

# Practical information



## Study visits

Two study visits were carried out during the project, the first to Strasbourg and the second to Brussels, two important cities in the European Union and home to the headquarters of several of their institutions and bodies. The aim of these activities was to get first-hand information of the operation of European institutions and put the knowledge acquired in the previous training courses into practice.

The study visits were also a transnational forum where the young participants from each project member country shared their expectations, opinions and experiences. **See annex 6.**

The first study visit to Strasbourg took place after the first two training courses “Values and identify of Europe and the European Union” and the “Structure and makeup of the European Union”, and the second after the two courses taught during the project’s second year: “Bodies comprising the European Union” and “European Construction” to Brussels.

In the organisation of the study visits, equal attention was paid to developing the agenda as to the selection of the participants with a view to getting the most out of an activity such as this.

The study visit participants were selected by the youth participants in the theoretical training courses in each country. The following requirements needed to be met by the five representatives from each country (maximum group size 25):

- positive leadership skills
- linguistic skills

After the participants returned home, they were called on to transmit what they learned to the rest of the group from the training courses by organising conferences with photographs, sharing of the material received from the different organisations during the visits and lectures on who's who in the EU scene just as they had learned during the study visits.



It was also important to include guided visits to the European Union institutions (like the European Parliament, for example) as well as interviews with key actors able to give the participants an up-close look at the subjects of interest to the group.

## Study visit to Strasbourg

The aim of this first study visit, and of the first two training courses which preceded it, was to offer our young participants a broad view of Europe, providing the opportunity to analyse the concept of Europe as a huge continent not solely centred on the European Union.

Considering that the two training courses preceding the visit provided information and insight into the values which Europe stands for, how it emerged, the symbols identifying it and how it is structured in terms of its political system, we thought it essential to design the agenda of the first visit around the Council of Europe.

Due to calendar conflicts and lack of institutional availability, the group was unable to visit the headquarters of the European Court of Human Rights<sup>15</sup> or the Strasbourg headquarters of the European Parliament<sup>16</sup>.

As for official visits and receptions we were able to arrange interviews or guided visits to the following institutions:

<sup>15</sup> See the web page to arrange group visits: <http://www.echr.coe.int/ECHR/EN/Header/Visitors/Information+for+visiting+groups/How+to+request+a+visit/>

<sup>16</sup> See the web page to arrange group visits: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/public/staticDisplay.do?language=EN&id=50>

– **Visit to the headquarters of the Council of Europe.**

To visit the headquarters of the Council of Europe<sup>17</sup> in Strasbourg, you will need to arrange a group visit via their web page.

During the visit, participants were introduced to the founding values of the Council of Europe and had a first-hand look at the institution’s objectives and its powers at the European political level.

– **Interview with the Council of Europe’s DG Youth and Sports.**

To arrange an interview or visit DG Youth and Sports, go to their web page or contact them directly by e-mail<sup>18</sup>.

At our interview, technicians from the Council of Europe’s DG Youth and Sports presented the institution’s political priorities and encouraged the young Roma to get involved in these actions. Priorities can be reviewed at the DG Youth and Sports website<sup>19</sup>.

They also provided information on the main resources which the CoE has earmarked for youth activities<sup>20</sup> and highlighted the fact that their programmes are compatible with the ones promoted by the European Union within the framework of the Youth Partnership<sup>21</sup>.

– **Interview with the Council of Europe Roma and Traveller Division.**

The Roma and Traveller Division<sup>22</sup> of the Council of Europe is the unit which works directly on behalf of the Roma community in all of the Council of Europe Member States.

– **Interview with advisors to the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner.**

At this interview, the advisor of the Human Rights Commissioner, Thomas Hammarberg<sup>23</sup>, presented the main actions which the Commissioner is taking to defend human rights.

<sup>17</sup> Visits to the Council of Europe: [http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/About\\_Coe/visits.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Com/About_Coe/visits.asp)

<sup>18</sup> DG Youth and Sports: <http://www.coe.int/youth / youth@coe.int>

<sup>19</sup> The main lines of action of DG Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe\\_youth/CoE\\_and\\_young\\_people\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Coe_youth/CoE_and_young_people_en.asp)

<sup>20</sup> Resources which the Council of Europe makes available to youth: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Fin\\_support/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Fin_support/default_en.asp)

<sup>21</sup> Visit the website of the Youth Partnership at: <http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/>

<sup>22</sup> See their website to arrange interviews and/or visits: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/Contacts/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/Contacts/default_en.asp)

<sup>23</sup> Portal of the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Commissioner: [http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/default_en.asp)

## Study visit to Brussels

The second study visit, this time to Brussels, took place in November 2008. Preceded by the two training courses entitled "*Bodies comprising the European Union*" and "*European construction*", the aim of this visit was to have a first-hand look at the operation of the different European Union institutions and



again put the young people from the partner countries in contact with one another (see annex 9).

This time the agenda focused on visiting the main institutions of the European Union and bodies playing an important role in the area of youth and the Roma population.

Summing up, the agenda of the second study visit to Brussels was as follows:

### – Visit to the European Parliament.

Visits to the European Parliament may be arranged through their web page three months in advance<sup>24</sup>.

The official visit focused on the operation of the European Parliament, the latter's institutional relationship with the European Commission and what the European Parliament means for European citizens.

The participants also had the opportunity to visit a plenary session to see first-hand how the euro-chamber works.

### – Visit to the European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs<sup>25</sup>.

This official reception gave the participants a first-hand view of the European Commission's policy priorities when it comes to the Roma community in Europe:

- Design of a Roma policy strategy;
- Fight against discrimination;
- Move forward with the results of the European Roma Summit<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Group visits to the European Parliament: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/public/staticDisplay.do?language=EN&id=50>

<sup>25</sup> Use the following link to arrange group visits or to organise information conferences at any European Commission DG: [http://ec.europa.eu/contact/index2\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/contact/index2_en.htm)

<sup>26</sup> For further information on the first European Roma Summit see: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=105>

In view of the fact that the object of the project is to train and inform Roma youth regarding European issues and promote more active citizenship, it made sense to visit the institution responsible for developing social policy targeting the Roma community in Europe.

### – Visit to the European Commission DG Education and Culture<sup>27</sup>.

The Directorate-General for Education and Culture is the main body responsible for Youth policy in Europe. It is very important to involve young people in the implementation of these youth policies, starting with the dissemination of their programmes and priorities.

At the time of the visit, this DG's on-line consultation for the review of youth policies in Europe for the upcoming period was still open and our project's youth participants were encouraged to actively participate in the consultation process.

### – Interview with the European Commission's DG Justice, Freedom and Security<sup>28</sup>.

The meeting with the representative of DG Justice, Freedom and Security took the form of a presentation on the fundamental rights acquired by European Union citizens when States become members.

### – Attendance at a public parliamentary group debate.

During the Brussels study visit we were fortunate enough to be able to sit in on a public debate organised by one of the principal European parliamentary groups.

The public debate was entitled "Towards a European Roma strategy" and was held at the Brussels headquarters of the European Parliament convening the main social organisations to table proposals and ideas of how to contribute to a single European policy protecting the rights of Roma throughout Europe.

Our project took part in this debate through its transnational coordinator who had the opportunity to speak about the objectives and role that Roma youth should play in the design of this European Roma strategy.

Our group took great interest in this public debate which was organised by one of the Roma members of the European Parliament<sup>29</sup>. At the end of the session, our participants had the opportunity to personally meet the people involved in the pan-European associative movement involving Roma.

<sup>27</sup> DG Education and Culture Website: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html)

<sup>28</sup> DG Justice, Freedom and Security Web page: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/justice\\_home/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/justice_home/index_en.htm)

<sup>29</sup> Would you like to meet the members of the Euro-chamber? See: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members.do?language=en>

– **Visit to the European headquarters of the Open Society Institute – OSI.**

Open Society Institute<sup>30</sup> is an organisation which implements programmes to improve the socio-economic situation of the Roma population throughout Europe.

The aim of this visit was to give the young Roma participants the chance to see what this organisation is offering to Roma youth throughout Europe<sup>31</sup>. Scholarships and internships at European institutions are their main lines of action with young people.

– **Visit to the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA<sup>32</sup>)**

The EACEA is the body of DG Education and Culture which manages programmes related to culture and youth within the European Commission. Moreover, it is the body financing "Roma Youth - European Citizenship".

The aim of this meeting and the visit to the EACEA facility was to take a closer look at the Youth in Action programme, the main resource for young people in Europe<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> To arrange a visit to OSI headquarters in Brussels, see: <http://www.soros.org/about/offices#brussels>

<sup>31</sup> Initiatives targeting the Roma community: [http://www.soros.org/initiatives/brussels/focus/integration/focus\\_areas/roma](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/brussels/focus/integration/focus_areas/roma)

<sup>32</sup> Visit the EACEA portal at: <http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/index.htm>

<sup>33</sup> The EACEA manages the Youth in Action programme: [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index\\_en.htm](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm)

## Europe Day

The aim was to transmit the knowledge acquired during the training stage and the importance of celebrating Europe Day as another exercise of active citizenship<sup>34</sup>. Organising a Europe Day activity puts the knowledge acquired during the training courses into practice.

Europe Day marked the official launch of the project and was the first activity with the young people.

As from the second training course “Structure and makeup of the European Union,” and especially during the third training course “Bodies comprising the European Union”, this activity was designed in each of the partner countries and implemented on 9 May 2008, representing the multiplier effect of the participants as agents promoting European citizenship among young people.

Europe Day was celebrated on 9 May 2008 and each group of participants taking part in the training course taught prior to that date took an active part in festivities celebrated at high schools, primary schools, associations and other fora where educational activities targeting Roma young people take place.

The act was topped off with the reading of a manifesto (see annex 8) prepared by a group of young participants in one of the partner countries which also had a media and institutional impact.



<sup>34</sup> In organising entertaining activities we consulted: <http://europa.eu/europago/>

## Europe Day Activity

### Gymkana on the creation of Europe

**Duration:**

1:30 to 2:00 hours.

**Participants:**

50 youngsters between the ages of 12 and 14.

**Team leaders:**

Between 8 and 10. The team leaders are members of the group which took part in the training course.

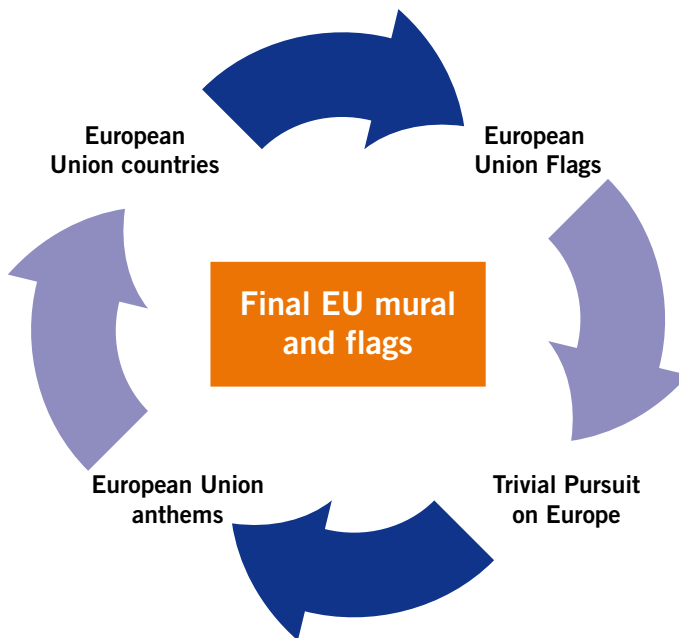
**Venue:**

Patio of the school or indoor sports centre.

**Procedure:**

Participants are given brief instructions and are then given a summary of the European Union creation process which they will then try to recreate in the four tasks they need to carry out before creating Europe amongst all participants.

**Tasks:**





**A) European Union flags:**

Participants are given miniature flags of the different EU countries in black and white and must colour them in. They are given hints to help them and coloured models so that they can complete the task.

During the activity they are told stories about the history of the flags.

**Duration:**

15 minutes

**Material:**

- 100 to 150 black and white flags
- Coloured pencils
- Mural with flags

**B) Trivial Pursuit on Europe: (see annex 7)**

To build Europe one must have at least a minimum knowledge of other countries. The aim of this task is to learn something more about the 25 countries of the European Union such as capital cities, year of accession, football teams, famous athletes, famous artists, bordering countries, whether it is on the coast or not, currency, etc.

This test is done in the form of a contest with participants forming two teams. Questions alternate from one team to the other, the one answering correctly winning a star, the team with the most stars being declared the winner.

**Duration:**

15 minutes

**Materials:**

- Question and answer cards
- Yellow stars

**C) European Union anthems:**

All Member Countries and the Union itself have an anthem.

The participants' task is to identify the anthems of each country. They listen to the different anthems and are given hints as to which country they could be from.

**Example:** The Portuguese anthem

**Hints:** This anthem is from a southern European country which is close to Spain where they speak Portuguese.

**Duration:**

15 minutes

**Materials:**

- The national anthems of EU Member States
- Lap top computer.
- Hint cards

**D) European Union countries:**

The European Union is built, first and foremost, of countries with their own particular cultures, languages and peoples.

The aim of this task is to learn something about each one of the countries. First the outline of the country, then its location, language, most important monuments, capital city, etc. are revealed.

**Procedure:**

Participants are given the outline of a country and if they guess correctly straight away they are asked to tell everything they know about that country to fill out the information sheet. If they are not able to indentify it, they are given the hints one by one until they guess what country is being described. This task consists of identifying countries based on the elements comprising them.

**Duration:**

15 minutes

**Materials:**

- Country outlines
- Country information cards

**Card**

<b>Country:</b>
Capital city:
Language:
Location, borders:
Monuments of interest:
Important locations:

When all of the tasks are completed (approximately one hour), a final test is given on *The Creation of Europe*.

For this part, the participants must paste the country silhouettes on a mural to form a map of Europe.

Once the map has been completed, they must paste the flags on each of the EU Member Countries.

And to finish up, they draw the map of the European Union and can listen to the European Union anthem.

**Duration:**

30 minutes

**Materials:**

- Outlines of each country, cut so that they all fit together like a puzzle.
- European Union anthem
- Large piece of blue construction paper
- Yellow stars (12)