT I – Committee on Culture and Education I

Considering the importance of an international lingua franca in a globalized world as well as the commitments made in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: How can European countries facilitate linguistic mobility while honouring the abovementioned treaty?

CULT II – Committee on Culture and Education II

"Sitting is the new smoking" – how can European countries react to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle of the European society and its health impact?

ENVI – Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Feeding more with less: With one billion people lacking access to adequate nutrition, could genetically modified (GMO) crops be the solution to increase agricultural productivity and sustainably feed a growing world population?

FEMM – Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

With only few women holding leadership positions in the private sector, the Swiss Federal Council has proposed a binding gender quota for boards of major stock-listed companies. Are gender quotas the way to enable women to reach management positions or should governments take other appropriate action to break the glass ceiling?

LIBE I – Committee on Civil Liberties I

Learning from our mistakes: considering Europe's history of integrating immigrants into society, which steps should Member States be taking to successfully integrate immigrants into society, both regarding logistics and tackling existing xenophobia amongst citizens?

LIBE II – Committee on Civil Liberties II

Freedom of expression or "political correctness": With the increasing use of xenophobic, racist and sexist content in political speech across the word, should stricter regulations on hate speech in Europe be implemented?

SEDE – Committee on Security and Defence

In light of the recent terror attacks in major cities and the changing security situation on the continent, should European States extend conscription to women or should women's military service remain on a strictly voluntary basis?

TOPIC OVERVIEWS

AFCO - Committee on Constitutional Affairs

From Brexit to Remainia: Following a wave of regional secessionist movements and the possible withdrawal of further Member States from the EU, how can pan-European cooperation be sustained while respecting nations' right to self-governance and independence?

By Aurel Gautschi (CH)

1. Introduction

It was in 1950 when we saw the first appearance of a European international governmental cooperation when the European Steel and Coal Community was established consisting of six countries. The goal of the Community was to never have Europe suffering again from a tragedy like World War II. Out of this community grew the European Union: a network of 28 European States which often faced internal disagreements.

Politically, the EU has recently been experiencing a rise of right-wing parties. With for example the far right "Front National" in France and the "Alternative für Deutschland" in Germany, possibly game-changing elections are coming up in 2017. Economically, the EU is still trying to maintain stability after the Eurozone crisis and Greek bailouts. With Britain voting to withdraw from the EU, we must analyse what the source of discontent amongst Europeans is, and how the EU can regain the trust of its citizens and rebuild unity amongst its members.

2. Key conflicts

23rd of June 2016 marked a historical date for both Britain and the EU. On the Brexit referendum, 52% of the electorate voted to leave the EU. For Britain this meant an immediate promise from the government to a government that is responsible to trigger Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which regulates the procedure to leave the EU. At the same time, maintaining bilateral relations with the EU and access to the European single market despite an exit from the Union became a top priority for Britain.

Meanwhile in the EU many far right parties take Brexit as an inspirational event and try to score higher election results by promising voters a similar referendum. For example Marine

Le Pen, the presidential candidate of the “Front National” in France, announced that she will hold an EU referendum if she gets elected. “We want a free France that can decide its own laws, its currency and guard its own borders”[1] she said in several speeches and also on Twitter.

The Brexit referendum can also be seen as a clash between the age groups. People over 65 constituted the vast majority of Leave votes, whereas 73% of people aged 18-24 voted to stay.

If we take a closer look at the Leave Campaign lead by Boris Johnson we saw the following points as main arguments for leaving the EU:

- “Uncontrolled” mass immigration both from within the EU and outside of it
- High financial losses by contributions that had to be made to the EU Budget
- Reduced sovereignty of their own federal courts as EU members are legally bound to the verdicts of the European court of justice and the European Court of Human Rights
- Reduced sovereignty of the British parliament and law as EU members have to prioritise EU law over their own
- Calling the EU a “bureaucratic monster”

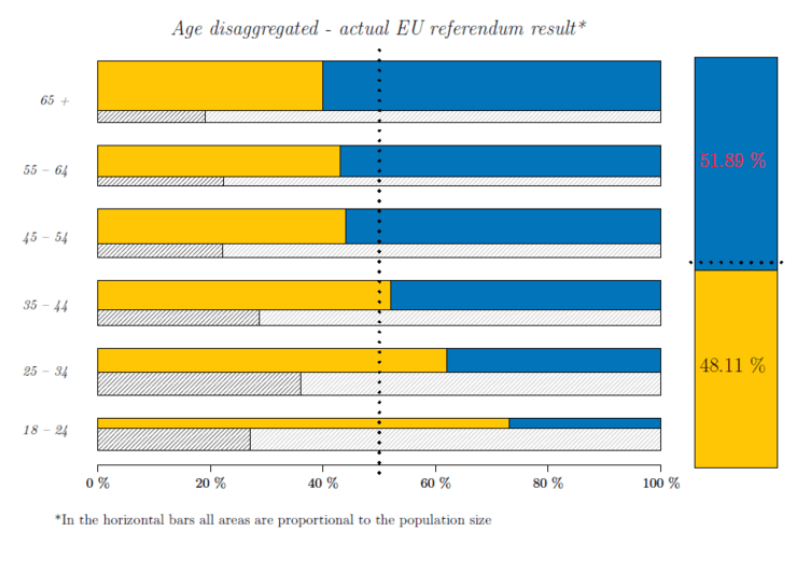
International far right movements raise the same arguments and likewise to the Brexit movement they mainly mobilise older generations to vote for them[2]. Additionally we see in the Brexit referendum that the voter turnout by age groups is really worrying with turnouts of 36 % among 18-24 year olds and 83% among over 65 year olds[3].

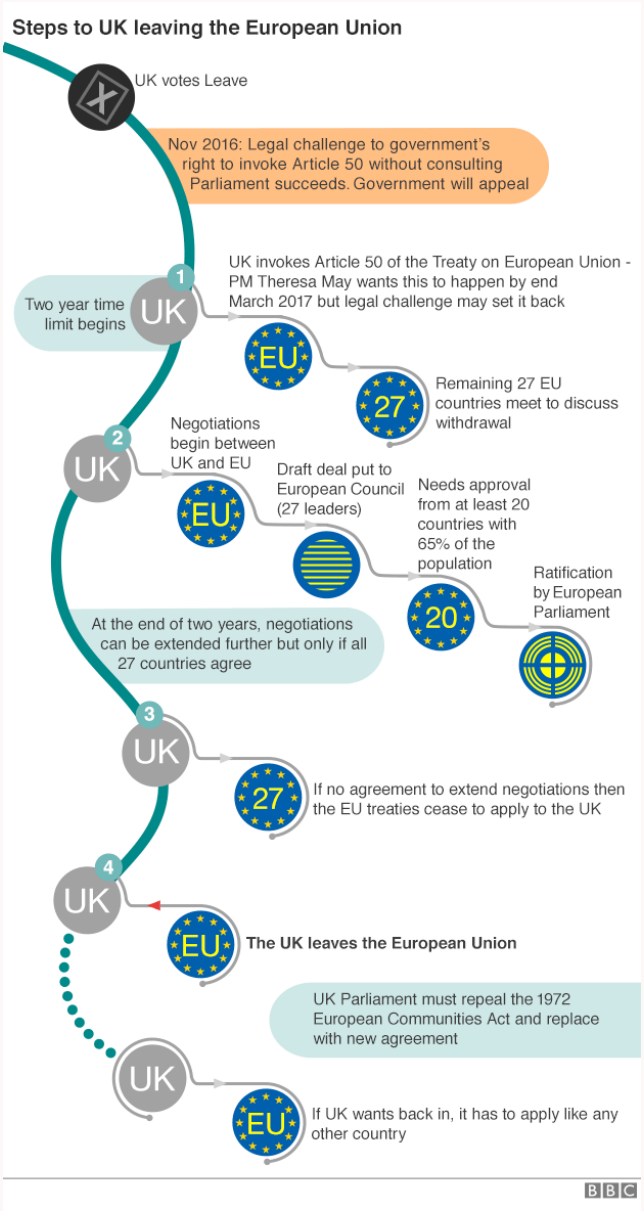
So how should the EU act and react in these debates and to these arguments? If the EU starts a campaign to promote itself there are most probably going to be calls that the EU tries to undermine the country’s sovereignty and for this reason it is difficult for EU institutions to directly take part in these debates. Additionally the EU cannot give special treatment for every country that threatens to leave the EU because that would violate the principle of equality amongst the Member States of the EU.

1 Twitter Account of Marine LePen, https://twitter.com/MLP_officiel/status/777503897564880896

2 Telegraph, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11696466/Call-me-Madame-Frexit-Front-National-leader-Marine-le-Pen-says.html

3 The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/28/young-people-bad-voting-millennials-eu-vote-politics


Age disaggregated - actual EU referendum result*
65 +
55 – 64
45 – 54
35 – 44
25 – 34
18 – 24
0 %
20 %
40 %
60 %
80 %
100 %
51.89 %
48.11 %
*In the horizontal bars all areas are proportional to the population size


Steps to UK leaving the European Union
UK votes Leave
Nov 2016: Legal challenge to government's right to invoke Article 50 without consulting Parliament succeeds. Government will appeal
1
Two year time limit begins
UK
UK invokes Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union - PM Theresa May wants this to happen by end March 2017 but legal challenge may set it back
EU
27
Remaining 27 EU countries meet to discuss withdrawal
2
UK
Negotiations begin between UK and EU
EU
Draft deal put to European Council (27 leaders)
Needs approval from at least 20 countries with 65% of the population
20
Ratification by European Parliament
At the end of two years, negotiations can be extended further but only if all 27 countries agree
3
UK
27
If no agreement to extend negotiations then the EU treaties cease to apply to the UK
4
UK
EU
The UK leaves the European Union
UK Parliament must repeal the 1972 European Communities Act and replace with new agreement
UK
EU
If UK wants back in, it has to apply like any other country
BBC

3. Measures in place

When it comes to a debate about leaving the EU or remaining, it is important to take a look at the competences of the EU, the shared competences and the ones that the EU only has a supporting competence on in such a case (see in the Chapter about the EU in the beginning of the Academic preparation kit). The EU has no actual competence when it comes to the referendum itself. But as we saw it in the Brexit campaign, the EU negotiated with then acting Prime Minister of the UK David Cameron before the referendum was even called out in order to present a acceptable deal to the voting populous and therefore trying to convince them to stay in the EU. The competence of the EU really starts as the referendum is passed and the acting responsible government starts its work. The government has to trigger Article 50[4] of the Lisbon Treaty. The triggering of the Article kicks off the process that is described in the visual "Steps to UK leaving the EU" which can be adapted for every Member State expressing the wish to leave the EU.

4. Key actors

The only one with an authority to decide whether or not a state will leave the Union, is no other than the **Member State itself**. This choice is to be made by the State and its people, under national sovereignty and the right to govern itself. A Member State can decide to leave the EU, in most cases that would be done by an EU membership referendum and thereby be approved by the public. At the same time, national parliaments may also have a decisive role in this issue, alongside national governments, so for example ruled the British Supreme Court that the cabinet of Theresa May must have a parliamentary decision in order to be able to trigger Article 50.

A Member State that wishes to leave the EU must notify the **European Council**. The European Council then agrees on guidelines for the negotiation of a withdrawal agreement. The withdrawal deal must also be approved by the European Parliament. At this stage, the leaving State is not allowed to vote. The **European Commission** is also a major "player" in the issue; as the executive institution of the EU, the Commission is the "face" of the Union for most citizens. The Commission can therefore, upon identifying the reasons the people's dissatisfaction with the EU, provide strategic guidance and work towards restoring people's trust.

4 Explanation of the procedure foreseen in Article 50, Telegraph, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/0/what-is-article-50-the-only-explanation-you-need-to-read/

In order to fully understand the topic and how the EU should act against this rise of withdrawal tendencies of its Member States, one must consider the fact that there are political parties in many Member States, whose main political agenda is exiting the Union. These parties influence public opinion towards the disadvantages of their country's EU membership. At the same time, governing parties in Member States have openly supported the European Union and warned against their country's withdrawal. In this mudslinging especially the far right side often make use of "alternative facts" to justify their position and just make politics by headlines of sensationalist newspapers.

5. Key questions

- With a rise of national parties with Eurosceptic or even nationalist views, how should the EU respond to calls for membership referenda in the Member States?
- How can the EU regain people's trust in its values and prevent multiple Member State withdrawals, whilst respecting the right of sovereign states and people to decide on their country's membership?
- Should the EU push for a "remain" agenda and how? What are the roots of public disenchantment with the EU and how can the Union deal with them?
- How should the EU react to the claims made by the leave campaigns as listed in Key Conflicts?

CULT I - Committee on Culture and Education I

Considering the importance of an international lingua franca in a globalized world as well as the commitments made in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages: How can European countries facilitate linguistic mobility while honouring the abovementioned treaty?

By Bethany Appleton (UK)

1. Introduction

Language is an essential part of how we express ourselves, how we form relationships with others and how we define our cultural identity. With some 125 languages spoken across the continent by native Europeans and established immigrant communities, it is vital to preserve this huge linguistic diversity and everything each language represents, if we are to aspire to an open and inclusive Europe. However, in an increasingly globalised world,lingua francas – common languages spoken by a broad cross-section of people, regardless of their mother tongue – have become practical and useful in many aspects of daily life and international relations. For example, although 24 languages are recognised across its 28 Member States, the European Union (EU) operates officially in only two: English and French.[1]

The consequence of this is that the usage of many of Europe's rarer languages is dwindling. A 1996 Euromosaic study concluded that of the 48 recognised minority languages in Europe, 12 were classed as endangered, and a shocking 23 were identified as having little to no chance of survival.[2] Aware of the dangers to such languages, in 1992, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was drawn up in an attempt to preserve less spoken European languages and the cultural inheritance that accompanies them. Since then the treaty has been signed by 33 countries, 25 of which have ratified it, and it remains the single biggest piece of legislation guiding the policy of Europe and its constituent Member States on this issue.

The marginalisation of these languages, and their absence from public life has an import-

1 European Commissaion. (2016). Official Languages of the EU. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/official-languages-eu-0_en.

2 Education Training Youth. (1996). Euromosaic. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Retrieved from http://www.lavplu.eu/central/bibliografie/euromosaic1.pdf.

ant social dimension too. It cannot be ignored that a disproportionate amount of those affected by linguistic exclusion are from groups that are potentially socially disadvantaged anyway, for example rural, immigrant or indigenous groups. Over half of EU citizens are already bilingual,[3] painting a clear picture of the potential for new integration and cross-border exchange that could exist in Europe, with the cultural legacy of minority languages intact, and existing in tandem with the practicalities offered by lingua francas.

2. Key conflicts

Lingua francas enable many personal and political processes to happen more smoothly, and for divides to be more easily bridged. Enormous amounts of international co-operation happen more efficiently because shared languages make communication quick and easy. However, in allowing lingua francas to dominate popular discourse, there is a risk of letting regional and minority languages slip out of usage. Languages specific to certain cultural groups that have been in use for centuries are at risk of dying out, with the minority language often not being passed on to the younger generation, who are more interested in using a more widely spoken lingua franca.

In some regions, minority languages can become very politicised, for instance in communities where there has been a lot of immigration, or where tensions between different cultural groups already exist. Where immigration has come from outside Europe, the problem is even more fraught, because the aforementioned charter does not cover languages spoken by immigrant minorities, placing them at a further disadvantage. Members States must therefore legislate carefully, promoting minority languages alongside a wider focus on cultural exchange and appreciation to achieve true integration. An example of this would be in Slovakia, where a controversial law has been in effect for some years, enforcing the precedence of Slovak above any other language despite there being a high proportion of ethnic Hungarians in the country. Certain Member States have also made good progress implementing the guidelines from the treaty into some aspects of public life, but struggled with others: last year, Spain was issued six recommendations by the Council of Europe, stemming from the Charter, as it was felt that the minority languages of Galician and Basque were still not being represented in the media, in the health and social care sector and in

3 Alberto Nardelli. (2014). Most Europeans can speak multiple languages. UK and Ireland not so much. The Guardian. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/sep/26/europeans-multiple-languages-uk-ireland.

the judiciary,[4] although a trilingual system of education was operating well in some regions.

Finally, it will be important to remember in finding solutions to these problems that individual Member States are the ones that have complete control over policy on minority languages; the EU is able to act as a guiding force but not to institute legislation. Measures such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities offer such guidance but cannot be legally imposed; states must choose to participate and honour their terms. It is worth noting that many efforts put in place by the EU came into force around twenty years ago; the world we live in now is a very different one and might require new ideas and new perspectives to carry on the intentions of the original treaty. The usefulness of existing measures is also difficult to track where information is often outdated and budgets tight. The European Commission stopped supporting the European Bureau for Lesser-Known Languages, an NGO which worked on initiatives promoting minority languages, in 2010, due to funding constraints.

3. Measures in place

Articles 21 and 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union enshrine the obligation to protect minority groups from discrimination and to 'respect all cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.'[5] In an effort to implement this as a practical reality, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was drawn up by the Council of Europe in 1992 with the aim of preserving less spoken European languages and the cultural inheritance that accompanies them.[6] It entered into force in March 1998. Eight fundamental principles are applied to all languages, including respect for the geographical area of each minority language, the promotion of such languages in a public – not just a private – setting, the provision for teaching of these languages at all stages, and the prohibition of any kind of discrimination or exclusion based on language. Each state must then commit to at least thirty-five of sixty-eight concrete actions to make this happen in their respective states, over a range of areas of public life, from education, to the media, to the judicial sys-

4 Council of Europe. (2016). Spain: Regional and minority language users face 'significant problems'. Retrieved from http://www.humanrightseurope.org/2016/01/spain-regional-and-minority-language-users-face-significant-problems/.

5 European Union. (2012). Directive 2012/C 326/02 of 26.10.2012 'Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.'
Retrieved from http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT.

6 Council of Europe. (1992). ETS No. 148 'European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages'. Retrieved from http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/148.

tem. To date, the treaty has been signed by 33 countries, 25 of which have ratified it.

Although not focussed entirely on minority languages, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities[7], which came into force in 1998 and has currently been ratified by 39 Member States, certainly deals with this aspect, amongst others, of what it means to live as a minority in a European country. It establishes people's right to access their own language throughout the spheres of public and private life.

4. Key actors

One of the key aspects of this topic is that every **Member State** has complete control over how they deal with the problem. **The EU** can outline the measures they deem effective, can offer advice and support, but the power lies in the hands of each individual state to put these measures into motion.

The fact nevertheless remains that the government of a country has a responsibility to uphold the interests of **minority language speakers** within their countries who deserve respect for their language and freedom from discrimination or exclusion on the basis of it. This is especially crucial because of how membership of a minority language group can sometimes intersect with other social disadvantages.

5. Key questions

- How desirable is the use of lingua francas and how compatible is the use of these with the protection of minority languages?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure the survival of minority languages?
- How can we combat exclusion or marginalisation based on native language?
- Accepting that Member States have complete competence over their approach to this problem, how can we ensure that any measures put forward to preserve minority languages will be adopted?
- How can more countries be encouraged to sign or ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages?

7 Council of Europe Committee for the Protection of National Minorities. (1995). H(95)10 'Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and Explanatory Report'. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016800c10cf

CULT II - Committee on Culture and Education II

"Sitting is the new smoking" – how can European countries react to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle of the European society and its health impact?

By Elise Buis (FR)

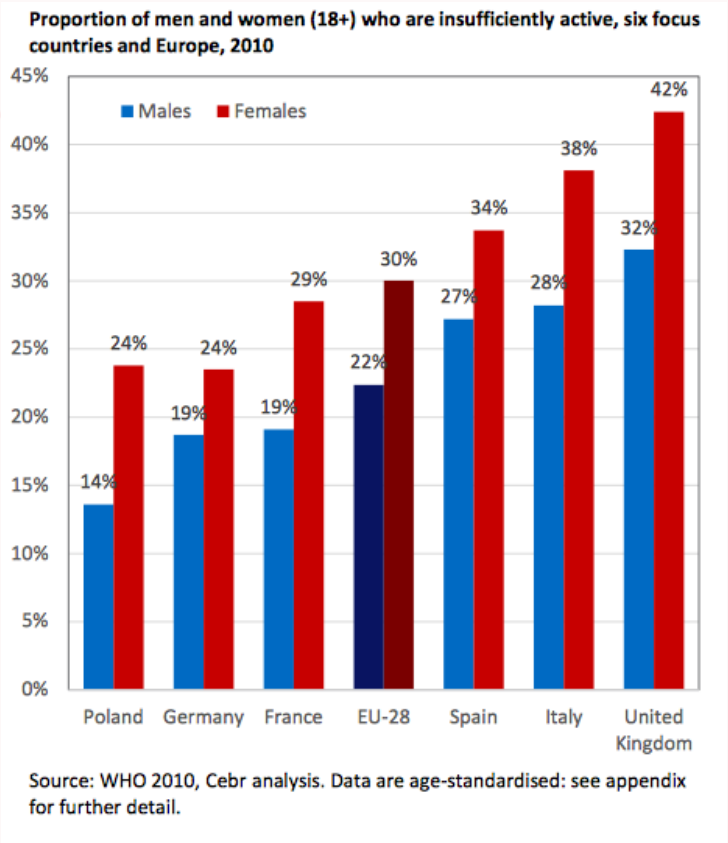
1. Introduction

Physical activity is a fundamental means of maintaining physical as well as mental health. For too many people, however, it has been removed from everyday life, with dramatic effects for health and well-being. The **World Health Organisation** (WHO) estimated nearly 600,000 deaths per year due to physical inactivity in Europe[1]. Additionally, world-wide, physical inactivity could be among the ten leading causes of death and disability. More specifically, physical inactivity, also known as the **sedentary lifestyle**, has many impacts on our health: cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, some forms of cancer, obesity and psychological disorders may arise from this behaviour. Moreover, physical inactivity poses high costs to the **European Union**[2] (EU) in relation to treatment of diseases or mental disorders. Physical activity of the average individual has reduced over the last few decades for example due to **technological and engineering progress,** which has reduced the physical labour input necessary to accomplish all kinds of tasks both at work and at home. Additionally, in some cases **the environment** is not really suitable for physical activity. For instance, air pollution leads to respiratory malfunctions and lung problems. This often limits individuals' engagement in physical activity. Moreover, some areas do not have enough facilities for children to be physically active. A few studies showed that 26% of children are more likely to be active five times per week than those in areas without facilities[3]. Overall, certain community designs have strong potential to contribute to increased physical activity: for example people living in communities characterised by mixed land use (e.g., with stores in walking distance of homes), well-connected street networks and high residential density are more active than those who live in communities designed for automobile dependence.

1 Physical inactivity is estimated to cause 600 000 deaths per year in the Region (5–10% of total mortality, depending on countries) and leads to a loss of 5.3 million years aof healthy life due to premature mortality and disability per year.

2 80.4 billion of euros per year to the EU-28 through four major non-communicable diseases (coronary heart disease, type II diabetes, colorectal and breast cancer), and through the indirect costs of inactivity-related mood and anxiety disorders. This is equivalent to 6.2% of all European health spending according to the Center of Economic and Business Research.

3 According to the Oxford English Dictionary, facilities are physical means or equipment required for doing something or the service provided by this. Here, we talk about sport halls, playground, etc.



2. Key conflicts

This is a complicated issue affected by conflicting interests and priorities of different actors. Promoting physical activity and a healthy living standard is not always a priority for the governments in Europe. Therefore the first question we may ask ourselves is: should we prioritise physical activity and the well-being of the European population or should we prioritise technological productivity and progress? Indeed, as mentioned shortly in the introduction, **technological and engineering progress** might be one of the causes of physical inactivity. In many cases **machines** have replaced most of **human labour**. For instance, in agriculture, people do not engage in physical labour but rather tractors or other machines replace the human process. **Progress** has removed many positions in the **primary sector**, as well as in the **secondary sector** of the economy. Nowadays, people work more often in offices and sit all day long. As it is mentioned in our topic “Sitting is the new smoking”, and many recent medical studies showed that sitting all day increases the **risk** of developing several

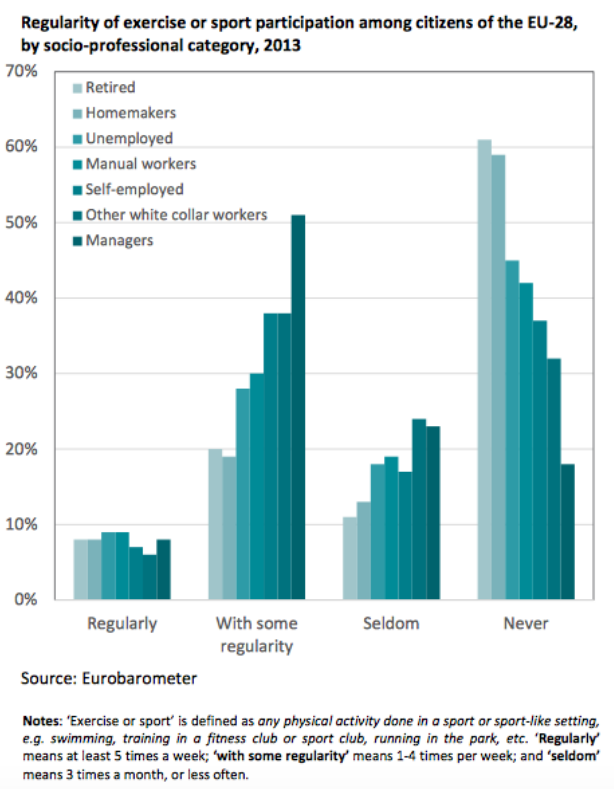
serious **illnesses** like various types of cancer, heart disease and type 2 diabetes[4]. Furthermore lack of physical activity can lead to problems such as anger disorders, anxiety and panic attacks and depression. Physical activity has been proven to reduce stress, improve self confidence, sharpen the memory and prevent cognitive decline and diseases such as Alzheimer's. Beyond the workplace, for instance the popularity of using cars for all transport lowers the levels of physical activity in individuals' personal lives. People choose to not walk as much as before, because taking the car is easier, faster and more practical. How can technological progress be fostered while making sure this does not lead to further reduced physical activity in citizen's personal and professional lives?

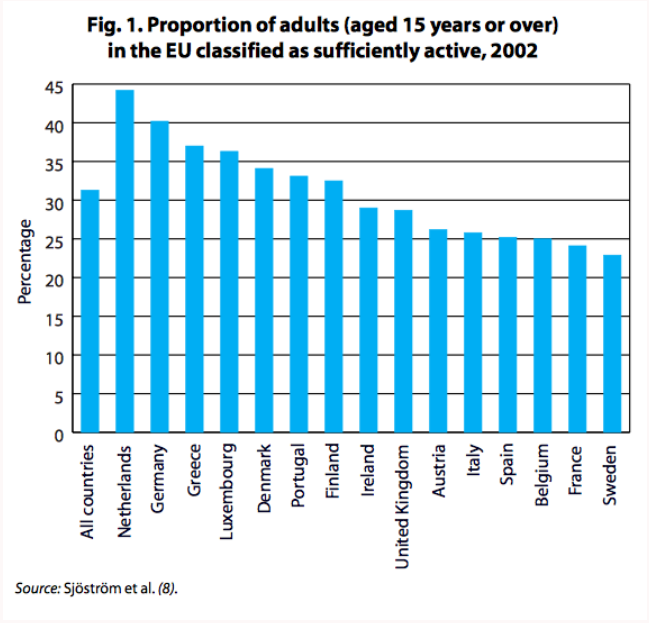
The second conflict we may talk about is: how can we encourage people from different social backgrounds to engage in physical activity throughout their lives? It is in fact recommended to be **physically active every day.** The recommended times vary according to the age of the person[5], but it is nonetheless recommended that every individual should engage in adequate levels of physical activity throughout their lives. However there is a disparity between individuals' access to opportunities for physical activity, which correlates highly with **socioeconomic status (SES)**. It has been shown that people with low income are less likely to have access to physical activity. Furthermore, people with a higher education level tend to have a higher income and can therefore take the opportunity to spend a part of their income on physical activity. So, what can we do to ensure European people from all backgrounds receive the same opportunities to engage in physical activity?

Furthermore, encouraging physical activity among all **age classes** has proven to be a challenge. Many studies show that teenagers are not physically active due to high use of technology in the form of watching television, playing video games and using computers, smartphones and other technological devices. Children and teenagers used to be physically active at school or after school, but recently their physically active **leisure-time pursuits** have been increasingly replaced by **sedentary** ones such as surfing the web or watching countless hours of television. Furthermore, younger generations are often influenced by the behaviour of their parents and therefore most likely not be physically active enough if they have parents who do not exercise. This means that adult lifestyles will contribute to children and teenagers' health. How can we promote a healthy life for all age classes?

4 Type 2 diabetes is a metabolic disorder where high levels of blood sugar occur. Type 2 diabetes is a result of both genetics and lifestyle. People who have relatives with type 2 diabetes are at an increased risk. They may develop diabetes if they have other risk factors in their lifestyle, for example obesity or low amount of exercise.

5 According to the WHO, at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer. Children and young people should achieve a total of at least 60 minutes of at least moderate intensity physical activity each day.





3. Measures in place

As physical inactivity is a worldwide issue, the EU and the Member States have been working collaboratively on this problem for years. Concerning issues related to health, the institutions of the European Union only have **supporting competence**[6]. This means the EU can **support** its Member States in actions they want to carry out, but they do not have any exclusive competence. Over the years, the **European Commission** (EC) has supported its **Member States** in various projects in order to promote healthy lifestyles. For example, the **EU Work Plan for Sport 2014-2017** includes expert recommendations to promote physical education in schools. The **Erasmus+ Programme** supports projects promoting physical activity and the **European Week of Sport**, in September 2015, helped raise awareness among citizens on the importance of exercise in preventing childhood obesity. The EC also supports the Member States in implementing the **2014 Action Plan on Childhood Obesity**.

Additionally, many European countries have tried to tackle this issue on a national level. In **Switzerland**, a new concept for a national sport policy was prepared in 2000. When the Federal Government accepted the concept at the end of 2000, it defined health as the first

6 "*The Union can carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement Member States' actions*"

priority of the national sports policy in Switzerland and **"more physically active people" as its main objective**. In **Sweden**, a county implemented a **comprehensive approach**: in 2005, all primary care units took part in **prescribing physical activity** while collaborating with local partners. The **Czech Republic** created an event called **International Walk to School**. This event is an annual month-long event that gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders an opportunity to take part in a global event as they celebrate the **benefits of walking**. The County of Nordland in **Norway** started a **comprehensive school programme** in 2004 to provide pupils in all its primary schools with at least **60 minutes of physical activity** every school day. Tackling physical inactivity and obesity is an important goal of the EU and its Member States.

4. Key actors

As mentioned beforehand, health is a supporting competence of the EU. However, the **EC** or more precisely the **Directorate General for Health and Food Safety** (DG for Health and Food Safety) supports the actions of the Member States concerning this issue. Its goal is to raise awareness among the European people to tackle this problem and improve the population's health. Since the DG for Health and Food Safety can only support the Member States, the **national ministries of health** in every **European country** are the main actors to promote a better lifestyle and physical activity. These are the actors who can develop policies concerning health and execute them. Moreover, the **World Health Organisation** is an organisation of the **United Nations** that is concerned with **international public health**. The WHO has a physical activity strategy for 2016 until 2025[7]. This contains several goals such as reducing inequities within the access to physical activity, promoting a life-course approach and empowering people and communities through a health-enhancing environment. The WHO is also responsible for the **World Health Report** (WHR). The main purpose of the WHR is to provide policymakers, donor agencies, international organisations and others with the information they need to help them make appropriate health policy and funding decisions. The World Health Organisation is therefore really important for other actors, e.g. the national ministries for health. Furthermore, NGOs such as the International Union For Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) have an important impact on promoting a healthy lifestyle. For instance, the IUHPE aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the people through education, community action and the development of healthy public policy.

7 http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/282961/65wd09e_PhysicalActivityStrategy_150474.pdf

5. Key questions

- How can technological progress and physical activity be linked together?
- How can we implement physical activity in the work space and encourage it in leisure activities?
- How can access to physical activity be ensured for people from all socioeconomic backgrounds and age classes?
- How should the need for physical activity be taken into account in city planning and the construction of new environments?
- In what ways could Member States work together to improve the European sedentary lifestyle?

ENVI - Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Feeding more with less: With one billion people lacking access to adequate nutrition, could genetically modified (GMO) crops be the solution to increase agricultural productivity and sustainably feed a growing world population?

By Elliott Syrén (SE)

1. Introduction

Traditionally our food comes from different plants and animals that have been grown and bred by several generations before us. Over time, we have carefully selected crops and animals with the most desirable traits and characteristics and used them to breed the next generations of food and feed. Today, we have acquired the necessary knowledge and technology to be able to control the traits that an organism possesses by modifying their genetic make-up. We call organisms with human-made genetic alterations **"genetically modified organisms" (GMOs).**

There are currently approximately 60 different kinds of GMOs that are legal for commercial use within the EU. In order for a GMO to be allowed to be produced, it first has to pass through a rigorous safety assessment: part of a legal framework established by the EU to maintain a high level of food security and to ensure adequate protection of the environment as well as human and animal health. This framework strictly regulates the production of GM food and crops, GMO imports as well as the release of GMOs into the environment.

With a growing world population comes an increased demand of different foods and crop and some claim that GMOs are the solution, whilst others believe that the risks of GMOs overcome the rewards.

2. Key conflicts

Genetically modifying organisms has shown to improve efficiency in the production of various types of foods by for example increasing cold tolerance or adding resistance against different kinds of pesticides. It can even be used to increase or add vitamins to crops, as

in the example of **golden rice**[1]. However, there are also certain risks in using GMOs. One main risk related to the usage of GMOs is the fact that the desired trait added to the GM crop could be **transferred to regular wild crops through cross-pollination**, if the crops are closely related. If this were to happen, attributes added to different crops and plants could spread into wild life, which could have devastating effects. As a theoretical example: a plant which has been modified to increase insect resistance could through cross-pollination transfer its new trait to closely related wild plants that could result in the non-GMO counterpart of the plant being outcompeted by the GMO version, due to its ability to more easily survive against insects. That would consequently result in the reduction of insects in the area where the GMO trait has spread, since the insects no longer have as many plants to eat. The reduction of insects would then later on lead to a lack of food for the local birds and so forth, resulting in severe damage to the ecosystem of the area at hand. A more present example could be made regarding herbicide resistance added to crops to enable the use of herbicides to keep unwanted invasive plants away from the soil without killing the crops. However, it has been noted by some farmers that **herbicide resistance has been transferred** from the GMOs to the invasive plants, making cultivation even harder. This is something that has already occurred, especially within the US where legislation and regulation regarding GMOs is not as strict.

So-called **"Genetic Use Restriction Technology" (GURT)**, also known as "Terminator technology", has been developed as an attempt to prevent GMOs from spreading. What GURT does is genetically modify plants to make them produce sterile seeds. Although so called "Terminator seeds" are not yet being sold, a lot of research in the field has been done and many believe that they are due for commercialisation in the near future. Opponents of Terminator seeds are concerned that farmers, especially in poorer regions, would suffer because of the expense of having to buy new seeds after the corps have been harvested, considering the inability to grow saved seeds. Additionally, opponents also fear that the terminator trait could be passed on to non-GMO seeds, potentially resulting in all food seeds in the region becoming sterile. Supporters of the technology argue that utilizing GURTs would tackle the problematics of accidental cross-pollination between GMO and non-GMO plants, since the offspring would yield seeds that are sterile after the first generation, which would in turn prevent genetic modifications from spreading.

1 Golden rice is genetically modified to contain beta-Carotene which when consumed transforms into v itamin-A.

3. Measures in place

GMOs are currently allowed within the EU, but are considered highly regulated compared to for example the US. It is up to each and every Member State if they want to allow cultivation of GM crops or not, and ever since 2015 Member States are allowed to decide if they want to restrict or prohibit the use of authorised GMOs themselves, meaning that a country could for example not only restrict the production, but also the sale of GMOs within their territory, if they can justify why.

In order to be allowed to cultivate or use GMOs for food and feed you have to apply for allowance. There are two types of authorisations for validation of GMOs, one for cultivation and one for the usage of GMOs in food or feed. Both types of applications have to pass through the **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** which performs a risk assessment of the GMO at hand. The application has to include several supporting documents such as studies and analyses showing that the GMO is not in any way harmful towards humans, animals or the environment. The EFSA have up to six months to draft their opinion. After the EFSA has completed their risk assessment and presented their opinion the EU Commission have three months to draft a decision. If the Commission's decision differ from EFSA's opinion, a written justification is required. All authorisations are valid for ten years and all authorised GM foods are entered into a public register.

Any product that contains **more than 0,9 % of any kind of GMO** have to be labeled, in order to make traceability of GMOs in food and feed easier and more accessible. However, there's no requirement to do so if you're for example selling meat from animals that have fed on GMO feed.

Currently, it is possible to hold a **patent on a genetically modified organism**. This is something quite controversial, considering that some claim that this is a way of technically holding a patent over a form of life. This is also something that has made the development of some GMOs harder. For example, after the discovery and production of golden rice, the main scientist behind genetic modification wanted to use his product in order to help Asian countries in their fight against vitamin-A deficiency amongst their citizens by introducing the golden rice at the Asian market. However, after the GMO had already been developed, it was revealed that during the research and development of the product, methods and genes that had been patented had been used, and the ones holding the patents wanted compensation for the usage of their patents, which stagnated the launch of the golden rice.

4. Key actors

The EU, specifically **the EU Commission** and **EFSA,** play a main role in terms of the present and the future of GMOs within the union. Ultimately, it is up to them to decide whether or not a certain GMO is allowed to be cultivated and/or used in food and feed.

Major biotechnology companies are usually responsible for researching and developing different GMOs, which oftentimes is quite expensive. Due to their expenses, they will try to make a decent profit off of their GMOs in order to maintain a reasonable economic condition. Different companies will have different ambitions, for example the creators of the golden rice did it primarily to help the poorer regions in Asia since there is often a lack of vitamin-A in their diets, while other companies' main focus lies in economic profit.

Member States are ultimately the ones who decide if a GMO will be grown and used within their own territory.. Their main interest is to ensure that GMOs do not harm their citizens health or endanger their agriculture through for example cross-pollination.

Farmers, regardless of if they are themselves are using GMOs or not, are affected by EU legislation on GMOs. If you are a farmer that is not using GMOs, you still run the potential risk to have your crops affected by GMOs if regulation, planning and legislation is done poorly. You also have to compete against crops that might have a higher efficiency when it comes to cultivation.

5. Key questions

- Should the EU work towards making the process of introducing a GMO on to the European market easier?
- Companies within the GMO industry have a lot of influence over agriculture in general by for example holding patents - is the power distribution between biotechnology companies and farmers appropriate at the moment?
- Should national governments have a say over what GMOs are allowed to be sold in their countries, or is it endangering to the European single market?
- Could GURT be a reasonable solution to the problematics of cross pollination, or should the EU look to find other solutions?

FEMM - Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

With only few women holding leadership positions in the private sector, the Swiss Federal Council has proposed a binding gender quota for boards of major stock-listed companies. Are gender quotas the way to enable women to reach management positions or should governments take other appropriate action to break the glass ceiling?

By Judit Lladós (ES)

1. Introduction

Since the 19th Century, with the kickoff of the industrialisation process and more recently the advent of World War II, women have become a key actor in the labour market. In spite of this fact, their salaries have never reached parity with those of men.

In 1957, with the Treaty of Rome, the European Union started working to achieve *equal pay for equal work*. This fundamental principle has been enhanced by numerous directives and posterior treaties. A clear example of this can be found in the Article 14 of the *European Convention on Human Rights*, which forbids any kind of discrimination including discrimination based upon gender. This treaty has been ratified by forty-seven European countries, including Switzerland.

Given the small percentage of women occupying directive seats in major stock-listed companies, initiatives such as positive discrimination (also known as quota system[1]) have been applied to address this gender imbalance and finally break the glass ceiling. Therefore, the problem concerns not only the matter of equal pay, but also the matter of fair opportunities to access leadership positions in the boards of companies.

Countries such as Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain have already implemented this type of quota in their legislation. The effects that they have had vary widely, as in some States quotas have been highly efficient and well-received by the CEOs of the major companies, and in others quotas have not proven useful at all.[2]

1 Quota system: in the employment context it is a hiring system that gives preference to protected group members, such as women. Quota systems are designed to correct adverse impact, resulting from employment practices that appear neutral but have a discriminatory effect on a protected group. Retrieved from: https://definitions.uslegal.com/q/quota-system/

2 Wiersema, M. and Mors, M.L. (November 14th 2016). What Board Directors Really Think of Gender Quotas (Refer to the 5th paragraph of the article). Published by Harvard Business Review: https://hbr.org/2016/11/what-board-directors-really-think-of-gender-quotas

2. Key conflicts

Studies show that in the past years more women than men have graduated from higher education[3]. This means that more qualified women have entered the working market, yet the gender pay gap still has not closed.

The advantage that women seem to hold in education is clearly not being transferred to the workplace. Factors such as motherhood and the problems surrounding maternal leave as well as the evident vestiges of a traditionally sexist society are some of the reasons why gender discrimination is still a reality in major companies.

As a result of such clear labor discrepancies between men and woman, public institutions like the European Council[4] have approved a quota system with the goal of facilitating a better gender balance on the corporate boards of enterprises. Other institutions such as the Swiss Federal Council are on their way to accomplishing the same target.

However, many parties are against this quota system, as they consider "positive discrimination"[5] to be discriminatory against men. Some critics claim that if these quotas come into action highly qualified men may have less of a chance to access these positions than their female co-workers. Some of the most critical voices even say that this system is, in a way, forcing companies to hire less-qualified candidates just because of their sex.

3. Measures in place

In July 2006, the European Parliament passed a Directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation. Later on, in 2014 the European Commission, which is the body in charge of monitoring the correct application and enforcement of the existing EU law on equal pay, has founded a department named *"Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency"* with the

3 Nolan Feeney (October 7th, 2015), Women Are Now More Likely to Have College Degree Than Men, Published by the Time US magazine: http://time.com/4064665/women-college-degree/

4 European Council (November 24th, 2016), Gender balance in decision-making positions. Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/index_en.htm

5 Positive discrimination: Giving advantage to minority groups which are treated unfairly because of their gender, race, religion or sexual orientation by improving their educational and job opportunities.
Diane Gilhooley (Debember 29th 2008). The positive discrimination and positive action, published by The Times Higer Education: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/positive-discrimination-and-positive-action/404799.article

objective of assisting Member States and other stakeholders in finding the right approaches to tackling pay discrimination and the persisting gender pay gap.[6]

Some Member States, such as Belgium have already assessed this issue through their legislation. In July 2011 the Belgian government incorporated a mandatory quota system for large companies in order to abolish the glass ceiling in major enterprises, which establishes that at least one third of the board members in publicly listed companies must be of a different sex than the other board members. If the quota is not fulfilled, the salaries of the board members will be suspended until the board reaches the legally established quota.[7]

Switzerland has also taken steps forward in this matter through passing the Federal Act on Gender Equality[8]. This regulation grants financial aid to public or private institutions that conduct programmes for the promotion of gender equality in the workplace. Furthermore, the Swiss cabinet has firmly insisted on imposing gender quotas of 30% on the boards of stock-listed companies.

4. Key actors

The European Commission: with a specific department of experts devoted to the studies of gender equality in the EU, the European Commission strives for achieving a balance in aspects such as equal work and equal pay for both men and women.
The Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality (FOGE): is an area of the Federal Department of Home Affairs that promotes the equality of women and men in all areas of life and is committed to eliminating any form of direct or indirect discrimination. It aims to raise awareness of the need for structural changes, seeking cooperation with other Federal Offices, parliamentarians, men's and women's organizations, as well as with social partners and businesses.

Major-stocked listed companies: are companies whose shares (*dividends*) can be bought and sold in the Stock Exchange (also known as *bourse*).
The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): autonomous body of the European

6 European Commission (November 24th 2016), What is the EU doing?, Retrieved from: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-pay-gap/eu-action/index_en.htm

7 Myriam Van Varenbergh (May 10th 2012), Exchange of good practice on gender equality. Published by the European Commission department of Justice: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/exchange_of_good_practice_no/be_comments_paper_no_2012_en.pdf

8 Swiss Federal Council, Act 151.1 of 24 March 1995 (Status as of 1 January 2017). "Federal Act on Gender Equality" (GEA). https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/19950082/201701010000/151.1.pdf

Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality. Their mission is to raise awareness on gender equality issues.

European Women's Lobby (EWL): europe's largest umbrella organisation of women's associations. They strongly support gender quotas and any kind of government incentives and legislation to achieve gender balance. They represent a large stake in gender equality measures taken in the EU.

5. Key questions

- Why should gender equality be considered an important right worth protecting?
- Are gender quotas a legitimate way to end gender discrimination in the workplace?
- What other initiatives could be fostered by the European Council or the Swiss Federal Council in order to ensure an economic and labour gender balance?
- Should the EU take direct action or should the Member States tackle the matter on a national level?
- Should this measures be mandatory for all major-stocked companies or just optional?

LIBE I - Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs I

Learning from our mistakes: considering Europe's history of integrating immigrants into society, which steps should Member States be taking to successfully integrate immigrants into society, both regarding logistics and tackling existing xenophobia amongst citizens?

By Hannes Ahlvin (SE)

1. Introduction

The EU has always had a steady stream of immigrants and emigrants flowing into, out of, and within the union. Between 2000 and 2012, the immigrant communities within the EU grew by 30%, with one of ten people living in the EU being foreign-born.[1] More-so than just for immigrants, the EU is also a refuge for asylum-seekers. Following international turmoil in 2015, the EU experienced a surge of both migrants and refugees seeking asylum – now colloquially known as the European migration crisis. In 2015 alone, more than 1.2 million first-time asylum seekers registered in the EU.[2] The EU and its Member States are now faced with the challenge of integrating these large quantities of immigrants and refugees.

There are many different ideas of what exactly integration means, as well as how one measures success. Common indicators are things such as learning the native language(s), naturalising (becoming a citizen), voting, adapting to the native culture and, most commonly, finding employment within the host country. Large differences exist between the extent to which immigrants are expected to remain attached to the culture of their country of origin once successfully integrated into the host country.

Between 2012 – 2013, 62% of immigrants were in employment, compared to 65% of the native-born population. The most important factor determining immigrants' success on the labour market is their education level and ability to speak the host country's language. However, an average of 30% of foreign-born third country national students across the EU lacked basic reading skills at 15 years of age. Although a difference between native-born and immigrant employment rates remains even after adjusting for education, the discrepan-

1 OECD/European Union (2015), Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Indicators-of-Immigrant-Integration-2015.pdf

2 Eurostat (2016), Asylum in the EU Member States: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/7203832/3-04032016-AP-EN.pdf/

cy decreases with time as immigrants become more familiar with their host country.[3] Many countries are further facing challenges with providing available lodging for immigrants and refugees alike, as many housing markets across the EU are highly saturated. An example of a saturated housing market is that of Stockholm, where the average queue time for a rental apartment is over nine years.[4] With limited options, refugees tend to be gathered in segregated communities, which hurts their ability to integrate.

Across the EU, concerns have been raised with respect to the benefits made available to migrants and refugees. Some believe that everyone living in a country are entitled to the same benefits, whereas others argue that some benefits should be linked to citizenship, or that immigrant benefits should be tied to responsibilities such as attending language classes or making steps towards naturalisation.

In order for immigrants to be able to integrate well into their host country, they need to be accepted by the native-born. The immigration of third country nationals evokes negative feelings in 50% of EU citizens, with only 34% of EU citizens seeing it as a positive.[5] Across the entirety of Europe, far-right parties with xenophobic policies have sprung up over the past decade, posing a serious challenge to the acceptance and integration of immigrants. One immigrant in seven felt that they were discriminated against on the grounds of their origin, however immigrants who have naturalised perceive less discrimination than those who are still third country nationals.[6]

2. Key conflicts

Meaning of integration: Integration does not have an agreed-upon definition, making it difficult to measure its success. Whether naturalisation is the ultimate goal of the integration process is a question of ongoing debate among specialists. Nevertheless, it is generally perceived as a sign of successful integration, particularly since many countries require applicants to take a number of tests relating to their language, values, and culture before granting nationality. Some believe that successful integration equates to assimilation, in that

3 OECD/European Union (2015), Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: http://www.oecd.org/els/migIndicators-of-Immigrant-Integration-2015.pdf

4 BBC (2016), The city with 20-year waiting lists for rental homes: http://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20160517-this-is-one-city-where-youll-never-find-a-home

5 DG COMM (2016), Standard Eurobarometer 85 Spring 2016: https://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/75908

6 OECD/European Union (2015), Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2015: http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/Indicators-of-Immigrant-Integration-2015.pdf

the immigrant should renounce their native culture and language and fully adopt that of the host country. Others argue that being foreign is not itself proof of failure to integrate any further than attachments to the country of origin means rejecting the host country. Common for most definitions is that employment is seen as an important indicator of integration.

Segregation: With housing being difficult to arrange in many placed, immigrants and refugees often find themselves in overcrowded neighbourhoods with others from their country of origin. These neighbourhoods form segregated communities, which prevents the immigrants from engaging with and integrating into the host country's mainstream society.

Cultural clashes: With people of different cultures being together, misunderstandings will occur and views will differ on sensitive subjects. Many have condemned several African and Middle Eastern cultures for being archaic and intolerant, particularly regarding women's rights. Balancing cultural clashes is difficult, and many leaders now seek less multiculturalism, in favour of cultural homogeneity. Cypriot interior minister Socrates Hasikos said that they should seek to primarily help Orthodox Christians, as they would be easier to integrate.[7]

Xenophobia and security concerns: With large numbers of immigrants and refugees arriving within a short time period, and several high profile terrorist attacks and crimes (often of sexual nature), security concerns are growing. As this fear of outsiders grows, so does populist far-right xenophobic parties such as Front National and Golden Dawn, who are gaining both national and international influence.

Education & language: A vital element of integration is language, which opens up a lot of opportunities on the labour market as well as enabling social interaction with natives. With immigrants lacking language skills, it is difficult to proceed with any other part of integration. Furthermore, many immigrants lack basic education, making them very unattractive on the European labour market; and many of those who do have an education find it difficult for employers and institutions to assess its value.

3. Measures in place

Directive 2013/33/EU establishes basic rules on the living conditions of asylum seekers within the EU, in order to prevent people from moving around because of variations in living conditions. It mandates that asylum seekers be able to access employment within nine

7 The Trumpet (2015), Europe's Immigration Crisis: A Clash of Civilizations: https://www.thetrumpet.com/article/13089.2

months of application for international protection and that those aged under 18 are granted education.[8] It has not been especially successful, with countries being unable to provide for the surge of refugees, and refugees still targeting specific destination countries with generous support systems.

The **European Qualifications Framework** helps in comparing national qualifications systems, frameworks and their levels to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. This has been successful in promoting the mobility and life-long learning of EU citizens, but does little to help third country nationals.

National recognition of foreign education differs between Member States. Most require documentation of the education and verifiability by the issuing institution. With many refugees fleeing unstable countries where verification becomes impossible, the systems set up are not working to recognise the education of refugees.

Education for Young Refugees (Bildung für junge Flüchtlinge) is an Austrian programme that focuses on ensuring that young asylum seekers are able to catch up on basic education in a setting that promotes autonomy and self-efficacy. Political education, anti-discrimination and anti-racism are brought up in all learning areas.[9]

4. Key actors

The **European Network Against Racism** is a network representing more than 600 non-governmental organisations in all Member States. They fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and seek to promote equality of treatment between EU citizens and third country nationals.[10]

The **Directorate-General of Migration and Home Affairs** is the body of the European Commission that is tasked with the creation of EU-wide guidelines on legal migration while bearing the interconnection between migration and integration in mind.[11]

Migrants is a broad term that can be split up into three primary groupings. **Refugees** are

8 Directive 2013/33/EU: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013L0033

9 Regina Rosc (2017), Sustainable adult education in relation to immigration and asylum: https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/blog/sustainable-adult-education-relation-immigration-and-asylum

10 Citizens for Europe (2017), ENAR: http://www.citizensforeurope.eu/organisation/enar

11 European Commission DG HOME (2017), Integration: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/integration/index_en.htm

fleeing their country of origin due to conflict or well-founded fear of prosecution. **Third country nationals** are immigrants that have voluntarily left their non-EU country of origin, generally seeking better economic or social conditions. **EU citizens** are immigrants originating from another Member State.

Far-right xenophobic parties are growing across the EU and they champion an agenda of fighting against immigration and refugees fleeing to Europe in order to preserve cultural homogeneity. They are primarily opposed to people from the Middle East or Africa. Many of these parties – in particular, the Greek Golden Dawn – have links to neo-nazi movements.

5. Key questions

- How is integration defined, and what are the goals Member States want to achieve? Is multiculturalism or cultural homogeneity the best path forward?
- What approach should the EU and its Member States have towards adult education and language courses for refugees and immigrants?
- What steps can the EU take to better validate non-European education?
- Which benefits and rights should be reserved for nationals, and which should be freely enjoyed by all?
- How can the EU work to counteract xenophobia – and should it?
- Should stringent tests for naturalisation be recommended for all Member States, or should the naturalisation process be made easier? Should it remain as is, diverse across the EU?
- How can the EU and its Member States work to alleviate saturated housing markets and distribute immigrant and refugee populations evenly to avoid segregated communities?

LIBE II - Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs II

Freedom of expression or "political correctness": With the increasing use of xenophobic, racist and sexist content in political speech across the world, should stricter regulations on hate speech in Europe be implemented?

By Erik Michalowski (CH)

1. Introduction

At an alarming pace, political polarization in Europe and in other Western States has led to a large gap between left and right wing ideology. This division of cultural and moral principles has made the already stormy political climate in Europe even more turbulent as it gives populism and other political movements the chance to exploit the fear and prejudice of the European public. Whether their rhetoric criticizes European open border policy or demonizes social groups based on gender, religion or even political affiliation these kinds of scapegoating practices do not adhere to European core values. Additionally, certain media outlets have contributed to a surge in paranoia as news reports lead increasingly to falsification or warping of facts. Furthermore, hate speech laws are being criticised by some media outlets and political parties in some Member States as being overly politically correct, and that other groups maintain that hate speech does not qualify as freedom of expression. Other groups are advocating tightening these laws in order to enforce a more stable political climate, claiming that the freedom of expression can not protect hate speech.

With public trust in the media shaken, political confidence at an all-time low[1] and an increase in racist, sexist and xenophobic rhetoric, it will be difficult to ensure safety and equal representation whilst considering individual rights. The EU will has tough time ahead, managing the equilibrium between its members' security and individual rights.

2. Key Conflicts

The key conflict in this case is the balance between the freedoms of the individual versus the protection of under-represented groups. One could argue that by protecting marginalized groups, one also protects their rights as individuals to freedom from social prejudice. The

1 The Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/16/britons-trust-in-government-media-business-falls-sharply

EU already has measures in place in order to prohibit hate speech - speech which incites violence or hatred against people based on gender, sexuality or ethnicity. These laws also prevent workplace discrimination, allowing greater equality of opportunity, a central principle of European identity. However, on the other end of the spectrum, tightening these laws can lead to further controversy. A recent example of a controversial legislation is the Bill C16, introduced in Canada. Bill C-16 which was originally aimed to protect the rights of Canadian Trans people has received criticism for limiting free speech, as it would make using pronouns that an individual does not identify with a legal offense. The opposition's main argument is that the law prescribes what kind of speech can be used rather than just forbidding hateful speech.[2]

Democratic rights are also at the forefront of this discussion. Recently, popularity surges of populist candidates have sparked their own conundrum. Anti-immigration and thus anti-EU stances have become commonplace in European politics, as these candidates aim to profit from low approval ratings of past pro-EU politicians. Another example of this can be seen in France. The Front National candidate Marie Le Pen, who has turned the once xenophobic fringe platform into an approachable faction, turning the once xenophobic fringe group into a commonly accessible platform, shifting the core constituencies to incorporate the views of Euro skeptics and worker unions. However, the party's xenophobic views on immigration have remained unchanged, and Le Pen herself has taken flack for her criticism of Islam following the Charlie Hebdo attack of 2015. Her views, however controversial, have resonated with the some of the French public and she is thus a strong candidate for the French presidency.

Another key issue is the role of the media. In what has been charmingly dubbed the post-truth era by the Economist, half-truths and non-peer reviewed papers have for many people replaced traditional news outlets. Online outlets and clickbait articles have recently become far more common, and many of these outlets rely on shock value headlines. Although sensationalism is not unique to the web based news sites, the flood of alternative media outlets has forced traditional media to adapt. Misleading articles have even been blamed for perpetuating stereotypes in Europe, headlines such as *"Muslim vote could decide 25 per cent of seats"*[3] and *"Collections at UK mosques' fundraising for terror"*[4] use cherry picked instances and misleading statistics to incite sympathy for xenophobic viewpoints. However, as they do

2 A critic regarding Bill C16, http://www.nationalobserver.com/2016/10/25/opinion/opinion-bill-c-16-flawed-ways-most-canadians-have-not-considered

3 Daily Mail, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3061596/Muslim-vote-decide-25-seats-Victory-quarter-British-constituencies-decided-Islamic-voters.html

4 Dailystar, http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/476949/UK-mosque-terror-fund-cash

not directly call for violence they do not face legal consequences. Tightening hate speech laws could help combat the spread of false news. This however, would open up a grey area as government officials would have created a position that has the power to effectively censor the media.

3. Measures in place

It is worthwhile to look back at the already existing laws and proposed solutions. This also helps review whether policies are effective or should be cut or revised. The Framework Decisions[5] covers the the basics of how hate speech laws in the EU function. An example of a legal offense under EU law would be starting a rally in the name of the national socialist party. Since the party is publicly directed against groups of persons based on their race, religion, colour and descent or national ethnic group, the offender would be publicly inciting to violence and hatred and thus would have to suffer with the implications for his crimes. A minimum penalty for an offense can range from 1-3 years depending on the Member State it is enforced in. Corporations and organisations are also subjected to fines.

4. Key actors

The key actors are the institutions we have available to us as well as relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Using these tools effectively is the key to understanding the scope of this issue. Therefore, understanding the significance of each institution is vital.
The main actor in this topic is **the European Commission**. The European Commission is the executive branch of the EU. It consists of 28 commissioners, one from each Member State and each of these commissioners represent a specific field of responsibility such as agriculture or education. They are responsible for policy implementation. This means that they are in charge of managing how laws are implemented and how the European budget is spent. One can compare this to how the Swiss parliament implements legislation after it has been voted on by the general public. The European Commission proposes legislation and thus is the main tool for direct action in this issue. Additionally, the European Commission is the guardian of the treaties, which means that it is in charge of upholding laws already in place.
Lastly, the European Commission is responsible for the international dimension of the EU. The Commission negotiates trade deals as well as manages foreign investment projects for

5 Framework decisions, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/racism-xenophobia/index_en.htm

developing nations. To summarise, the European Commission is in charge of developing and implementing policy on an EU level. Before the policies discussed by the European commission are implemented, they must first pass through the decision making process of the EU.

NGO's also constitute key players within a government. NGO's usually follow long term goals that go beyond the timespan of elected officials. Thus if we are to implement long term solutions consulting with Non-governmental organisations may be necessary as they are not restricted to a term in office like politicians. Depending on the organisation, they may already have achieved significant influence within politics and thus may provide to be a useful ally. Especially think tanks and research organisations such as Oxfam may be useful in creating unbiased surveys. Simply funding some of these organisations may even help solve the issue as more information would be available to the public.

5. Key questions

- What caused xenophobic, sexist and racist rhetoric to become more common in political circles?
- Why are xenophobic, racist and sexist views held by the public?
- What role does the media play in this issue?
- Are current countermeasures effective? Can they be improved or revised?
- Is there an excessive prevalence of political correctness in the media today ?

SEDE - Committee on Security and Defence

In light of the recent terror attacks in major cities and the changing security situation on the continent, should European States extend conscription to women or should women's military service remain on a strictly voluntary basis?

By Miriam Aitken (CH)

1. Introduction

In the détente following the Cold War, many European countries saw the end of military conscription. With the current political tensions, some states have considered reintroducing conscription[1] and in 2015, Norway became the first European country to introduce universal conscription of males and females.[2] With debates of **gender equality** and the **optimisation of military forces**, the 'Norwegian model' has been seen as an example for other European states. However, societal views as well as barriers for women within the military mean that including women in the mandatory military draft is still widely questioned.

2. Key conflicts

In the past 20 years, the number of European countries transitioning from conscripted armed forces to voluntary armies has risen strongly. The changing nature of warfare and advancements in technology have lead to many countries abandoning mass standing armies in favour of voluntary armies in an attempt to professionalise their armed forces and use their resources most efficiently. Furthermore, adherence to military alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) means some countries **no longer regard conscription as necessary** in guaranteeing national security. However, there are still some countries that rely on military conscription. These are often smaller nations and thus the concern of not being able to mobilise enough soldiers for a voluntary army is present. Moreover, unresolved regional conflicts or fears of a militarily superior neighbour, for example in Eastern

1 Matthias Bieri: Military Conscription in Europe: New Relevance, CSS Analyses in Security Policy, ETH Zurich, N0. 180, October 2015, http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSS-Analyse180-EN.pdf

2 Norway Expands Mandatory Military Service to Women, Norway - the official site in the UK, http://www.norway.org.uk/norwayandcountry/current-affairs/norwegian-politics/norway-extends-compulsory-military-service-to-women/#.WJDE_xDF6Rt

Europe, cause some countries to maintain conscription.[3]
Currently, only 17 European countries[4] conscript recruits and Norway is the only one which has gender-neutral conscription. However, universal conscription has been the norm in several countries worldwide[5] for many years. The **Norwegian model** is based on the idea that a larger pool of recruits, including both men and women, allows for the recruitment of the most capable conscripts, regardless of gender.[6] As the number of conscripts generally exceeds the requirements of the armed forces, only the most motivated and fittest recruits are actually called up for military service.[7] Some countries, including Switzerland, have considered adopting a similar model.[8] However, opinions on the issue are split.

On the one hand, the belief that **gender equality** should extend to military conscription is one of the most striking arguments for universal conscription. Many believe that men and women should have the same opportunities and the same obligations and that therefore, women should not be exempt from military service. However, there are also opinions that in regard to ensuring gender- equality, military service should **not be the priority** but other areas, such as equal pay, should be tackled first[9]. Still others hold pacifist opinions, which tend to see abolishing conscription altogether, for men and women, the solution to gender discrimination with regards to military service.

On the other hand, increasing the pool of recruits means that the most capable will be called up, thus ensuring the armed forces have the **best personnel** possible.[10] Opinions divide as to whether mixed-gender units pose problems in the military, however, despite concerns that they lack cohesion and do not perform as well as all-male units, analyses suggest that this

3 Matthias Bieri: Military Conscription in Europe: New Relevance, CSS Analyses in Security Policy, ETH Zurich, N0. 180, October 2015, http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSS-Analyse180-EN.pdf .

4 European countries with military conscription: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine.

5 Countries with universal conscription: China, Eritrea, Israel, Libya, Malaysia, North Korea, Norway, Peru, Taiwan.

6 Norway Expands Mandatory Military Service to Women, Norway - the official site in the UK http://www.norway.org.uk/norwayandcountry/current-affairs/norwegian-politics/norway-extends-compulsory-military-service-to-women/#.WJDE_xDF6Rt .

7 Matthias Bieri: Military Conscription in Europe: New Relevance, CSS Analyses in Security Policy, ETH Zurich, N0. 180, October 2015, http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSS-Analyse180-EN.pdf.

8 Fabian Renz: Jetzt wird die Wehrpflicht für Frauen geprüft, Tagesanzeiger, http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/schweiz/standard/jetzt-wird-die-wehrpflicht-fuer-frauen-geprueft/story/16811488.

9 Gefragte Soldatinnen: Wehrpflicht für Frauen weitet den Personalpool aus, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/wehrpflicht-fuer-frauen-weitet-den-personalpool-aus-1.18485253

10 Norway Expands Mandatory Military Service to Women, Norway - the official site in the UK.

is not necessarily the case. On the contrary, studies have shown that there are benefits from mixed-gender units and that women often display superior skills in certain areas, such as discipline, communication, alertness or negotiation. However, **negative attitudes** towards women in the military, both from within the armed forces and from society, can negatively affect team cohesion and performance.[11]

Moreover, despite women being allowed to serve on a voluntary basis, many countries **exclude women from certain positions**, notably combat roles. Some believe that if women do not have the same opportunities as men, they should not be required to serve in the military. Furthermore, as the military has historically been a male-dominated institution, women generally only occupy a very **small percentage of senior ranks and leadership positions** and thus are generally required to serve under men, which many believe leads to the discrimination of women.

3. Measures in place

As decisions concerning the functioning of their military lie within the competences of national governments, existing measures to include women in the armed forces vary from country to country. **Norway's law** to include women in the conscription is currently without match within Europe. Though the question has been raised in other countries, such as Switzerland, where the **Federal Court ruled that male-only conscription was not a violation of the right to gender equality**[12], military service remains voluntary for women in all other European countries.

Though there aren't any international regulations on including women in the armed forces, measures to include women in peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict resolution have been taken by the **United Nations Security Council** in the **Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**[13]. The resolution calls i.a. for the mainstreaming of gender equality in peacekeeping operations and conflict resolution and urges Member States to increase representation of women in institutions for the prevention, management and resolution of

11 Paul Cawkill et al.: Women in Ground Close Combat Roles: The Experiences of other Nations and a Review of the Academic Literature, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/27406/women_combat_experiences_literature.pdf

12 Allgemeine Wehrpflicht diskriminiert gemäss BGer die Männer nicht, Humanrights.ch, http://www.humanrights.ch/de/menschenrechte-schweiz/inneres/frau-mann/gleichstellung/bger-2c-221-2009-2010-wehrpflicht-maenner-diskriminierung.

13 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement.

conflicts, particularly in decision-making processes.

The **North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** has committed to implementing the UN Resolution 1325 and, while recognising that it has no influence on measures and policies on the national level, has set goals to increase gender perspectives in operations and missions and has set up **working groups, gender advisors** and a **gender office** as well as a **mentoring programme** tasked to help break down structural barriers for women.[14]

4. Key actors

National parliaments and their governments define the state's military system. It is up to them to decide if and how they implement conscription.

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), is an international court which deals with cases in which contracting states are accused of violating the European Convention on Human Rights. Judgements of the ECHR are binding.[15] Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender. Furthermore, in a judgement the ECHR states that *'in particular, references to traditions, general assumptions or prevailing social attitudes in a particular country are insufficient justification for a difference in treatment on grounds of sex.'*[16]

European Court of Justice, the highest court in the European Union has passed rulings on the inclusion of women in the armed forces, notably when it ruled that Germany's refusal to let women serve in positions involving the use of arms went against the principle of equal treatment of the genders.[17]

Armed forces would have to adapt and rethink current systems to accommodate a larger number of female recruits and enable equal treatment and opportunities. However, they could also benefit from the advantages of more gender diversity and a larger pool of potential recruits.

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14 Women, Peace and Security - NATO, UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions, NATO, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm.

15 European Court of Human Rights - Questions and Answers, European Court of Human Rights - Council of Europe, http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Questions_Answers_ENG.pdf

16 Factsheet: Gender Equality, European Court of Human Rights, http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Gender_Equality_ENG.pdf.

17 ECJ rules that women should be allowed to join German army, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/observatories/eurwork/articles/ecj-rules-that-women-should-be-allowed-to-join-german-army.

Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) working to ensure gender equality are divided on the issue. Some, notably the **International Alliance of Women** are opposed to female conscription as they believe that women suffer from discrimination in what has historically been a male-dominated institution and that women's contribution to society by generally being more likely to care for children, sick and elderly balances out their exemption from conscription.[18] However, there are also women in favour of gender neutral conscription, believing that women are at least as capable of serving in the military as men.[19]

Civil society generally still sees the military as a male domain and negative attitudes towards women in the armed forces can be detrimental to the efforts to integrate females in the military.

5. Key questions

- Would extending conscription to include women benefit the armed forces in light of current security threats?
- Is excluding women from conscription at odds with the principle of gender equality?
- How can equal treatment and opportunities within the military be guaranteed for women?

18 No to female conscription, International Alliance of Women, http://womenalliance.org/no-to-female-conscription.

19 Both sexes called to arms as Norway conscripts girls, Europe Newsweek, http://europe.newsweek.com/both-sexes-called-arms-norway-conscripts-girls-310990?rm=eu.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

How will we defend the resolution during the Assembly?

General Assemblies in sessions of the European Youth Parliament are all held according to a strict parliamentary procedure. Each committee has a chance to propose their resolution and defend it during debate as follows:

Reading of the operative clauses

A member of the proposing committee (i.e. the ones whose resolution is being debated) is asked to come up to the podium to read out the operative clauses. The operative clauses, as explained above, are the second part of the resolution and state which action should be taken and which solutions the committee proposes for the problem. Since the introductory clauses are only defining the status quo, there is no need for them to be read out loud.

Defence speech (3')

This is the key moment for the proposing committee to present their resolution and explain why it should be voted for within the given time of three minutes. During that time one member of the committee can go to the podium and deliver a speech on the resolution. This is the time for bold rhetoric – catch the attention of the General Assembly, highlight the key problems and how your resolution tackles them. Here it is central that you keep your fellow delegates engaged and convince them to vote for your resolution.

Attack speech (3')

Following the defence speech, delegates from all the other committees have a chance to attack the resolution with a three minute speech, too (though if they keep their speech shorter and only use one minute, the board may invite a member of another committee to hold a second one). The attack speech shouldn't pick at individual clauses or details but rather is used when a delegate fundamentally disagrees with the content of the resolution: for example in a resolution on nuclear power which encourages the closure of all nuclear power plants, an attack speech might be one which says that nuclear power is key to reducing carbon emissions and the resolution is therefore not to be voted for. Like a defence speech, the attack is held from the podium and this is an opportunity for lots of rhetoric.

Points of Information

In order to have a constructive debate, the entire General Assembly must understand the resolution fully. Therefore there is an opportunity with points of information for other committees to ask the proposing committee for a definition or clarification – for example to ask

what an acronym stands for or explain the content of a treaty referred to in the resolution. Points of information are however not a chance to ask how an action could be taken. For example:

"Could the proposing committee explain what was decided in the Maastricht Treaty?" – is a point of information

"Could the proposing committee explain how they intend to increase the level of employment" – is not.

Open debate

This is the main part of the General Assembly. Any committee with a point or a question on the resolution can raise their committee placard and, when recognised by the board, pose it to the proposing committee. Rather than letting the proposing committee respond to each point individually – since this would take a lot of time – the board take 4-5 points from the floor before allowing the proposing committee to respond to all of them. Usually there is time for 4-5 rounds of questions (so up to 25 points per debate). During each debate, Committees must raise the placard with their committee name to show that they want to speak and wait for the board to officially give them the right to speak.

Summation (3')

The final element of the debate: one or two members of the proposing committee can go to the podium to defend their resolution one last time. This occurs straight after a round of questions (before the proposing committee have a chance to respond) so the first part of the summation should be responding to the last 4-5 questions. The second part is the final chance to use all rhetorical energy and skill to convince people to vote for your resolution: be passionate and engaging, don't stick to dry terms or repeat what's been said. The summation speech is time for big words to win people for your cause.

After the summation, the General Assembly will have a chance to vote on the resolution.

The president of the session will explain all this to you again on the day and it's far simpler when acted than when explained, so don't worry if this sounds very stiff. It's formal, yes, but when debates get going they can be very heated and flow well. In addition, you will be guided through the entire session by a chairperson – an experienced EYPer who perfectly knows how EYP works.

BEFORE YOU ARE OFF THE SESSION

We are looking forward to welcoming you soon at our Regional Session. We would like to already thank you for your interest in politics and in our events.

Since you are now well-prepared for the session, keep in mind again the meeting time: between 08:30-08:45 at Collège Calvin, **2-4 Rue Théodore De-Bèze, 1204 Genève**.

There will be no jury at the session. However, if you successfully took part in the entire programme of the regional session, you will be entitled to apply to the upcoming National Selection Conference (NSC) Lausanne taking place from 8 - 12 September 2017 of EYP Switzerland. At the NSC, you will have the chance to get selected by a jury to attend sessions abroad and to discuss European politics with young Europeans on a truly international level.

At the session, you will be asked to sign EYP Switzerland's code of conduct. Please know that it is a prerequisite in order for you to attend the session.

In order to apply to the NSC, you will have to apply as a delegation (consisting of not more than 6 delegates, but there is no minimum number of delegates per delegation). All delegates of the applying delegation need to have taken part in a regional session of EYP Switzerland previously, but the delegation does not need to consist exactly of the same people with whom you took part in the regional session. Rather, we just encourage you to continue by applying to the NSC only if you feel that EYP is the right thing for you and that you have enough time and motivation to continue your commitment also on an international level.

During the application process, you as a delegation will have to submit a self- phrased committee topic and a motivation statement in form of for example a video to EYP Switzerland. Based on these two documents, we will select the delegations that can attend the NSC if there are more applicants than available spots. Hence stay tuned, we will keep you and your teachers updated by email and inform you as soon as the application window has opened. You can also always check our Facebook page and our website to stay up to date.

Your voice is welcome in the European Youth Parliament. We are looking forward to seeing you soon.

We would like to thank our sponsors for having made this event possible:

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As well as Mr. **Jean-Pierre Naz** for his generous contribution.



In case of any questions regarding the participation in the session or the organisational aspect, please direct your questions to Mallorie Ashton-Lomax at mallorie.ashton-lomax@eyp.ch or Solène Hababou at solene.hababou@eyp.ch.

