



Briefing note for lecturers and students: EUTOPIA virtual simulation exercise on draft European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)

When? February 12-13, 2024

Where? Online. Access will be provided to a dedicated VUB Canvas course

What? Simulation exercise on intra and inter-institutional negotiations of draft European Media Freedom Act

Note that the simulation will take place in English. Sufficient command of English is required.

Phase 0 (Sign-up) by January 14, 2024

Students from EUTOPIA partner universities sign up to participate through their university EUTOPIA simulation coordinator by January 14, 2024

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New EUTOPIA partner universities: EUTOPIA project officer, Els Decoster, els.decoster@vub.be

The contact points serve as intermediaries and assist students in their preparation and participation in the simulation exercise.

Phase 1 (Preparation) by February 4, 2024

In the **first phase**, the VUB EUTOPIA simulation coordinators will assign alter-ego roles to each student, dividing the major roles (presidents of the European Commission, Council Presidency, leaders of political groups) across universities.

Students receive their alter-ego role and briefing notes by January 19, 2024 and have one briefing session with the VUB EUTOPIA simulation coordinators on January 23, 2024.

Then students familiarize themselves with the topic, the background negotiations and the individual position of their alter ego (member state position, political party position, or interest group position). Students need to prepare and submit their alter-ego starting policy position by February 4, 2024.

Phases 2-4 (Simulation) on February 12-13, 2024

In the **second phase**, the simulation starts with meetings of the Council of the EU configuration and the European Parliament committee on February 12 (all day). In these meetings, students present their alter-ego starting policy position and negotiate towards Council configuration and Parliament committee positions.

In the **third phase**, on February 13 (morning), a small group of the Council and Parliament meet with the European Commission in a trialogue setting to present their separate positions and work towards a common position, depending on the evolution of the negotiations.

In the **fourth phase**, on February 13 (afternoon), the Council of the EU configuration and the European Parliament committee briefly meet again to deliberate and vote on the outcome of the trialogue. In a final plenary, the outcome of the negotiations (separate or common positions) is presented.

During the negotiations, the European Commission needs to be in constant contact. Their mission is to make sure the proposal continues to reflect the position of the Commission.

Special roles will be invited to brief the European Parliament and Council on the position of the interest group they represent. EU special bodies will present their opinion in a similar fashion. Special roles are encouraged to lobby their positions creatively throughout the negotiations.

The media is a vital source of information for all parties involved in the negotiations and will keep everyone up to speed with recent developments, as they unfold via social media channels.

Phase 5 (Survey) on February 13, 2024

At the end of day 2, the simulation ends with a survey and **joint evaluation** where all participants will share their experience and reflect on specific learning aspects and tactics used in the game.

Why? Puts theory of EU policy-making into practice, allowing students to gain firsthand experience of EU institutional negotiations, rules and strategies!

Students will receive an EUTOPIA certificate of participation and micro-credential upon completing the simulation exercise.

Cost? Free. Vrije Universiteit Brussel will cover the cost of participation and organisation.

Context? This EUTOPIA virtual simulation exercise is organised within the EUTOPIA learning community on 'Europe in the World'. For more information, please consult <https://eutopia-university.eu>

Possibility to attend online Winter School on EU Policy-Making

The simulation is part of the online Jean Monnet Winter School on EU Policy-Making: Analysing Digital Rights & Diplomacy in Today's EU (5-16 February, 2024).

VUB and EUTOPIA students are entitled to a 1.000 EUR discount and can attend the full Winter School for a reduced tuition fee of 600 EUR.

The intensive two-week Winter School is a 100% online interactive programme that provides participants a 'crash course' in European Union Policy Making. Its focus area is digital rights and diplomacy, touching on policy discussions related to freedom of expression, data protection, AI, disinformation resilience, platform responsibility, and digital development.

The Winter School on EU Policy Making is organised by the Brussels School of Governance at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel as part of a Jean Monnet Chair, and is made possible with the support of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. For more information on the Winter School, please consult: <https://brussels-school.be/education/winter-school-eu-policy-making>