

3RD CONFERENCE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN STUDIES



SIMULATION OF EU ASYLUM POLICY

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MATERIAL

- Brief description
- Simulation programme
- Role cards
- Rules of procedure
- Assessment

Brief description

We like to share our overly positive experience with a simulation of EU asylum policy that we are offering on a biannual basis to 50-60 undergraduate students of International Relations. The simulation seeks to deepen students' understanding of the EU's legislative process and to introduce them to the current and controversial issue of asylum policy in an innovative and practical way. Students assume the roles of either journalist, minister, Member of Parliament or Commissioner. Depending on their role, students have to create a newspaper, poster, election spot or draft law that forms the basis for the simulation of the legislative process. During the simulation, students have to negotiate a distribution key for the relocation of refugees and a common list of safe countries of origin, among other things. Various social activities such as a poster vernissage or visit to a local refugee house make sure that students do not only improve their negotiation skills, but also their interpersonal and intercultural competencies. The simulation is accompanied by an input part, where experts are invited to talk about the legal aspects of asylum policy, and an evaluation part, where students are asked to critically reflect on the simulation. Students particularly value the opportunity to put themselves in the shoes of a politician and "play" the three stages of the EU's otherwise quite complex Ordinary Legislative Procedure, as well as the hands-on experience of how time-consuming, sometimes frustrating but in the end also satisfying it can be to pass a law when so many different players and interests are involved. Indeed, students report back that the simulation not only increased their understanding of the EU but also for the EU. We firmly believe that simulations like these can help to make the inner workings of the EU more tangible and better prepare graduates for their careers in international organisations.

SIMULATION PROGRAMME

- Day 1: European Union
 - 9:00-9:30
 - Introduction
 - 9:30-11:00
 - Lecture on EU integration, institutions and legislation
 - 11:00-12:30
 - Workshop on the functioning of the EU
 - 12:30-13:30
 - Lunch break
 - 13:30-15:30
 - Speech by Jens Geier (MEP)
 - 15:30-17:00
 - Live stream from European Parliament

SIMULATION PROGRAMME

- Day 2: Asylum policy
 - 9:00-10:30
 - Lecture on legal and moral aspects of asylum policy
 - 10:30-12:00
 - Workshop on asylum policy
 - 12:00-13:00
 - Lunch break
 - 13:00-15:00
 - Speech by Ingeborg Heck-Böckler (Amnesty International)
 - 15:00-17:00
 - Excursion to refugee house

SIMULATION PROGRAMME

- Day 3: Preparation of roles
 - 9:00-9:30
 - Reflection on excursion to refugee house
 - 9:30-10:00
 - Allocation of roles
 - 10:00-12:00
 - Research on roles
 - 12:00-13:00
 - Lunch break
 - 13:00-15:30
 - Preparation of poster/video/draft law
 - 15:30-17:00
 - Presentation of poster/video/draft law

SIMULATION PROGRAMME

- Day 4: Legislation stage I
 - 9:00-9:30
 - State of the Union address
 - 9:30-10:30
 - Political talk show
 - 10:30-11:30
 - Elections in European Parliament
 - 11:30-12:00
 - Rules of procedure
 - 12:00-12:30
 - Arrangement of rooms
 - 12:30-13:30
 - Lunch break
 - 13:30-16:00
 - Legislation stage I
 - 16:00-17:00
 - Reception

SIMULATION PROGRAMME

- Day 5: Legislation stages II & III
 - 9:00-9:30
 - Newspaper
 - 9:30-12:00
 - Legislation stage II
 - 12:00-13:00
 - Working Lunch
 - 13:00-15:30
 - Legislation stage III
 - 15:30-16:30
 - Reflection
 - 16:30-17:00
 - Evaluation

Dear Commissioner,

A bill on EU asylum policy needs to be passed within the next few days. Since you have to devote yourself to this topic, you will be exempt from all other work for the period of negotiations within the European institutions.

The European Commission mediates between the divergent positions of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The Commission also informs the Parliament about the developments and results of the negotiations related to the legislative process. In order to succeed, please consider the following points:

- You are the expert during the formal and informal negotiations of MEPs and Ministers.
- Try to influence the journalists in order to gain the support of the European citizens.
- Regularly ask all actors participating in the legislative process to cooperate constructively.
- You make suggestions to MEPs and Ministers that must be accepted by both in spite of their diverging interests.

You should:

- Do research on your simulation role. Think about three attributes that characterize the Commissioner which you will play during the simulation. Get familiar with your role, remain in it during the negotiations and breaks, e.g. at the Mensa.
- If you are the President of the European Commission, you should prepare a 3-minute opening address in which you discuss the question: ‘What unites & what divides the European Union with regard to the current refugee situation?’ (due on 04/10/17, 9am).
- The Commission drafts a 1-2 page legislative proposal on asylum policy (due on 04/10/17, 2.30pm) containing:
 - A permanent relocation system (focusing on binding distribution keys) in order to replace the so-called Dublin system, which states that people must claim asylum in the state where they first enter the EU,
 - a list of “safe countries of origin” to which refugees would have to return and
 - a plan of how to cooperate with EU neighboring countries in the management of current migration flows (focusing on cooperation with Turkey).
- Each Commissioner writes a four-page position paper (due on 01/11/17). The first two pages of the paper should be devoted to analyzing the position of the EU Commission on EU asylum policy. The last two pages should consist of a reflection of the simulation (see PPT-slides). The paper must be written individually (no group work) and should reflect your own point of view as a student at Rhine-Waal University (not that of the Commissioner you are playing). Make sure that you meet the academic writing standards (in particular referencing and bibliography), provide your name and matriculation number on the front page, and upload the paper on Moodle.

Please note that your mark for the module IR_30 Applied Project will be based on the position paper and your active participation during the week.

We wish you good luck!

Dear Member of the European Parliament (MEP),

A bill on EU asylum policy needs to be passed within the next few days. Since you have to devote yourself to this topic, you will be exempt from all other work for the period of negotiations within the European institutions.

For your stance on asylum policy your national interests are not decisive. Nevertheless, as MEP you bear national public opinions in mind as you feel tied to your election pledge. Besides, you should never forget the power of the media. However, let's make one thing clear, as MEP you stand for the political idea of your party group and in public you will always defend your party group's position on EU asylum policy. In order to succeed, please consider the following points:

- Use the time between the meetings to talk to colleagues of the other six party groups to make out possible allies.
- Try to influence the journalists in order to gain the support of the European citizens.
- Note that every decision you take has direct effects on your voters and may threaten your re-election as an MEP. Only you know what is best for you and your voters!
- Since decisions are taken by Parliament and Council, it is unavoidable for you to make compromises with other party groups in order to put pressure on the Council.

You should:

- Do research on your simulation role. Think about three attributes that characterize the MEP which you will play during the simulation. Get familiar with your role, remain in it during the negotiations and breaks, e.g. at the Mensa.
- Think about reasons if/why you want to become the leader of your party group. Convince your party group that you are a suitable candidate.
- If you become elected as a party group leader, you should prepare a 1-minute campaign speech in which you state why you would be a good president of the Parliament.
- If you want to become the rapporteur you should prepare a 1-minute campaign speech in which you state why you would be a good rapporteur of the committee.
- Each party group jointly creates a 2-3 minute video spot about the party group and its stance on EU asylum policy (due on 04/10/17, 1.30pm).
- Each MEP writes a four-page position paper (due on 01/11/17). The first two pages of the paper should be devoted to analyzing the position of the political party group you are representing on EU asylum policy. The last two pages should consist of a reflection of the simulation (see PPT-slides). The paper must be written individually (no group work) and should reflect your own point of view as a student at Rhine-Waal University (not that of the MEP you are playing). Make sure that you meet the academic writing standards (in particular referencing and bibliography), provide your name and matriculation number on the front page, and upload the paper on Moodle.

Please note that your mark for the module IR_30 Applied Project will be based on the position paper and your active participation during the week.

We wish you good luck!



Dear Minister of the Council,

A bill on EU asylum policy needs to be passed within the next few days. Since you have to devote yourself to this topic, you will be exempt from all other work for the period of negotiations within the European institutions.

Please be reminded that questions on asylum policy are discussed in the Justice and Home Affairs Council that is concerned with common policies on various cross-border issues with the aim of building an EU-wide area of freedom, security and justice. This includes the protection of EU borders and the equal treatment of asylum seekers to avoid “asylum hopping”. For the sake of the simulation we presume that the Council meets in a public.

According to the Lisbon Treaty (2009), the Council is obliged to represent the interest of the EU as a whole. Nevertheless, it is hardly surprising that ministers also take their national interest into consideration. Under the ordinary legislative procedure, the Council acts by qualified majority, in co-decision with the Parliament. Thus, as a minister you have to pursue your national interest on the one hand but also notice the European Union’s interests on the other hand. In order to succeed, we suggest the following points:

- Get in contact with your colleagues of the Council and the Members of Parliament to make out possible allies.
- Use informal channels to convince others of your position. Make use of your soft skills.
- Try to influence the journalists in order to gain the support of the European citizens.
- Try to find so-called “package solutions” (making concessions in one field and obtaining your will in another) as qualified majority has to be reached.

You should:

- Do research on your simulation role. Think about three attributes that characterize the Minister which you will play during the simulation. Get familiar with your role, remain in it during the negotiations and breaks, e.g. at the Mensa.
- Prepare a poster about your country’s political system, economy, culture and the government’s stance on asylum policy. Make sure that content and design reflect your professional position as a Minister (due on 04/10/17, 1.30pm).
- Each Minister writes a four-page position paper (due on 01/11/17). The first two pages of the paper should be devoted to analyzing the position of the country you are representing on EU asylum policy. The last two pages should consist of a reflection of the simulation (see PPT-slides). The paper must be written individually (no group work) and should reflect your own point of view as a student at Rhine-Waal University (not that of the Minister you are playing). Make sure that you meet the academic writing standards (in particular referencing and bibliography), provide your name and matriculation number on the front page, and upload the paper on Moodle.

Please note that your mark for the module IR_30 Applied Project will be based on the position paper and your active participation during the week.

We wish you good luck!



Dear Journalist,

A bill on EU asylum policy will be passed within the next few days. Since you have to devote yourself to this topic, you will be exempt from all other work for the period of negotiations within the European institutions.

As an experienced journalist you know the media business and its various opportunities to gather and spread information. With your reports and opinions you fulfill a crucial task for both the public and the political actors to get more transparency in a democratic European Union. Be aware that you have the power to influence the decision-makers by asking critical questions, presenting your opinions and by simply being present during the formal and informal negotiation procedures. In order to succeed, we suggest the following points:

- Appoint an editor-in-chief. Share the different tasks among the journalists in your team. You might want to appoint a reporter for each of the three EU institutions (Parliament, Commission, Council).
- Meet on a regular basis to jointly write the newspaper and to discuss further tasks.
- Take part in public meetings of the institutions. Interview actors involved in the legislative process. Ask critical questions. Report about background stories, developments and results of the negotiations related to the legislative process.
- You can use the camera of the University to take pictures and create film sequences. We will assist you with the printing of the newspaper.

You should:

- Organize and moderate a 30-minutes political talk show (starting on 02/10/17, 4pm).
- Write and design a 3-4 page newspaper containing reports, interviews, columns and photos (due on 06/10/17, 8am).
- Create a 2-3 minute film clip (due on 06/10/17, 11am).
- Each journalist writes a four-page paper (due on 01/11/17). The first two pages of the paper should be devoted to analyzing the role of the media in the current refugee situation. The last two pages should consist of a reflection of the simulation (see PPT-slides). The paper must be written individually (no group work) and should reflect your own point of view as a student at Rhine-Waal University (not that of the journalist you are playing). Make sure that you meet the academic writing standards (in particular referencing and bibliography), provide your name and matriculation number on the front page, and upload the paper on Moodle.

Please note that your mark for the module IR_30 Applied Project will be based on the paper and your active participation during the week.

We wish you good luck!

RULES OF PROCEDURE

- General rules
 - Dress code – business elegant/casual
 - Mutual respect
 - Raise placard or hand to speak
 - Stand up while giving a speech
 - Do not talk for too long (30sec. – 2min.)
 - “Points of information”
 - “Points of personal privilege”

RULES OF PROCEDURE

- Procedure of debate
 1. Roll call
 2. Short introductory speech by each minister & each party
 3. General Speaker's list
 4. Moderated caucus – on specific topic for specific time
 5. Unmoderated caucus – to work out amendments (do not leave the room)
 6. Voting upon amendments

RULES OF PROCEDURE

- Voting procedures
 - Council
 - Voting by raising placards
 - Procedural voting: simple majority
 - Substantive voting over amendments: double/qualified majority (55% of members who must represent at least 65% of the EU's citizens)
 - Parliament
 - Voting by show of hands
 - Procedural voting: absolute majority (50% + 1 vote)
 - Substantive voting over amendments: absolute majority (50% + 1 vote)

ASSESSMENT

- Participation: 40% of overall mark
 - Daily presence
 - 9am-5pm
 - Active participation
 - Discussion, simulation, etc.
 - Creative output
 - Posters, films, documents, etc.

ASSESSMENT

- Paper: 60% of overall mark
 - Every commissioner writes a 4-page paper, containing an analysis of the position of the Commission on EU asylum policy (2 pages) and a reflection of the simulation (2 pages)
 - Every member of parliament writes a 4-page paper, containing an analysis of the position of his or her political group on EU asylum policy (2 pages) and a reflection of the simulation (2 pages)
 - Every minister writes a 4-page paper, containing an analysis of the position of his or her country on EU asylum policy (2 pages) and a reflection of the simulation (2 pages)
 - Every journalist writes a 4-page paper, containing an analysis of the role of the media in the current refugee situation (2 pages) and a reflection of the simulation (2 pages)

ASSESSMENT

- Possible questions to consider in the reflection part
 - Comparison
 - What in the simulation was different from reality?
 - Which steps in the Ordinary Legislative Procedure have not been simulated?
 - How does the simulation's outcome differ from reality and why?
 - Influence
 - Is there anything in the final outcome document that without you would not be in there?
 - Do MEPs/ministers from smaller party groups/countries have any power at all?
 - Which institution (Parliament, Council, Commission, Media) is the most powerful and why?
 - Evaluation
 - How efficient/democratic/transparent is the EU legislative process?
 - How can it be improved?
 - Has the simulation changed your view of the EU and, if yes, in what ways?