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Handbook for the Model European Council of the European Schools

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Model European Council (MEC) is an annual large-scale event open to pupils from s5 to s7 of the European Schools network. This educational experience started in 1984 at the European School of Munich, where its name was coined.

The roles and programme mimic the actual European Council and Councils of Ministers as much as possible, although some adjustments have been made for pedagogical or practical reasons. Before the conference, pupils prepare for their roles in groups, and they are also guided by one or two teachers from their school.

The organisation is assured on two levels: the event has permanent coordinators and each year there are host coordinators from the host school. The pupils' preparation and participation is guided by their teachers, called advisors, in the system of MEC.

The groups of pupils arriving from different schools have different roles. They can represent delegations or media teams.

Example school and country allocation MEC 2023:

Alicante	Hungary	Bulgaria		
Bergen	Poland	Ireland		
Brussels 1	Romania	Estonia	Luxembourg	
Brussels 2	France	Greece		
Brussels 3	Netherlands	Denmark		
Brussels 4	Spain			Press
Frankfurt	Belgium	Austria		
Karlsruhe	Italy	Malta		
Luxembourg I	Germany			Press
Luxembourg II	Sweden Presidency	Slovenia	Croatia	
Mol	Slovakia	Cyprus		
Munich	Commission	Lithuania	Czech Republic	
Strasbourg	Portugal			Press
Varese	Finland	Latvia		Media

The total duration of the MEC:

The MEC is generally planned in March, although it has also been organised in November. It takes 2 and a half days. See point 5 for a detailed breakdown of the programme.

Communication on the next MEC starts almost immediately after the previous one. This communication is organised by online meetings and in info sheets (generally 4: 6 months before, 4 months before, 2 months before, 1 month before) which contain the information available at that time. From 2021 on, a Teams group is used, which makes it easier to keep the information up to date and to share information.

2 MEC IN NUMBERS – PEOPLE INVOLVED

Pupil participants:

- 1 EU president, chairperson of the European Council
- 5 EU commissioners
- 5 members of the EU presidency
- 26 regular country delegations of 5 ministers each. The 27th member state holds the Presidency. Total:141 politicians,
- 3 press teams of 10 journalists/editors/photographers that publish 3 editions each + a media team that keeps delegates informed with up-to-date material. Total: 30 members of the press, 9 newspapers
- 5 -10 secretaries
- 5 -10 pupils involved in logistics
- 10 pupils in the media team

Total: 20-30 pupils in supporting roles

Grand total of 201 pupils participating

Adult participants:

- 2-4 permanent coordinators
- 2-4 host coordinators
- 1 advisor per press team, total of 3
- 1 advisor per country delegation, total of 28
- 1 advisor for media team
- 1 School Director
- 1 Inspector

Total of 34 visiting teachers, and 2-4 teachers from the receiving school. Additional to this could be other guests from the host school/institution used, as well as guests, such as directors from participating schools...

The receiving organisation frequently also has a person responsible for hosting the pupils in the hosting organisation.

The numbers come from the modeling genre and the limited numbers ensure the effective preparation of the school groups and the functioning of the meetings. At the same time, there is a demand for a higher number of participation opportunities from larger schools and accredited schools. The need for a 6th Council is still a desired progression.

3 THE STRUCTURE OF MEC

3.1 History of the Model European Council / Parliament – Stability Embracing Change

The MECP Programme was an initiative started by two teachers working in the European Schools: James Campbell (ES Munich) and Michael Farrar (ES Brussels 1, Uccle). The first session (a MEC) took place in 1984 and was hosted by ES Munich and the European Patent Office. The second session in 1985 took place in Luxembourg in the Hemicycle of the EU research centre and library. This huge amphitheatre seemed to be better suited to a session of the European Parliament rather than a MEC. During the 1980s and early nineties the MECP alternated its sessions between the two locations: MEC in Munich and MEP in Luxembourg. This established a long tradition of EU institutions hosting the MECP.

As the EU enlarged and EU institutions were diversified outside the traditional centres, more institutions in different locations and European Schools to serve them were created, allowing the MECP to be hosted in new locations. MECP sessions have been organised in the European Parliament in Brussels and Strasbourg, Eurocontrol in Brussels, the European Patents Office (EUIPO) in Alicante, ISPRA in Varese, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, the IRMM in Mol and the ECB in Frankfurt. Often, the MECP has sought to include local schools in destinations away from locations with EU institutions. MECP sessions have taken place in Copenhagen, The State of Hessen near Frankfurt, Madrid and Göteborg, Sweden, which continued as participants until 2017.

The last MEP took place in the European Parliament buildings in Brussels in 2009. In a MEP, pupils take on the roles of politicians working in their different political parties. Participants in the large parties, such as the EPP or the PES, may be spread across several schools, smaller parties may come from one of the schools. Perhaps it is in the nature of more 'political' simulations that tempers can often run high - in one MEP, the whole socialist bloc walked out in protest and had to be persuaded back by a series of delicate negotiations. The advisers offered no help in resolving issues – this principle has held true throughout the long history of the MECP – advisers advise in preparation but, in the session itself, they never intervene nor try to micro-manage events. This is one of the most admirable aspects of the MECP – from the beginning of the session to the close on the second day, pupils are in charge and must resolve their difficulties without appeal to their teachers. It has often caused advisers to bite their tongues when they could spot an easy way out of the problem but, in the interests of verisimilitude and devolved responsibility, they remain out of the running of the session.

Since the last MEP in 2009, there have been only MECs. Many prefer the MEC as it demands greater participation by the ministers. A country is perhaps easier to research and its point of view easier to defend.

Any observer at the first session would still clearly recognise the integrity of the process in every later session of the MECP. However, there have been many changes over the years. The MECP has evolved as the EEC has evolved into the present EU. In 1984 there were 10 countries in the EEC, there are now 27 countries (10 of those joining after 2004 and one which has left). The MEC had to reflect these changes. In

the 1980s the MEC would comprise 10 councils, nowadays it comprises 5 councils as the number of participants has remained the same but is divided by a greater number of countries involved. The proposals from the Commission and Presidency have reflected the immediate concerns of the time. Many proposals were written which had not yet been passed as law by the actual councils. It has been remarkable how the amended MEC proposals often resembled the actual ones. The Maastricht Treaty, the Balkan wars, the Euro, terrorism and security, enlargement, Syria, the Ukraine – all the big topics were treated, but also ones of a more domestic concern, such as tax harmonisation, environmental concerns and the CAP, road safety, LGBTQ+ rights, football and youth unemployment to name just a few.

One massive change has been in technology. In the 1980s, proposals were typed out and posted to schools, and final proposals were typed (often by Jim Campbell's school's secretary) and printed on a Gestetner machine – the newspapers were literally cut and pasted and printed on slow photocopiers. The appearance of the fax machine improved communication greatly. In the 21st Century, the wide use of the internet meant that research was easier for the pupils and advisers benefited from instant contact. Technological change has accelerated so quickly that a highly successful MEC in 2021 took place completely virtually using TEAMS.

Another aspect of the MECP which has benefited from increased use of technology has been newspapers. The MECP has always had at least two newspapers and two sets of journalists producing high quality articles and professional looking copy. For decades the newspapers were run by Julian Archer (ES Lux I) and Dave McDonald (ES Culham). As well as traditional newspapers, the MEC now benefits from reporting on social media. Questions from journalists and the articles they write are important as they offer critical scrutiny of the ministers and their actions. The final plenary question session can be a nervous affair for many ministers!

One aspect which has not changed is the organisation of the MEC. Two permanent directors run the MEC overall and local organisers deal with the local organisation, liaise with the institution and the school. However, directors can change policy – Chris Atkinson (ES Lux I), for example, took the MECP out of Luxembourg / Munich and into new locations. The directors offer stability and ensure that the MECP continues. Directors after Jim Campbell and Michael Farrar have been Henry Christian, Dave McDonald, Chris Atkinson, Norah O'Riordan, Dave Roe, Stuart Idell, Majella O'Brien, Jeroen Masson, Anja Fischer, Angela Starost and Graham Starost.

Being a director involves a considerable amount of extra work on top of one's normal teaching duties. One wonders why one undertakes such an enormous responsibility. The answer lies, as it always has done, in the unique experience that the MECP gives to pupils. It's a two-day event which begins, and no one really knows how it will end – except that the experience for the pupils is a unique one and a deeply educative one. That is why so many teachers are still involved in making sure it can and will continue.

3.2 Overview of ES MECP sessions

1984-1996	Munich or Luxembourg	1 st – 13 th MEC / MEP
1997	Copenhagen	14 th MEC
1999	Frankfurt (Hesse)	15 th MEC
2000	Munich / EPO	16 th MEC
2001	Madrid	17 th MEC
2002	Göteborg / World trade Centre	18 th MEC
2003	Munich / EPO	19 th MEC
2004	Luxembourg	20 th MEP
2005	Alicante / OHIM	21 st MEC
2006	Brussels / Eurocontrol	22 nd MEC
2007	Göteborg / World trade Centre	23 rd MEC
2008	Alicante / OHIM	24 th MEC
2009	Brussels / European Parliament	25 th MEP
2010	Alicante / OHIM	26 th MEC
2011	Varese / ISPRA	27 th MEC
2012	Munich / EPO	28 th MEC
2013	No MECP	None organised
2014	Brussels / Eurocontrol	29 th MEC
2015	Karlsruhe / EP Strasbourg	30 th MEC
2016	MOL / IRMM	31 st MEC
2017	ES Strasbourg / Council of Europe	32 nd MEC
2018	Alicante / EUIPO	33 rd MEC
2019	Frankfurt / ECB	34 th MEC
2020	Munich / EPO	Cancelled - Corona
2021	TEAMS Online session (BXL I - UCC)	35 th MEC
2022	Munich / SCCM	36 th MEC
2023	Brussels (BXL II – WOL) / Eurocontrol	37 th MEC
2024	Luxembourg (LUX I)	38 th MEC
2025	tbc	
2026	tbc	

3.3 Organising system

The MEC has been an annual part of the European Schools' calendar since 1984. It was, for a very long time, in the hands of people with lifelong contracts. Because of the change in this, and because of the limitation of seconded teachers' contracts and the change in conditions of locally recruited teachers, it is becoming increasingly difficult to attract teachers who are willing to take on the considerable task of organising the Model European Council.

Because of specific requirements of the MEC and the heavy focus on content, it requires people to take on the role of **permanent coordinator** for a minimum of three consecutive years so the expertise can be passed on from outgoing to incoming coordinators. For continuation's sake, at least two permanent coordinators are needed whose tenure as coordinator does not end at the same time.

The workload of the **host coordinators** is also considerable: they have to liaise with the local host institution and organise accommodation, transport and catering. They also work together with the permanent coordinators and the school's management to ensure the availability and use of the facilities of a host institution (such as ECB, patent office, EUIPO, European Parliament Strasbourg, etc.)

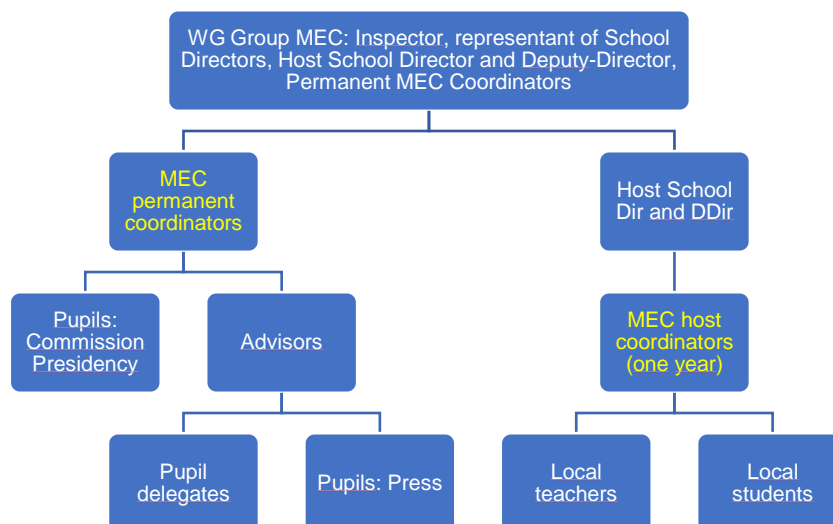
In order to ensure the future of the MEC as an annual event, the following system was put in place by the document 2019-12-D-36-en "Common Framework for 'Events' organised by the European Schools" approved by the Board of Governors on 15 and 17 April 2020:

- Permanent coordinators (2): 2 hours décharges each per week for the duration of their tenure (or based on the distribution of tasks in case of 3 or 4 coordinators)
- Host coordinators (2-4): 4 hours of décharges for one school year divided over the different organisers

Only providing décharge for the organising schools would not give MEC the continued leadership and coordination it requires. Since the MEC requires a deeper understanding of European politics (to provide the content to work on), having permanent coordinators ensures the essential knowledge is readily available.

At the system level, in addition to the permanent coordinators, the event is represented by an inspector and by a school director.

Structure of the MEC (responsibility)



Role of MEC permanent coordinators:

1. Find a school and help to find a venue with the host coordinators.
2. Inform all stakeholders of their responsibilities.
3. Aid the host coordinators with the practical aspects of organising a conference.
4. Aid the local host institution with organising a conference for pupils. This has involved the permanent coordinators traveling to the host institutions to meet with its representatives.
5. To create online meetings and regular 'information sheets' that are sent to all school delegations through their advisors. To assure a constant contact via Teams.
6. To work with the Commission, EU president and presidency pupils and advisors to create the content that will be discussed, before and during the MEC. (E.g.: subjects for urgent debate, press questions for VIP...).
7. To ensure that the actual conference runs smoothly, and that every stakeholder is confident in their role.
8. To organise guest speakers; greetings such as from President von der Leyen

Role of MEC host coordinators:

1. To find a venue for the conference.
2. To organise accommodation, through organising host families or finding hotel/hostel accommodation.
3. To organise travel (or provide information on how to travel) to and from the city and to the hotel, the school and the host institution.
4. To organise, in cooperation with the host institution, the catering during the event.
5. To create a budget that allows the other schools to invoice the amounts that need to be transferred to the organising school.
6. To send the final budget after the event to the permanent coordinators and the inspector in charge.

Role of host school management:

1. To support the coordinators with professional (accountant, secretaries) and official assistance, if necessary
2. To manage the financial background
3. To send official invitations (VIPs are inspectors, directors, members of the OSG and local contact at the host institution. They should receive an official invitation from the director of the host school. That invitation should specify: dates, schedule, venues; let the VIPs know that they are in charge of their accommodation and travel plans; invitation to VIP lunch or dinner.)
4. To host the event

3.4 Budget

The financing of the event is regulated in the document 2019-12-D-36-en “Common Framework for ‘Events’ organised by the European Schools” approved by the Board of Governors on 15 and 17 April 2020

The participating schools shall take care of the costs of travelling and shall reimburse the costs for accommodation and catering of their pupils and teachers. The amount to be reimbursed might be reduced by revenues resulting from public sponsorship.

The hosting schools shall take care of other costs linked to the specific event. The contribution from the EU Commission is fixed at € 15.000 for MEC.

3.5 Timing

Proposed timetable:

CALENDAR	permanent coordinators	host school	advisors
SEPTEMBER	<p>Contact the school that is organising the MEC the next school year.</p> <p>Together with director of host school, formally invite all participating schools.</p> <p>Stakeholder meeting with MEC workgroup, incl. host school management</p> <p>Set up a VIP list (school directors, deputy-directors, inspectors, OSG members). The same list could be used every year.</p>	<p>Start working closely with host institution and permanent coordinators.</p> <p>Organise data collection from advisors and permanent directors: dates of arrival and departure, gender, names, security information (depending on the venue), dietary and health requirements... (accommodation pre-booked, confirmation after having the precise numbers)</p> <p>Start planning the selection process for secretaries.</p> <p>Proprietary focus is on logistics: venues, catering, restaurant for teachers.</p>	<p>Start planning the selection process.</p> <p>If interested in taking on role of commission / presidency, contact permanent coordinators</p>
OCTOBER	<p>Liaise with host institution and host coordinators.</p> <p>Confirm participation of schools and update advisor list</p> <p>Assign countries to schools, including Commission, Presidency and EU President</p>	<p>Design posters, MEC logo, badges (secretaries)</p> <p>Continue until organised: accommodation, catering, travel within host city.</p> <p>Check that data collection is moving forward, send out reminders to advisors.</p> <p>Coordinate with local school director for the VIPs: send out official invitation, with practical info + organise VIP lunch or dinner (should be done by director)</p>	<p>COM/PRES: assign roles to experienced pupils.</p> <p>Other: select pupils</p>

NOVEMBER	<p>Info sheet 1 (Time, Place, organiser contacts, councils, countries, press and media teams)</p> <p>Start working with COM/PRES</p>	<p>Number of participants should be known, start logistics of venue and hotel.</p> <p>Secretaries: Keep working on design posters, MEC logo, badges + start looking for sponsors</p> <p>Keep monitoring data collection.</p> <p>Set up meeting with local deputy finance director to lay out who pays for what and agree on a proposed budget</p>	<p>COM/PRES: preliminary research, form of proposals, etc.</p> <p>Other: start preparing pupils</p>
DECEMBER	<p>Info sheet 2 (Repeat info sheet 1, arrivals and departure times, cost + payment details, links to social media, further information on logistics (esp. local transfers), preliminary topics, ...)</p>	<p>Secretaries: Finalise posters, MEC logo, badges and schedule and communicate them to the perm. coordinators</p>	<p>COM/PRES: preliminary topics, first draft proposals.</p> <p>Other: research countries and fields of councils</p>
JANUARY	<p>Preliminary topics and first final proposals sent out.</p>	<p>Confirm all names and inform accommodation and host institution if needed.</p> <p>Set up budget meeting with DDAF: check budget execution progress and sort out details</p>	<p>COM/PRES: First final proposals</p> <p>Focus prelim. topics</p>
FEBRUARY	<p>Info sheet 3, including programme.</p> <p>All final proposals sent out 4 weeks before conference</p>	<p>Communicate with venues, hotels, caterers, restaurant, DDAF, school's accountant (are bills being paid?)</p> <p>Visit the venue, the hotel and the restaurant to make sure everything is in place.</p> <p>Local director communicates final VIP list and organises collection of security info</p>	<p>COM/PRES: All final proposals, chairing</p> <p>Focus in proposals</p>

		for the venue (if necessary)	
MARCH	MEC (details see programme)	MEC	MEC
APRIL	Send out MEC certificates	Liaise with DDAF to check accounts	debrief
MAY	Meeting with MEC Perm WG Meeting next host school, start up next MEC Host school Dir invites all	Wrap up. Next local coordinators start up, contact host institution, start looking for accommodation	Communicate MEC with whole school
JUNE	Confirm to all stakeholders next MEC, including venue, host school and accommodation.	Host coordinators with management confirm host institution, dates, pre-book the accommodation for a rough number of pupils and teachers	

4 PUPIL ROLES

4.1 Secretaries

The secretaries do whatever helps the chairs (the presidency and the commission) which, in effect, means that they can tally the votes, keep track of the speaking order or amend a proposal as requested by the chairs. The secretaries are there to help the chairs as much as they can. They are part of the administrative staff and although they do not have a political role, they are essential to the MEC and the smooth running of a council.

The secretary of the European Council (the one with the Heads of Government) is also the secretary of the president and will do the same tasks as described above, although it should be noted that keeping the speaking order can be extra challenging in the plenary room.

Typically, a good secretary has good typing skills, a good grasp of working with Word and an excellent knowledge of the language of the council.

In the past, some schools have opted to assign each council two secretaries: one to work on the computer and one to keep track of the speaking order.

4.2 Press

The members of the press have access to the politicians at different times, generally twice at the end of the plenary meetings and at the end of Thursday in the council rooms. The press is encouraged to ask the politicians tough questions and to make sure they are held accountable. Their role cannot be underestimated, mirroring the role of the free press in the real world. Although some competition between the different newspapers is normal, it should be noted that respectful cooperation between the teams is stimulated.

4.3 EU President

The President of the European Council is the Master of Ceremonies of Council 1, working together closely with the Head of the Commission and the Head of Government or the Presidency. She or he may also chair the plenary sessions although, officially, that would be the Head of the Presidency. In the past it has been customary for the President to also prepare a proposal for a European regulation, so that the pupil can also experience that aspect of the roleplay.

The president has an official role, but his moral role of pushing the EU member states forward is at least as important. She or he needs to promote legislation, to guide lawgiving and display initiative by, for example, brokering deals between countries which cannot move forward.

The running of the plenary sessions and of council 1 happens in close cooperation with the Head of the Commission and the Head of Government of the presiding country. It is up to them to find the most efficient way of running the council and the plenary sessions. They are in charge and decide although, obviously, we will be there to advise them should the need arise.

4.4 Presidency and commission

Although in reality the commission proposes the vast majority of laws, in the roleplay, each commissioner and each member of the presidency are asked to prepare one or two proposals. When running a council, it is generally a good idea to let one present the proposal (and participate in the discussion) and the other moderate the debate. See added document for more info on how to run a council.

4.5 Advisors

The teachers play a very important role during the MEC, although they are in no way part of the actual roleplay. The advisors are responsible for the recruitment and selection of the ministers, who ideally come from s6, although mature s5 pupils and conscientious s7 pupils are also very welcome.

Selection procedures depend on the school but, typically, an invitation to try out will be sent to the relevant year groups, and try-outs (mock-debates) will be organised.

Preparation of the ministers may consist of several meetings about the politics of the assigned countries and the proposals which will typically be ready around 4 weeks before the start of the MEC. Ministers are stimulated to work together over countries and councils and to help the Heads of State (or their replacement) with their speeches.

When unclear what happens in a European Council, pupils can be asked to consider the real thing: when a European Council of Ministers convenes, they are tasked with discussing issues within their policy area or assigned responsibilities. They have two days to come to a consensus, a law or several laws that are then taken back to their countries and put into practice. In general, the commission (the executive branch) will have prepared a proposal of law as suggested by the presidency.

In our MEC, both the Commissioner and the Presidency minister will have prepared two proposals for discussion. In the European Council (with the heads of government /state), the European President will also have prepared a single proposal.

4.6 Media Team

The media team are NOT the same as press team. Rather, it complements it. The media team are responsible for creating a social media presence and a live feed before, during and after the MEC. This means that they are not part of the roleplay (the press team is), but they report on it from the outside.

Typically, the media team have a hashtag and accounts on Instagram and Facebook. For inspiration, please visit:

- <https://www.instagram.com/mecmunich2022/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/mecfrankfurt2019/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/MEC2019Frankfurt/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/MEC2018Alicante/>
- <https://www.instagram.com/mecalicante2018/>
- https://twitter.com/mec_2018
- <https://eurotimesalicante.wordpress.com/2018/04/16/mec-alicante-2018/>

Hashtags and pages are best created about a month before the start of the conference, so they can be shared with the advisors and participants.

The media team typically consists of up to 10 pupils (from different schools) and one teacher who has the knowledge of how to pull them together.

5 PROGRAMME (SAMPLE)

5.1 Day 0 afternoon

Sunday / Wednesday

13.30 – 16.30	Arrival of visiting schools at European School Lunch
14.30 – 16.00	Registration and tour of ES
16.00-16.45	
16.45	Welcome by Director, Deputy Director and Organisers
17.00	First council meetings in secondary school building Council 1: Heads of Government (EN/FR/DE) Monet Council 2: Foreign Affairs (EN) room 204 Council 3: Eco/Finance (EN) room 201 Council 4: Justice/Home (DE) Domus 1 Council 5: Environment/Energy (FR) Domus 2
18.00	Evening Meal will be served in the school restaurant
19.00	Transfer to accommodation, often escorted by the host school secretaries.
20.00	Evening Activities
	<i>Some delegations may have arrived the previous day or in the morning of the event.</i>
23.00	All participants return to own bedrooms

On Wednesday afternoon the visiting schools arrive, and the first (informal) council sessions take place, usually preceded by a brief meeting of the president, presidency and commission with the directors of MEC to discuss how to run a council and answer any questions they may have.

Since the roleplay only actually starts on Thursday, there is no formal meeting on Wednesday. The First Council Meeting is of a more practical nature. It is the meeting where the chairs take the ministers through the practical arrangements: the house rules, the voting procedure, speaking order, use of placards, etc. (see annex 1 – How to conduct a council for more details.)

5.2 Day 1

Monday / Thursday

07.00 – 08.00	Breakfast
8.15	Depart
9.00	All delegates are seated in plenary room Opening by the Director of Receiving organisation, (Deputy) Director of the European School and other VIPs
9.45	Opening statements by Heads of Government, Presidents of the European Council and President of the European Commission
10.15	Press Questions
11.00	Break
11.15	Council Meetings (1)
12.15	Lunch
13.00	Delegation Meetings
13.30	Council Meetings (2)
15.15	Break
15.30	Council Meetings (3)
17.15	Press Questions in Council Meeting rooms
18.00	Transfer
19.00	Evening meal
20.00	Evening Activities
23.00	All participants return to own bedrooms

NB timings may differ depending on the proximity of accommodation to venue and the times agreed by the venue.

5.2.1 Opening Statements

Each country is invited to make an opening statement. These statements are part of the roleplay and should be formal, but still appropriate for a person in power. It should be between 30 secs and 40 seconds. (Remind ministers of this before opening the session.) If it is going seriously over 1 minute, then ask the Minister to summarise. If that's impossible, then tell him/her to finish. These statements are part of the roleplay and as such should be on politics.

The running order of countries (see annex 4: Running Order) should be used when each country is invited to speak either in plenary or during QMV.

The Presidency, Head of the Commission and the EU President should make a speech. How you organize at what point they speak is up to you.

Similarly, for closing statements: the Presidency and Commission may delegate another minister / commissioner to give the closing statement. It may be a chance for a Maltese member to speak instead of the Maltese President of Council 1.

5.2.2 Plenary sessions

It is the Presidency which mostly runs the plenaries (the EU President is mostly concerned with Council 1). It will be the Presidency who opens and closes the MEC, runs the urgent debate and the press sessions etc. However, we do suggest that the Presidency Head of Government should delegate some of his/her chair(wo)manship to others – the EU President or the Commission for example, but also to one of his/her ministers. This is important in, for example, the urgent debate when the topic falls within his/her area of expertise.

5.2.3 Press Conferences

Each member of the Presidency may have to give a statement about the first day's councils from his/her point of view to plenary or to Press. In council 1 this could be done by the President.

Press conferences can be run by any one of the three main members of Council 1. Each member of the Press has the chance to ask at least 1 question and a supplementary question. They should be asked to give their name, their newspaper and the person for whom the question is intended very clearly. When the person has identified him/herself the member of the press may ask his/her question.

5.2.4 Council 1

In reality, the EU President chairs Council 1. However, we feel it only fair that writers of proposals be intimately connected with taking the proposal through the meeting, thus in Council 1, each writer will take his/her proposal forward while one other may help by chairing. Who that is will be left to the three personalities involved.

The role of the EU President is also to broker deals. It is up to him to see problems and deal with them by thinking of creative solutions, brokering deals between members and ensuring that business goes ahead as smoothly as possible. This can happen in lobby areas with certain countries while the debate continues.

We suggest alternating the order of proposals treated – e.g. (in Council) 1.1 (Pres.) followed by 1.3 (Comm.) then 1.5 (EU President) followed by 1.2 and lastly 1.4.

5.2.5 Councils 2 -5

We think it's fair that the writer of each proposal guides his/her own proposal through the council as he/she is probably the expert on the content. His/her opposite number in the Commission or the Presidency may chair the meeting. It will mean working as a double / triple act. It may, in fact, end up by the writer of the proposal effectively running the council, but it needn't – keeping track of amendments, sorting out content, dealing with questions on content is different from organizing the smooth running of the council (who speaks, order, focus etc.). At its best, working as a team is a quite effective way of moving the council business forward.

Of course, if either the Commission member or Presidency member does not want to chair, the other can take over – this is unlikely as one of the main reasons to become a member of the Commission or Presidency is to have the experience of directing a council. However, it is also true that having someone else chair a meeting is sometimes a welcome relief!

5.2.6 Writing a proposal
See annex 2.

5.2.7 Voting Procedures

There are two different voting procedures: Qualified Majority Voting and Unanimity. The authors of the proposals will add the voting procedures themselves and the Directors will amend if necessary.

Note that the European Council has an app for android and iOS, and that the voting calculator can be found here: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/voting-calculator/>.

With regards to the kind of voting procedure that is used, it is useful to know that the Council has to vote unanimously on a number of matters which the member states consider to be sensitive, like common foreign and security policy or money matters. For more detailed info go to: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/>

5.3 Day 2

Tuesday / Friday

07.00 – 08.00:	Breakfast
8.15	Depart
9.00	All delegates are seated in plenary room Reports by Council Presidents Urgent Debate Press Questions
10.30	Break
10.45	Council Meetings (4)
11.00	Advisors' Meeting
12.15	Lunch
13.30	Final Council Meetings (5)
14.30	Delegation Meeting (2)
14.45	Break
15.15	All delegates are seated in plenary room
15.30	Final Plenary Meeting Final Reports by Council Presidents Brief Closing Statements from Heads of Government (or replacement) Press Conference Final Act Signing Ceremony by Heads of Government Closing of MEC 20XX
17.00	End of MEC 20XX

NB some schools may be unable to return to their school/country on the last evening, so may stay an additional evening in the accommodation.

5.3.1 Urgent Debate

There will be an urgent debate on topics which will be given out either the day before or in the morning. In the past we have used two formats, depending on the complexity of the clauses proposed and the time available.

- Either format of the proposal will be a short enacting clause which can be amended. When the topics for debate are given out, it should be made clear that anyone can suggest an amendment. The topics are meant for amendment and additional statements (in support or not) should be discouraged.

- Or the clauses proposed will not be amendable. In that case, the minister may voice their opinions and a vote takes place.

There may be up to 3 or 4 topics for urgent debate. Again, it is up to the Presidency, President and Commission on the podium to decide who should chair which proposal for urgent debate.

A new procedure from 2024 is planned: the newspapers will come up with one common topic of breaking news which then will become the topic of the emergency debate..

Procedure:

Wednesday: agreement on the topic between press & media

Thursday evening: publish the breaking news in the newspapers/media

Friday morning: urgent debate

5.3.2 Final Act

By the end of the Friday morning Council sessions, all Proposals will need to be agreed, amended or discarded. Preambles are not amended and are not included in the Final Act. Chairs will need to use their Secretaries to keep a record of the exact wordings agreed displayed on the overhead projectors. Each Council President signs a final printed copy of each Council's Proposals at the end of Friday morning. For Council 1 the EU President will also sign the Final Act. These constitute the Final Act that is signed by each Head of Government on Wednesday afternoon.

5.3.3 Final plenary meeting and Closing ceremony

The final plenary meeting starts with reports of the Council Presidents and one minister per country (for pedagogical reasons this does not have to be the Head of Government). Then the EU President, the Head of Government and the Head of the Commission close the MEC. Statements of politicians should be brief and within the roleplay. They should under no circumstances contain thanks or outbursts of emotion.

The last part of the MEC is traditionally the signing of the Final Act, in alphabetical original language country order (see annex 4) and to the music of the European Anthem (note: put it on auto repeat, it is just a bit too short).

6 MEC2021: THE ONLINE EDITION

After the MEC2020 was cancelled because of the covid pandemic, a decision was taken to organise the first online edition of the Model European Council.

Because of logistical reasons, the Teams application was chosen as platform. One Team was created with one open channel per council. All pupils and advisors were added (as members) and the commission, president and presidency, as well as the MEC directors, were made owners. This worked exceptionally well, as it gave ownership to the pupils in charge of a council and made it possible for them to make the decision they considered necessary to run the councils as they saw fit. The only caveat was that pupils from outside of the eursc network only had limited access to the files section. They had, however, no problems in joining and participating in the meetings.

The programme was redistributed over five half days over a week (to limit screen time for pupils) but it was felt that because of that it was perhaps more exhausting, especially since pupils and teachers had to attend school in the mornings. In the evenings and at the request of the pupils an informal social get together was organised. The regular programme (including order of meetings, timing, press questions and urgent debate) was followed and among the advisors, there was a clear consensus that this worked very well.

In order to spice up the meetings, external speakers were invited. During the opening session, the Deputy Secretary General of the European Schools, Mr Andreas Beckmann, discussed his experience in the German Foreign Ministry, in the European Institutions and in the European Schools, focussing very much on the art of negotiation and reaching consensus. The closing keynote address was delivered by the President of the European Commission, Dr Ursula von der Leyen. She first focused on her role within the council and then interacted with the pupils, answering some of their questions.

As always, the conference was evaluated during an adviser's meeting. This is a brief summary of the conclusions:

- There was a clear advantage to having the presidency, president and commission in the same school.
- Some of the online feature (access to information in real time, starting (informal) meetings before the conference, ...) might be worth keeping during an in-situ conference.
- The media team interviews were well received, the Instagram account was a clear success.
- Keeping the newspaper format was positive, and the newspapers being published at different times was also appreciated.
- Sometimes the time for press questions could be increased, notably after the plenary sessions.
- The proposals were of an excellent quality, but perhaps too long for online proposals.

- Urgent debate was very successful, however, none were approved. Topics were:
 - As long as not everyone in the EU has been vaccinated, no vaccines produced within the EU shall be allowed to be exported. (QMV)
 - From July 1st on, non-essential travel within Europe will be limited to people with a valid vaccination pass, i.e. people who have been fully vaccinated with an EMA approved vaccine, who have recently recovered from Covid-19 (6 months) or who can provide a negative PCR test (of no more than 72 hours old). (QMV)
 - In light of the military coup in Myanmar, the European Union will no longer allow its banks and other companies to do business with the Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited (MEHL), Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), and any other organisation with direct links to the Myanmar military junta. (Unanimity)

7 ANNEXES

7.1 Annex 1: MEC - How to conduct a council (for president, presidency and commission)

1. Establish 'house rules' – should delegates put up their hands, how to vote, who counts the votes and writes them down, whether this resolution is QMV etc.
2. Make it clear that you will write down the names / countries of those who want to speak in order.
3. Summarise the debate when it seems necessary: 'Let's see where we are ...'
4. When the debate seems blocked and cannot progress, think creatively, consider inventive ways around blockages and see if people accept them – even throw the problem back to the floor and ask if anyone can see a way through the impasse. For instance, some countries may never accept the legalisation of heroin to lower drug deaths and crime, but they may accept it when coupled with an obligatory rehabilitation scheme.
5. Cut people who repeat endlessly the same point, who are speaking nonsense which will never be accepted and who are rambling without getting to the point.
6. Make sure you cover everyone – look to the extreme left and right; it's annoying to try and speak but the chair does not see you because you are sitting on the edge of the chair's sight.
7. When someone speaks, make sure everyone is listening. Hold the delegate from speaking until there is quiet and then let them speak. The alternative to this is frustrating chaos in which no one **listens** to anyone but everyone is speaking / shouting.
8. Despite the last point, sometimes you have to let the debate go, especially if it is trying to develop the discussion.
9. Use your authority to allow discussion which can be heard but don't let it stifle debate.
10. Make sure voting procedures are understood – clearly.
11. Make sure everyone knows what they are actually voting for – focus the delegates on the amendments to the proposition and then vote.
12. Keep calm – if you start shouting, being abusive or swearing then the delegates will perceive that you have 'lost it'.
13. Your job is to find consensus and a 'way through' to agreement. Sometimes agreement is impossible and it is best to cut your losses and move on.
14. Use the lobby to convince delegates to move on.
15. Enjoy it.

7.2 Annex 1b: Technical meeting on Monday (notes compiled by a pupil for MEC online)

- Greeting and welcome
- Attendance
- Informal information and gossip box
- Use of flags and country names
 - Cameras on at all times.
 - Optional Flag in the background
 - If we say your name, state your country before speaking.
- How the screen will be set up
 - Spotlighting
 - Sharing of screen
 - If you wish to speak, please raise your hand
 - Keep cameras on at all times
- Formal and informal language
 - You can use “I”
 - Always maintain a negotiating tone
 - Limit “uhmm” or other fillers. We’re all human, so obviously it will happen, it’s just a question of knowing what you want to say.
 - Turn off your mic when somebody else is talking, doesn’t really need an explanation, it’s just to not create an echo.
 - Not an MUN - No Points of information etc.
 - You have to be serious in the chat
 - If you want to discuss something between close allies you can request that we temporarily stop the meeting
- How to address the chair (moderating)
 - One chair will be screensharing on the document, and the other will be moderating. If you want to speak, raise your hand, the moderator will call on you. If the one screensharing answers, you can start debate directly with that person.
 - Stick to one point at a time, because maybe somebody wants to add onto it. If you have other points, note them down, we’ll get to them.
 - This is important, say something! We know this is the first MEC for a few of you, certainly the first online one, so don’t be scared to speak up. That also goes for support. If you want to support a clause, it’s helpful that you voice it.
- How to propose amendments through the chat
 - Should it happen that somebody wants to propose an amendment, you can raise your hand and ask “can I propose an amendment in the chat”. We’ll say yes, you’ll write it in the chat, and we can discuss it.

- How votes will be held
- Basics of proposals: start off with proposal 2,4. On Wednesday we will do 2,1. On Thursday – 2,3 on Friday 2,2
- Questions (are there any more questions?)

7.3 Annex 2: MEC - Writing a Proposal

1. Heading

Each proposal should have a heading which looks like this one:

MODEL EUROPEAN COUNCIL

MOL 2016

Council 1

The European Council

Presidency: (Name of pupil)

Commissioner: (Name of pupil)

EU President: (Name of pupil)

1.1: Procedure for readmission into the EU of regions which have become independent from a Member State:

Or this one for Councils 2-5

MODEL EUROPEAN COUNCIL

MOL 2016

Council 2

Foreign Affairs and Security

Presidency: Name of pupil

Commission: Name of pupil

2.1 Schengen Agreement and Migration

2. Numbering of the proposals:

Generally, the Presidency takes proposal numbers 1 & 2 and the Commission 3 & 4. In Council 1 the EU President would use 5. These are prefaced by the number of the council e.g. 1.4, 3.1 etc... e.g.:

1.1: Procedure for readmission into the EU of regions which have become independent from a Member State:

Font: any of the usual fonts will do – 12 point is probably best size.

3. Preamble:

The preamble gives the justification for the enacting clauses which follow. They usually begin with a participle – either a present participle: *Acknowledging the need for...* or a past participle: *Concerned at ...*

They are ranked in the Roman numeral form: i, ii, iii, iv, v

They avoid suggesting any specific proposal, but contain themselves to supporting the enacting clauses. They are rarely discussed and never amended.

Some of the phrases opening a clause in the preamble are:

Acknowledging the fact that
Acknowledging the need for
Aware of
Bearing in mind
Being aware that
Believing that
Concerned about
Concerned at
Conscious of
Conscious that
Considering the
Deploring (the effects of)

Gravely concerned about
Insisting on
Needing to provide
Noting
Noting the importance of
Recalling that the
Recognising that
Recognising the fact (that)
Further recognising the
Regretting that
Requiring the
Taking into consideration the

4. Enacting Clauses:

These are prefaced by the phrase

The Presidency proposes to the European Parliament and to the European Council:

Schlägt die Präsidentschaft dem Europäischen Parlament und dem Europarat vor:

La présidence propose au parlement européen et au conseil européen :

and then ranked by letter: a, b, c, etc.

(In the above examples, 'Presidency' could be substituted by 'Commission' or 'The EU President' if he or she has written the proposal.)

For example:

The Presidency proposes to the European Parliament and the European Council that:

a. All member states supply Greece and Italy with naval resources to patrol the shores of the Mediterranean and humanitarian aid to refugees in camps on land;

Proposals should be controversial, however, if too controversial they risk generating more heat than light. A proposal such as:

Preamble:

- i) Aware that the decriminalisation of cannabis in The Netherlands has not led to widespread unrest;*

The Presidency proposes to the European Parliament and the European Council that:

- a. Cannabis use be decriminalised for personal use across the EU.

The vetoes will be thrown around like confetti. Though controversial, the proposal is effectively dead. Countries have to take these resolutions back to their home parliaments and try to add them on to the statute book. Few governments could agree to this in council, take it home and then survive the next election.

However, this does not rule cannabis completely out:

Preamble:

- i. Aware that the decriminalisation of cannabis in The Netherlands has not led to widespread unrest;*
- ii. noting that the medicinal use of cannabis greatly benefits sufferers of multiple sclerosis;*

The Presidency proposes to the European Parliament and the European Council that:

- a. personal cannabis use for registered multiple sclerosis sufferers be decriminalised across the EU.

is a proposal that could generate useful discussion and would expose the division between more liberal countries and more conservative ones.

The proposals should be realistic enough to allow compromise but not so open as to invite immediate universal agreement. Consider this one:

Preamble:

- i. gravely concerned that CO₂ emissions cause global warming;*

The Presidency proposes to the European Parliament and the European Council that:

- a. EU countries should try as vigorously as possible to cut CO₂ emissions.

is worthy but dull and imprecise. Who would vote against such a proposal?

Concrete proposals are usually more effective:

Preamble:

- i. gravely concerned that increasing CO₂ emissions intensify global warming;*

The Presidency proposes to the European Parliament and the European Council that:

- a. all new coal, gas and petroleum electricity generating stations be fitted with CO₂ filters;
- b. CO₂ filters be fitted to all existing hydrocarbon electricity generating stations by 2020.

Costs need to be taken into account when making a proposal, the EU has finite resources and nations are very concerned about how the EU spends their money.

Avoid making a new agency for every proposal. A new agency increases EU bureaucracy and costs and often effectively 'shelves' the proposal.

5. German and French

Here follow some translations of certain phrases in English into German and French the accuracy of which is not guaranteed. Any phrases used should be checked by a native speaker!

Preamble

ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN
whereas	considérant	unter Hinweis
having regard to	vu	in Kenntnis
aware of	conscient de	im Bewusstsein
believing	estimant	in der Auffassung
welcoming	prenant note avec satisfaction	nimmt mit Genugtuung
	accueillant favorablement	
gravely concerned	vivement préoccupé	tief betroffen
deploring	déplorant	bestürzt über

Enacting Clauses

ENGLISH	FRENCH	GERMAN
<i>calls on..</i>	<i>invite</i>	<i>fordert</i>
<i>welcomes</i>	<i>accueille favorablement</i>	<i>begrusst</i>
<i>deplores</i>	<i>déplore</i>	<i>bedauert</i>
<i>stresses</i>	<i>insiste</i>	
<i>emphasizes</i>		<i>betont die Notwendigkeit</i>
<i>points out</i>	<i>souligne</i>	<i>weist auf die Notwendigkeit</i>
<i>proposes</i>	<i>propose</i>	<i>schlägt vor</i>
<i>takes the view</i>	<i>est d'avis</i>	<i>ist der Ansicht</i>
<i>approves</i>	<i>approuve</i>	<i>befürwortet</i>
<i>reiterates</i>	<i>rappelle</i>	
<i>supports</i>	<i>appuie</i>	<i>billigt</i>
<i>recognizes</i>	<i>reconnait</i>	<i>erkennt an</i>
<i>invites</i>	<i>invite</i>	<i>fordert auf</i>
<i>regrets</i>	<i>regrette</i>	<i>bedauert</i>
<i>is convinced</i>	<i>est convaincu</i>	
<i>recommends</i>	<i>recommande</i>	
<i>requests/asks</i>	<i>demande</i>	
<i>acknowledges</i>	<i>reconnaît</i>	
<i>rejects</i>	<i>rejette</i>	<i>lehnt ab</i>

7.4 Annex 3: Taking the Presidency or Commission of the MEC

The skills of running the Presidency or Commission are different from those required to be a delegation. You will be largely 'country neutral' and your preparation time will not be spent in exhaustive investigation of your own country but in practising the skills necessary to run councils, reach compromises, answer questions from the press and write proposals. Of all the experiences offered by the MEC, this is the most adrenalin-packed one of any team – it also looks great on your CV or in your personal statement.

You've taken over the Presidency or the Commission. What now?

Take a look at the Councils and see if you like them. Would you like to scrap one and replace it or introduce a different title to an existing council: eg *Council 5: Environment*; may be changed to *Council 5: Environment and Health* if you want to introduce health issues. (There is a limitation on this – it would be unusual for Health to be included in *Foreign* or *Heads of State or Government*.) In order to change the councils, Commission and Presidency need to agree so some discussion will be needed. However, it is possible, as long as other participants know very early as they may already have been preparing the topics. (It would be unusual to change Councils 1 (Heads of Government), 2 (Foreign) or 3 (Ecofin).

Take a look at the provisional agendas: again, do they cover the areas you wish to cover? Are they up to date? Is there a pressing issue you wish to bring into discussion in the council? You are the minister / commissioner in charge of the council and have a great deal of authority in deciding which issues should be discussed. Deciding topics for proposals should be done in consultation between Commission and Presidency to avoid duplication.

Invite / consider requests for topics to be included in councils from other delegations. If Hungary, for example, feels that the economic crisis in Eastern Europe is being ignored, they may ask you to include it in a proposal. There's a good chance that if one country feels neglected, others do too. You may consider the request and accept it or reject it.

Practice: you will need some practice in running councils. A good way to do this is to run mock councils in class which resemble the workings of a council. The content of the debates does not have to be specifically political in nature and the roles taken do not have to be countries. Taking over a few lessons for debate is justifiable as the skills developed form part of the set of skills you should be practising in L1 and L2 anyway. Religion and Ethics classes (perhaps combined) are also a useful place in which to run a practice debate. Putting a topic in the form of an EU proposal requires a little more work (roles have to be assigned for participants, participants should know how to amend a resolution, they have to be prepared and realise that they are simulating the process of making legislation). However, this is easily done and once understood, it does not need to be restated. Indeed, using the format of an EU proposal, adds structure to what sometimes turns out to be a debate without resolution in which people feel they have 'had their say' but often that they have not moved the debate forward. Even if the mock proposal fails to be amended, pupils understand the difficulty of making legislation in certain sensitive areas.

This is how I usually set up a mock council:

1. Introduce the class to the proposal (though be careful not to begin the debate);
2. show them how to amend a proposal;
3. give out their roles (you may have two or three people in one role if the debate is non-country specific) and explain that they must stay in that role, no matter what their own feelings on the topic are;
4. ask them to research the topic for homework;
5. ask them to prepare amendments and justifications before they arrive;

On the day of the mock council, I may ask certain people to begin speaking in their own (non-English) language to replicate the conditions in the MEC. I don't interfere at all, even if the debate is a shambles, the pupil running the debate has learned a very valuable lesson.

Knowledge: be familiar with terms such as QMV, Preamble, Enacting Clauses, amendment etc. Some proposals will require unanimity when voting, others QMV – make sure you understand how voting procedures are run. (You will be told which topics require QMV by the advisors – but it is you who will run the voting.)

Work as a team: The Presidency's *Heads of State or Government* opens and closes the MEC, introduces guest speakers, deals with the press etc. alongside the President of the European Council and the Head of the Commission. It's a very busy post, therefore, do not be afraid to delegate. Let another member of the team run the emergency debate, a different one answer questions from the press, another take over a speech...

The European President: this position was inaugurated by the Lisbon Treaty. The European President is head of *Heads of State or Government*. The Presidency and Commission will have to work with the Ursula von der Leyen figure chairing councils, debates and writing proposals.

Writing Proposals: begin early, decide which proposals will be written by the Commission and which by the Presidency. Two proposals should be written by the Presidency and two by the Commission. The Presidency member should work in close cooperation with the commissioner to make sure neither of you duplicates effort (i.e. has not chosen the same topic to write on). Your teacher will have many examples from previous MECs and you should also consult the annex *Writing a Proposal*. It's often useful to work with a teacher or someone you trust – they can tighten up the language use, make suggestions etc. If you need examples of former proposals, contact the MEC Directors or your advisors.

That's all and enjoy the Presidency / Commission.

7.5 Annex 4: Running Order

Belgique/België
България
Česká Republika
Danmark
Deutschland
Eesti
Éire/Ireland
Ελλάδα
España
France
Hrvatska
Italia
Κύπρος/Kıbrıs
Latvija
Lietuva
Luxembourg
Magyarország
Malta
Nederland
Österreich
Polska
Portugal
România
Slovenija
Slovensko
Suomi/Finland
Sverige