

# MODEL EUROPEAN COUNCIL (MEC) 2014

Brussels, 26-28 March 2014

Last March Brussels was the host city of the 2014 edition of the Model European Council. This event, known as MEC for short, is organised by and for all the European Schools. Essentially, MEC is a two-day simulation of the European Council and the Council of the European Union (yes, these are two different institutions; feel free to look them up). Once a year students from every European School and one national school in Sweden, come together to re-enact an EU-summit, discussing and, hopefully, overcoming the challenges facing the “real” EU ministers. In total, about 170 students took part in this year’s event, each one filling a specific role.

My name is Nico Spruit, and I’m a student from ES Varese. At the beginning of the school year, I was selected as one of the lucky ten 7<sup>th</sup> year students from our school who would go to Brussels in March. I was going to be the UK Prime Minister, heading the United Kingdom delegation. The other country given to Varese was Poland. In the months preceding MEC 2014, my fellow “ministers” and I had to prepare ourselves intensively to know all the necessary economic, social, environmental and political aspects of the countries we were going to represent. We were guided in this phase by our teachers, Mr. Cawthorne and Ms. Muller.

When the 26<sup>th</sup> of March dawned, we took an early flight to Brussels, arriving there at 8am. We had most of the day free, so we had a chance to visit Brussels 1 (the school hosting the event) and the city centre. We visited Brussels’ iconic *Grand Place* and explored the small streets of the old city. By 5pm we were back in Brussels 1, where we had our first chance to meet our fellow European School students in the first general briefing of the event. After this, the host families arrived to bring their guests to their new, temporary homes. And with this, MEC 2014 had effectively begun.

The 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> were the real “summit” days. We were hosted by Eurocontrol, where we were provided with fantastic facilities to ensure this was going to be a successful event. The two days were packed with hours of heated council discussions, press conferences (there were also students playing the part of journalists) and, most importantly, opportunities to make new friends.

If I were asked what was the most valuable aspect of the event, I would have to reply that the opportunity to meet fellow ES students, challenging them verbally in the debates and having a laugh afterwards, and generally having a great time together while doing something you enjoy, was definitely the best and most unforgettable aspect of MEC 2014.

The days flew by, and before we knew, it was the end of our time together: two days of debate, new experiences and a lot of fun. MEC 2014 was the fantastic experience I have described thanks to all the people making it possible: the organisers, the teachers guiding us, Eurocontrol hosting it, the host families being so kind to us all and of course, the actual students bringing it to life.

To conclude this article, I would like to recommend participating in MEC to every student reading this. If you are interested in politics and debate, MEC is the perfect opportunity for you. I can honestly say that it was one of the most amazing experiences of my life, so really, go for it!

Link: <http://modeleuropeanparliament.blogspot.de/>

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