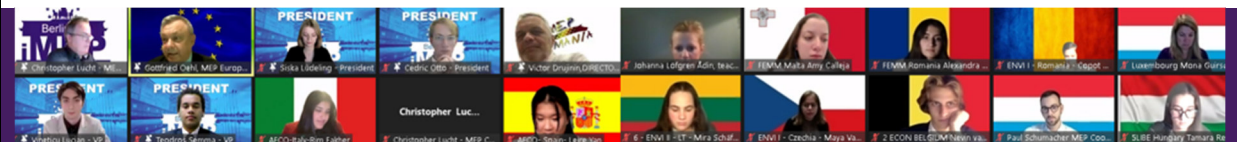




3rd Digital Conference
54th international session of the
Model European Parliament
in Berlin, Germany
10. - 14. November 2021



Summary
Democracy First

The 54th international MEP paves the way –
Young Europeans become Berliners

"This MEP session offers you the chance to become Berliners as Berlin stands for freedom and the power of democratic revolution". With this motivating invitation the 54th session of the international MEP in Berlin, organized by MEP-Germany, kicked off.



In this online session 140 young people from 24 European countries were called upon under the motto – “Democracy first” to discuss important political and social challenges with a European dimension in 10 committees and to propose innovative solutions in the form of resolutions. The topics were based on the 11 EU Youth Goals and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. The resolutions aimed to make the world, Europe and our societies fairer, more sustainable and more youthful, so that - as the Hungarian delegate described it - the world would be as colorful as a Rubik's cube, or perhaps even more so.

Youth policy as a give and take

The opening ceremony already provided a real firework of impressions. After the emotional European anthem, there were very vivid speeches by Biliana Sirakova, EU Youth Coordinator, Christin Knüpfer MEP Alumna, as well as iMEP President Cedric.



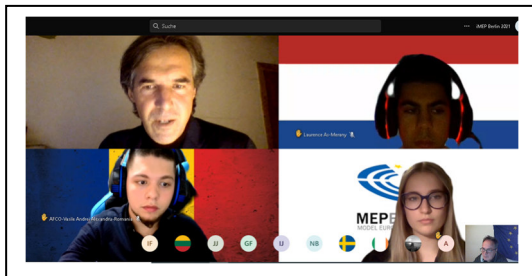
There was a lively discussion with Biliana Sirakova about the future of the European youth. The coming year has been proclaimed the European Year of Youth and so the EU is planning various actions in which young people can directly participate. According to Biliana Sirakova, the EU youth policy is a give and take: The EU has numerous offers such as Erasmus plus or the European Solidarity Program. On the other hand, these offers should also stimulate and empower young people to get involved and to raise their voices.

In the other speeches the topic of German history was spotlighted as at the beginning of November, reunification and the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9 are present everywhere in Germany. But it was also about tips to the delegates for the coming intense days. This can be summarized as follows: Listen, think critically, be open and humble, look ahead, seize the opportunity, reflect on what you have learned and have fun.



The 24 participating delegations presented colorful and innovative introductory videos and speeches. These offered basic information as well as trivia about the countries of Europe - such as the "important" fact that Slovenia is the only country in the world where LOVE occurs.

The added value of Europe

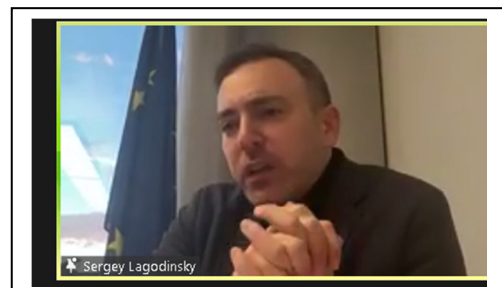


In preparatory talks, ten experts answered the delegates' questions for an hour each. Experts were drawn from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from a Stanford professor to an activist for women's rights; from an international speaker of the

Landesjugendring to a member of the European Parliament. Thus well-prepared, the delegates then went into the two-day committee meetings, joining the different views from all over Europe. The difficult task was to mold the respective national perspectives into a European compromise. For as one of the committee chairs put it: compromise is not a means of politics, it is the goal! Or as Angela Merkel recently put it in reference to her talks with the French President: "Even if the initial ideas were mostly different, we have always succeeded in bringing together the different inspirations and making something more out of them than what we thought on our own". In other words: That is the European added value.

Democracy first – but with more social dimension

In order to further develop this value among the young delegates, real MEPs were available for in-depth discussions: In addition to Delara Burkhardt, our MEP Association Chair, and Rainer Wieland, EP Vice-President, this was especially Sergey Lagodinsky from



the EP Group "The Greens/European Free Alliance". The young people were very intensively immersed in the topic "Democracy first": The questions why populists



were so successful in Europe and what could be done against this visibly challenged Mr. Lagodinsky. He said that they, the populists, were primarily concerned with addressing citizens directly and unfiltered without the mediation of the media, parties or parliaments and institutions, so that the latter could not question their emotionalizing stories peppered with fake news. On the other hand, global developments and trade flows were challenging traditional structures and attitudes. Many people were unprepared for this, he said, and would then seek simple and one-dimensional solutions, which they would also find with populists. As a solution, Lagodinsky suggested that democracy could not stand on its own, but always had to take social issues into account. This was neglected, especially in Eastern Europe after the democratic revolutions, and far too one-sided a focus was placed on liberalizing the economy.

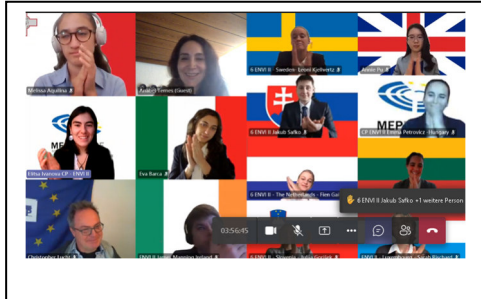
The Diversity of the Sound of Germany



The iMEP was not only about politics but also about culture and relaxation. Here a Kahoot quiz, there a BINGO on wonder.me and then on Saturday evening our highlight: the Eurovision Song Contest - The Sound of Germany. It was amazing to see which pop pearls are known beyond the borders of the German-speaking countries. Of course, Nena, Lena and Nicole were among them. But great art was offered by the video from Norway to the classic children's rhyme "Backe, Backe Kuchen". The two German delegations could not really score with Atemlos and Griechischer Wein. The competition was simply too strong, especially the videos from Estonia, Sweden and Luxembourg (Denkmal by Wir sind Helden; Forever Young, Was wollen wir trinken; Ab in den Urlaub) left a strong impression. In the end, the Netherlands won with a joint dance performance and a self-made video to the song by Bosse "Frankfurt Oder".



Democracy is a hard sell



As expected the 10 resolutions proposed exciting, innovative and controversial solutions to current challenges – democracy at its best. These included the introduction of social school activities between lessons, a reforestation program in cities, and the indictment of China before the UN Human

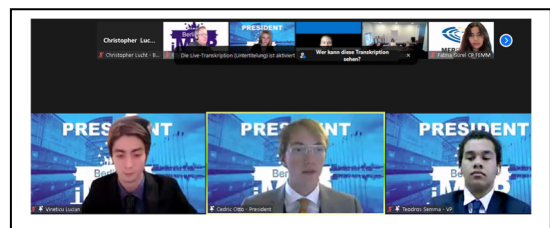
Rights Court for the suppression of the opposition in Hong Kong. In addition, the assembly became heated with the amendments to delete some Operational Clauses (OCs). And so there were also some downers. In particular, the vote on lowering the voting age to 16 caused a minor sensation, as this was, to the surprise of many, rejected by a majority. Finally, the most exciting debate revolved around measures to combat hate speech against women on the Internet. Among other things, many delegates did not want to see the point that online violence can be just as dangerous as physical violence: the resolution was defeated by a one-vote majority. The FEMM committee took it “sportswomanlike”: The MEP is - strictly speaking - only a game, a simulation.

After 10 hours of discussions, one thing was certain: democracy is sometimes a hard sell. Convincing someone of a certain opinion is not a matter of course. 5 resolutions were adopted by the delegates, 5 resolutions on the other hand were sometimes - as I said - only one vote short of a majority and were thus rejected.

From discussions to action

In the end, besides a lot of praise and enthusiasm, there were also some cautious tones mixed into the Closing Ceremony. Gottfried Oehl from MEP Europe quoted John F. Kennedy with the modified saying:

"Don't think about what Europe can do for you, but what you can do for Europe." And organizer Christopher Lucht encouraged delegates to stay politically involved in European unification, for example with the Young European





Federalists or MEP Alumni. resident Siska notes at the end of the 5 days that with the resolutions everyone participated in the political decision-making process. Your voice was heard. "So remember never to reject a good discussion. You will learn so much when you are forced to listen". At the very end, the baton was passed to the upcoming MEP team, to Lucien and Victor Drujinin from MEP Romania - and how could it be otherwise, in the form of a chunk of the Berlin Wall. The wheel has turned full circle: 140 Europeans have become Berliners.

Of course, a report of this kind can only offer a glimpse of how the project actually affects the participants. Therefore, here is a quote from a student's evaluation:

"Thank you for offering us this great opportunity. My parents can't understand why I stay up all night, sprint to my room after school to sit down in front of laptop for hours and worship a digital document as if my life depended on it. Neither do I. I think it's a kind of addiction which just can't let me go."

The project was part of Erasmus plus. The results will now be discussed again with MEPs and then posted in part on the platform for the Future of the EU.

