

# Venice Universities' Model European Union 2020



Organized by:

In collaboration with:



November 13th - 14th, 2020



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
RESEARCH SERVICE



## Study Guide

# Table of Contents

<i>Partners</i>	3
<i>Social Media Management</i>	6
<i>Welcome Letter</i>	7
<i>Directors Profile</i>	9
<i>The Venice Universities' Model European Union 2020</i>	11
<i>The European Commission</i>	12
<i>The European Parliament</i>	29
<i>The Council Of The European Union</i>	40
<i>Press: "Eu Now" Journal</i>	62
<i>Additional Staff Profiles</i>	72



The VeUMEU is organized by:



The **Venice Diplomatic Society** was founded in June 2015, when a group of Ca' Foscari students decided to team up and invest in **young people's** expertise within the field of **diplomacy and international relations**. The aim of "VDS" is providing students, graduates and citizens with the chance of acknowledging the complex functioning of international organizations; introducing their inner workings; training to speak a foreign language in front of an international audience; debating about the most pressing topics of Planet's agenda. Among their activities, we can find: organizing and designing MUNs, MEUs, Debate Society meetings, workshops, conferences and more.

For more information: [www.venicediplomaticsociety.com](http://www.venicediplomaticsociety.com)



Università  
Ca' Foscari  
Venezia

**Ca' Foscari University of Venice** was born as the **first business school in Italy and the second in Europe**. Today it provides several courses in various departments, such as Languages, Management, Environmental studies, Philosophy, Science, Humanities International Relations and more. Just like the city that hosts it, it is a crossroad of cultures, fields of research, ideas and creativity; a modern university that keeps abreast of things by realizing, within its eight departments, advanced research projects and innovative study programs that guarantee an excellent educational experience. Through its five interdepartmental schools, Ca' Foscari works with cross-cutting and integrated educational approaches. Whoever studies in Venice can this way acquire a wider range of and more articulate skills: economy interfaces with cultural heritage, languages intersect with economics, restoration meets science just to cite a few examples.

For more information: <http://www.unive.it>



**Venice International University (VIU)** is something **unique** in the international academic environment: a **group of 20 Universities** from all over the world sharing a common Campus on the beautiful **Island of San Servolo**, in the Venice lagoon. These Universities collegially devise study programs to prepare their students to face today's global challenges: Sustainable Development, Ageing and Welfare, Global Ethics and Cultural Heritage are central topics of VIU programs. Students who choose to spend a term studying at VIU are taught to move across disciplines and through cultures with a flexible approach, an open mind and creative thinking. VIU offers its support for research programs involving the various Universities that form its network, and develops specific programs for advanced training.

For more information: <http://www.univiu.org>



With the support and participation of:



**Europe Direct** is a European Commission information network designed to inform citizens about the activities and opportunities offered by the European Union. Europe Direct aims to reinforce citizens' sense of attachment to the European Union by involving them in the process of building Europe. The Veneto has a Europe Direct information relay, set up by the City of Venice - as leading figure - and 18 institutional partners: the Veneto Region, the Prefettura di Venezia, the Provinces of Venice, Belluno, Padua, Rovigo and

Treviso, the Venice Chamber of Commerce, the Eurosportello of Unioncamere Veneto, the Cities of Bassano del Grappa, Chioggia, Jesolo, Padova, Thiene and Valdagno, Università Iuav di Venezia (Architecture and Design), ESU of Venezia (Students' Union) and USR (the Veneto Regional Schools). 32 centers in the region support citizens in accessing information relative to the areas of activity of the European Union. Since 2008 the information relay has also hosted Eurodesk, providing young people and youth workers with information on the sector-opportunities offered by the European Union and the European Council.

For more information: <http://europa.eu/contact/> , [www.comune.venezia.it/europedirect](http://www.comune.venezia.it/europedirect)

Email: [infoeuropa@comune.venezia.it](mailto:infoeuropa@comune.venezia.it)



European Parliament  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY  
RESEARCH SERVICE

**European Parliament Research Service** | EPRS' mission is to provide Members of the European Parliament, and where appropriate parliamentary committees, with independent, objective and authoritative analysis of,

and research on, policy issues relating to the European Union, in order to assist them in their parliamentary work. EPRS provides a comprehensive range of products and services, backed by specialist internal expertise and knowledge sources in all policy fields, so empowering Members and committees through knowledge and contributing to the Parliament's effectiveness and influence as an institution. EPRS also supports and promotes parliamentary outreach to the wider public, including universities.

For more information: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/stay-informed/research-and-analysis>



**BETA Italia - Bringing Europeans Together Association** was created by young Italians with a specific purpose: to contribute to the achievement of a European citizenship. Young people represent the core values that will permit the success of the integration project of the European Union.

Nowadays Europe is undergoing a Post-Truth period, so the diffusion of a correct and truthful information on the issue of EU functioning and on the rights and the duties its citizens can enjoy has to be considered a fundamental goal. For these reasons, starting from 2016 BETA-Italia saw the light as a part of a widest network created by BETA Europe and it is starting to collaborate with other associations which shares the same core values.

For further information: <https://betaitalia.wordpress.com/> , <https://www.facebook.com/betaitaly/>  
[mail: infobetaitalia@gmail.com](mailto:infobetaitalia@gmail.com)





**Società San Servolo – Servizi Metropolitan di Venezia srl** performs services of general interest promoting the development and social cohesiveness of the metropolitan area through tasks assigned by the Metropolitan City of Venice which has control over the company. For more information: <http://sanservolo.servizimetropolitani.ve.it>



**Global Campus  
of Human Rights**

The **Global Campus Human Rights** was founded in 2002 – thanks to EU funding – with the aim to develop educational activities, research, and interdisciplinary training on the issues of human rights protection. The EIUC has its roots in Europe but a global vision. It is now the hub for a network of over 100 universities (Global Campus of Mater’s Programmes and Diplomas in Human Rights and Democratisation).

For more information: [www.gchumanrights.org/](http://www.gchumanrights.org/)



# Social Media Management

Nowadays, we are overwhelmed by social media, which has acquired such a meaningful power in the promotion of each event. This is the reason why we suggest you use the following # to extensively and effectively spread the word:

#VeUMEU2020  
#FestaEUVenezia2020  
#MEU  
#SanServolo  
#EUNow  
#EU  
#EUsimulation

#LearnHowtoMaketheDifference  
#VeniceDiplomaticSociety  
#VIUopportunity  
#Diplomacy  
#Training  
#Education  
#Environment

And don't forget to tag the institutions in your posts on the #VeUMEU2020

## **VeUMEU Socials**

Facebook: @VeUMEU  
Instagram: @veumeuve

## **EUNow, the official VeUMEU newspaper**

Facebook: @EUnoweditors  
Instagram: @eunoweditors

## **Venice Diplomatic Society**

Facebook: @venicediplomaticsociety  
Instagram: @venicediplomaticsociety

## **Venice International University**

Facebook: @VeniceInternationalUniversity  
Instagram: @univiu  
Twitter: @univiu

## **Ca' Foscari University of Venice**

Facebook: @cafoscari  
Instagram: @cafoscariuniversity  
Twitter: @CaFoscari

## **Europe Direct Venezia**

Facebook: @EuropeDirectVenezia  
Instagram: @europe\_direct\_venezia  
Twitter: @EuropeDirectVe

## **Global Campus of Human Rights**

Facebook: @gchumanrights  
Instagram: @gchumanrights  
Twitter: @gchumanrights

## **San Servolo Servizi**

Facebook: @sanservolovenezia

## **Beta Italia**

Facebook: @betaitaly  
Instagram: @betaitalia

## **European Parliamentary Research Service**

Twitter: @EP\_ThinkTank

**Thank you for your help, we really appreciate it!**



# Welcome Letter

**DEAR MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, MINISTERS AND JOURNALISTS...  
WELCOME TO VEUMEU 2020!**

We're honoured and excited to welcome you all to the fourth edition of the Venice Universities' Model European Union! This edition is indeed a special one, given the peculiar circumstances we find ourselves in. Normally we would welcome you to the wonderful Island of San Servolo, whereas this year we are going to have to adapt to the challenges posed by the current situation and meet online.

We want to start this letter by thanking all the institutions that contributed to the organization of this simulation: Venice Diplomatic Society (VDS), Venice International University (VIU), Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Europe Direct Venezia, Global Campus Human Rights, San Servolo Servizi Metropolitan di Venezia, BETA Italia and, last but not least, the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Without the precious efforts and the commitment of these institutions, we would not have been able to organize this event. We also need to thank Professor Sara De Vido for her endless support and advice. Lastly, a massive thank you goes to the entire staff. With the postponement of the event, many members of the original team had to give up their role due to prior commitments; nevertheless, everyone collaborated to ensure a seamless and efficient transition. Your enthusiasm and your dedication were fundamental in bringing the simulation to life.

What makes this year's edition so special is the incredible and unexpected change we had to experience in the past year. The Covid-19 crisis has affected many domains in our lives, and our beloved VeUMEU was not an exception. Almost one year ago in January, we took with great excitement on this new challenge, ready and looking forward to meeting you all in person in Venice. We had no idea of what was about to happen and the immediate lockdown created many challenges and obstacles that only as a team we were able to overcome. Despite the difficulties, we have put so much effort, energy, love and passion into this project, and we promise you that even if it's online, we will do our best to make the experience feel as real as possible. We are sure that you will remember forever VeUMEU 2020 and we are glad to have you on board with us to experience this once in a lifetime experience.

This year the fourth edition of the VeUMEU challenges us with two incredibly relevant topics: sustainable finance and work-life balance. Specifically, you will debate *Proposal 2018/0178(COD) for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment* and *Proposal 2017/0085(COD) for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU*. The importance of sustainable finance is nowadays unmistakable and the very aim of the Regulation fittingly seems to answer to the call of the younger generations for a more comprehensive and clear definition of what qualifies as "environmentally sustainable" and for a greener, more circular economy. The topic of work-life balance, on the other hand, albeit already intrinsically relevant, has been brought to the spotlight in many European and non-European countries since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. In this new context where schools are closed or struggling to reopen safely, the debates over parental



leave and flexible working arrangements have gained a new significance. We can only hope that discussing these topics together will broaden yours and our perspectives on such issues.

During the simulation you will be promptly guided in the discussion by your Chairs and the Commissioners and constantly questioned by the Press team. However, remember that a good knowledge of the Rules of Procedure and a thorough research on the topics are essential to actively take part in the sessions and enjoy the event to the fullest. Should you have any questions, doubts, or need for clarifications after the workshop, please, do not hesitate to email the staff: we are at your complete disposal to ensure you have the best time possible. Lastly, remember to be respectful of your colleagues and of the members of the Staff: they are all performing a political or professional role just as you.

We wish you the best time at this VeUMEU: challenge yourself, play hard, and enjoy it.

*Miriam Bettwein*

*Mariauf Frangulyan*





# Director General Profile



Dear participants,

Welcome to the Venice Universities' Model European Union 2020! I'm Miriam and I'll be your Director General for this year's edition. I'm not usually one to indulge in sharing my life story, but if you're reading this you probably want to know something about who is organizing the event you're taking part in. I'm 22, from a small town in the middle of Veneto that's weirdly famous for making shoes, and I'm currently pursuing a Master's in Comparative International Relations at Ca' Foscari.

I got to know political simulations when I participated in the VeUMUN 2017 and I have been mesmerized ever since. After that first experience, I became a member of the Venice Diplomatic Society, the wonderful students' association that had organized the event and of which I am the current President. I also became more knowledgeable on the topic of simulations by participating in more MUNs and MEUs as a participant and as an organizer, for both high school and university students.

This will be my third VeUMEU, an event for which I've cared a lot over the last few years, and that we present to you this time in less than ideal circumstances. If you're anything like me and you value in-person experiences over online ones, getting accustomed to doing everything online wasn't easy and this event will be no exception. However, I hope you can take this situation for the positive challenge that it is! From someone who has invested a lot of her time in simulations while at university, let me tell you that they are tremendous learning experiences not just academically but also personally. This time around we can add digitally as well.

My advice for you is to see the simulation as a game: this is after all like playing pretend with the European Union. You have a role to fulfil and an agenda to pursue, so play to the best of your abilities. You can win by understanding the importance of the process that you simulate and the influence it has on our daily lives; by learning something new about the topics the proposals will tackle; by being more confident by the end of it. Above all, I suggest you embrace the difficulties you will meet while playing. Simulations are the best kinds of games: the harder they are, the more fun they become.

Good luck!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Miriam Battarini".



# Deputy Director General Profile



Hello everyone!

I am extremely honored to be the Deputy Director General for this special edition of VeUMEU 2020. Let me first introduce myself: my name is Mariam Frangulyan and I recently graduated in Philosophy, International Studies and Economics from Ca' Foscari University of Venice. I am currently an MA student in Advanced International Studies with a focus on security issues and conflict resolution at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna. I was born in Yerevan, Armenia and moved to Venice with my family when I was one years old.

Hence, I grew up between the Italian reality outside and the Armenian one at home. My multi-cultural international background and further, the positive influences of my education and family, have molded me as a person willing to listen to, share with and embrace the world and its diversity. After the amazing experience of last year's VeUMEU, where I served as Vice-President of the Council of the European Union, I decided to hop on the MEU train once again. I have always enjoyed simulations and in fact I have participated in many during high school and university, both as delegate and organizer, as I believe they really serve the purpose to illustrate and show how institutions and organizations actually function.

My interest in international relations and diplomacy has led me to become a member of the Venice Diplomatic Society since 2018, thanks to which I had many incredible opportunities, such as the VDS Debate Society, where I served both as debater and coordinator.

It doesn't matter if this is your first experience, dare and be ambitious, the more you challenge yourself by going out of your comfort zone, the more you gain confidence in yourself and, most importantly, have fun while also acquiring crucial skills for your future such as public speaking and problem solving. This edition will be a special and unforgettable one, and I am glad that we will experience it together.

Without further ado, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the 4th edition of the Venice Universities' Model European Union!

Good luck to all of you!

*Mariam Frangulyan*



# The Venice Universities' Model European Union 2020

The **Venice Universities' Model European Union 2020** focuses on **Work-life balance** and **Sustainable finance**.

During the Model EU the delegates will be asked to **discuss** the following **Commission's proposals**:

- 2018/0178(COD) Framework to facilitate Sustainable Investment  
→ [PROPOSAL 1](#)
- Proposal 2017/0085(COD) for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Work-Life Balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.  
→ [PROPOSAL 2](#)



# The European Commission



## CONTENTS

<b>Role of the Commissioner</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Legislative Acts of the EU</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Commissioner's Profile: Proposal 1</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Introduction to Proposal 1</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Commissioner's Profile: Proposal 2</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Introduction to Proposal 2</b>	<b>24</b>



# The Role of the Commissioner

At European level, the European Commission holds a central role within the decision-making process, since it is responsible for proposing legislations. The Venice Universities' Model European Union (VeUMEU) has the purpose of simulating such processes. Therefore, participants will be already provided with two proposals, a Regulation on **sustainable finance** and a Directive on **work-life balance**.

The role of the VeUMEU Commissioners will be: introducing the proposals to the participants at the beginning of each day by underscoring what matters to the EU as a whole, proposing amendments and influencing the course of the discussions in accordance with the objectives and principles of the European Union, specifically of the European Commission. On the second day, in fact, Commissioners will present the already amended proposals, and they may explain what modifications are still needed.

During the simulation, participants can ask for the help of the Commissioners by proposing a **motion to call the Commissioner**, and, in that occasion, they can ask for clarifications, or they can ask them to state the position of the Commission on that particular matter. However, Commissioners are not obliged to help or guide participants as the Chair does, because they play an active role within the simulation.

Commissioners will be involved in **trilogue meetings**, with exponents of the Council and Parliament where they will be updated on the proceedings and informed on the development of the discussions. They will also be present at the Press Conference (at the end of every day) to comment the work in progress.

Commissioners will have **the last word** on the directives and amendments, declaring whether they have been accepted by the Commission or not before the final voting on the last day of discussion.



# Legislative Acts of the EU

The legislative acts of the European Union are laid out in **art. 288 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE)**. The article states:

*Article 288*

**(ex Article 249 TEC)**

To exercise the Union's competences, the institutions shall adopt regulations, directives, decisions, recommendations and opinions.

A regulation shall have general application. It shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

A directive shall be binding, as to the result to be achieved, upon each Member State to which it is addressed, but shall leave to the national authorities the choice of form and methods.

A decision shall be binding in its entirety. A decision which specifies those to whom it is addressed shall be binding only on them.

Recommendations and opinions shall have no binding force.

**Regulations** and **directives** are different legal acts, they have different features and characteristics.

**Regulations** set out precise rules. They are usually deployed in areas in which the EU has **exclusive competence**. They are applied automatically and uniformly to all Member States as soon as they enter into force, with no need to transpose the act into national law - requiring no transposition means that Member States do not have to draft a national law that receives the act and makes it binding inside the country: the regulation automatically enters the legal systems of the States.

Regulations have three main features:

1. They have **general application**: it means that the subjects to their rules are not only Member States, but also citizens for instance.
2. They are **binding in their entirety**, which means that every provision, rule and obligation is binding for every subject
3. They are **directly applicable**, which, as it was already explained, means that they do not need transposition and start to produce legally binding effects right when they enter into force. This also means that they have a **direct effect**: they create duties and rights for the subjects right away.

**Directives**, on the other hand, are used to set an objective. As a matter of fact, as art. 288 states: "they shall be binding as to the result to be achieved"; meaning that they set an objective which Member States have to reach, but States are free in terms of how to reach it. Thus, directives are binding as to the goal they set, but the choice on how to implement them is up to the discretion of the States. Unlike regulations, they **do require transposition**, meaning that States have to draft a national law to receive the directive and make it binding. Moreover, unlike regulations, they **do not have general application**.



Summing up the main features:

Regulation:

1. General application
2. Binding in their entirety
3. Direct applicability and effect
4. It sets precise rules to follow

Directive:

1. No general application
2. It requires transposition
3. It sets an objective to reach

# Commissioner Profile 1



Dear participants,

My name is Juliette Miatello and this year I have the pleasure to be one of the two commissioners for the 4th edition of the VeUMEU.

I'm twenty-one years old and I'm currently enrolled in the final year of the bachelor's degree Philosophy, International and Economic Studies here in Venice at Ca' Foscari University.

After two personal experiences this year, firstly the Erasmus experience in Belgium and secondly the participation in the municipal election of my city, I truly realized how important it is to take an active role in political life at all levels (municipal, national and European) and VeUMEU is a major example of learning-by-doing opportunity.

I'm excited to be part of the VeUMEU Team 2020 and I'm glad that you all have decided to participate in this simulation, despite all the difficulties of the current time.

Last year, I participated in an incredible edition of VeUMEU, full of surprises and improvements. My faction, the Socialists and Democrats, also had the chance to win the "best delegation" award. I think this recognition was due to the incredible teamwork and the desire to get 100% involved in the simulation. I hope you will find this experience engaging and worth-growing as I found it last year and I advise you to speak up without being afraid.

Last but not least, this year the regulations are really interesting, so stay tuned and jump into it!

Wishing you all the best, see you soon!



# Introduction to Proposal 1

## 1. Proposal Overview

### Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment - 2018/0178(COD)

If passed, the Regulation of the European Parliament of the Council 2018/0178 COD on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment will provide the basis for a more green, resilient and circular European economy. Sustainable finance generally refers to the process of taking due account of environmental, social and governance considerations in investment decision-making. In particular, the Regulation provides some long called-for clarity in the realm of sustainable investments and will strongly promote the mainstreaming of sustainable finance. This is to be achieved by the means of setting up a well-outlined taxonomy, comprising effective criteria, for defining those economic activities considered as “environmentally sustainable”. Furthermore, a comprehensive EU taxonomy would help ensuring that investment strategies are oriented towards economic activities which are genuinely contributing to the achievement of environmental objectives, while also complying with minimum social and governance standards. In addition, this Regulation is one of the twenty reforms to the financial system that are proposed to improve the sustainability of the way investors and financiers work (e.g. Commission Action Plan on Financing Sustainable Growth).

As of now, no clear definition for such activities has been provided at the European Union level: even though some partial undertakings can be recorded at national levels. Through this Regulation, the Commission wished to provide Member States a coherent set of criteria according to which stakeholder dealing with sustainable development can easily refer to when and what investing in the Union. In fact, the choice of a Regulation over a Directive is deliberate: the goal is to achieve uniformity in the market system, provide a ‘common language’ to be used in the financial activities, avoiding divergences and thus ensuring greater clarity for market participants. Hence, the proposal addresses the current market fragmentation and would bring the needed clarity for investors as to what environmentally sustainable economic activities are. A Directive would have not ensured such coherency when implemented by National Parliaments. After the implementation of a unified EU taxonomy, the next step – according to the action plan on sustainable finance – will be to use this taxonomy to guide the integration of sustainability into the management of financial institutions such as banks, insurance companies and pension funds.

Many voices have called upon the Commission to lead the effort in standardizing the terms “sustainable investments” or similar words. Given the ambitious measures that need to be undertaken in order to meet future environmental goals in the fight against Climate Change at the European and international level, such as the 2016 Paris Agreement



on climate change, the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the 2050 Climate Neutrality agreement, it is of the utmost importance that the road ahead is well-defined to the largest possible extent. In fact, it has been calculated that in order to reach climate and energy targets in Europe by 2030, additional annual investment of EUR 180 billion is needed. So that such amount of financial resources is mobilized, the encouragement and actual reorientation of private capital flows toward more sustainable projects is necessary.

The Regulation attempts to bridge the necessities of the financial world with the European sustainable development agenda. Moreover, the rise of new financial instruments such as “green” bonds or similar tools of a “green” approach to finance, has actually pushed toward undertaking this sort of taxonomic endeavour given the intrinsic lack of clarity behind the “green” term. In addition, this effort is one of the very first steps into mainstreaming green considerations into the decision-making process of the investors. In this sense, the role of the taxonomy is essential in creating an optimum business environment, inasmuch as it allows the economic sustainability of market operations in clean sectors and relative legal certainty.

For these reasons, the Regulation also suggests such actors to partially disclose sustainability-related information on the products being marketed under environmental labels. Such demand will help creating confidence in a fair and greener market, while also providing substantial experience to develop ever-more efficient technical screening criteria, ensuring that the taxonomy is indeed clear while also at the same time maintain a certain degree of adaptability. Furthermore, such disclosure aims to face the issue of “greenwashing”: it refers to the achievement of a competitive advantage for certain products being marketed as environment-friendly while this being not true according to certain basic environmental standards.

Such ‘sustainability’ taxonomy would include not only definitions but also labels, standards and other benchmarks so to better compare all activities according to a single yardstick. The taxonomy is to be developed by a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG), set up in 2016. The Group has already worked closely with the Commission, other institutions and stakeholders from the private sector so to actively build a consensus over what form such taxonomy should take in order to be clear and efficient in order to build a EU strategy on sustainable finance. The system received words of praise coming from many of the actors involved given its granular and details-oriented approach. Moreover, the Regulation ensures coherency for Member States, an aspect warmly welcomed by private operators. The criteria being studied by the Group capitalize over the work already done at National level, so to move along the same direction of the efforts already pulled by the Member States, while the proposal also complements with other existing EU environmental and climate policies.

## 2. Useful Definitions

In order to understand the contents of the present Directive, the Commission evaluates as particularly significant all the definitions provided in *Article 2*:

(a) ‘environmentally sustainable investment’ means an investment that funds one or several economic activities that qualify under this Regulation as environmentally sustainable;



- (b) 'financial market participants' means any of the following: an insurance undertaking which makes available an IBIP, an AIFM, an investment firm which provides portfolio management, an IORP or a provider of a pension product; a manager of a qualifying venture capital fund registered in accordance with Article 14 of Regulation (EU) No 345/2013; a manager of a qualifying social entrepreneurship fund registered in accordance with Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 346/2013; a UCITS management company;
- (c) 'financial products' means portfolio management, an AIF, an IBIP, a pension product, a pension scheme or a UCITS;
- (d) 'climate change mitigation' means the process of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels;
- (e) 'climate change adaptation' means the process of adjustment to actual and expected climate and its effects;
- (f) 'greenhouse gas' means a greenhouse gas listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (g) 'circular economy' means maintaining the value of products, materials and resources in the economy for as long as possible, and minimising waste, including through the application of the waste hierarchy as laid down in Article 4 of Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (h) 'pollution' means:
- (1) the direct or indirect introduction, as a result of human activity, of substances, vibrations, heat, noise or other pollutants into air, water or land which may be harmful to human health or the quality of the environment, may result in damage to material property, or may impair or interfere with amenities and other legitimate uses of the environment;
  - (2) in the context of marine environment, pollution as defined in Article 3(8) of Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;
- (i) 'healthy ecosystem' means an ecosystem that is in a good physical, chemical and biological condition or of a good physical, chemical and biological quality;
- (j) 'energy efficiency' means using energy more efficiently at all the stages of the energy chain from production to final consumption;
- (k) 'good environmental status' means the environmental status of marine waters where these provide ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas which are clean, healthy and productive within their intrinsic conditions, and the use of the marine environment is at a level that is sustainable, thus safeguarding the potential for uses and activities by current and future generations;
- (l) 'marine waters' means marine waters as defined in Article 3(1) of Directive 2008/56/EC;
- (m) 'surface water', 'inland water', 'transitional waters' and 'coastal water' shall have the same meaning as in points (1), (3), (6) and (7) of Article 2 of Directive 2000/60/EC;

(n) 'sustainable forest management' means using forests and forest land in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.

### 3. Previous Legislations and EU Commitments

The Commission has committed itself upon mainstreaming sustainable investments throughout all EU policies, a goal announced by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. To further formalize such commitment, in 2016 the Council has concluded on behalf of the European Union the Paris Climate Agreement, whose targets have been already mentioned above. Many policies in the last few years have developed the initial commitment into formal legislations, such as the 7th Environmental Action Program, the Water Framework Directive, the Action Plan for the Circular Economy, the Industrial Emissions Directive. Finally, the Regulation falls in line with the spirit of the Action Plan on Sustainable Finance, launched by the European Commission in 2018, under the framework project of the Capital Markets Union. Other acts taken by the Institutions are the Decision No. 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Program to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet', along with the call of the European Parliament on the creation of a framework for sustainable finance (Parliament's resolution 2018/2007 INI), has pushed the Commission to the drafting of the Proposal before you today.

### 4. Legal basis

**Art. 114 TFUE:** power to adopt measures so to eliminate obstacles to the establishment of a full-fledged and functioning internal market. As previously explained, in the case of Reg. 2018/0178 the obstacles that the Commission attempts to eliminate are the discrepancies among national labels and the different interpretations on what are sustainable activities and investments. Such differences present an important hindrance to the creation of a clear, favorable and sustainable business environment. In fact, national labels based on different criteria as to which economic activities qualified as environmentally sustainable make it difficult for investors to compare green investment, thus discouraging them from investing across borders. In addition, existing divergences are also a burden on economic operators having to comply with different standards in different Member States.

**Art. 5 TEU:** The Commission has undertaken this effort according to the principle of subsidiarity. Specifically, it is the principle whereby the EU does not take action (except in the areas that fall within its exclusive competence), unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level.

In addition to this principle, the proposal complies also with the principle of proportionality set out in the same article, stating that the content and form of Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.

### 5. Context of the Regulation



Sustainable finance is under the spotlight for the crucial role it plays in the fight against Climate Change. The necessity of mobilizing a great deal of financial resources has become the primary objective in order to fundamentally scale up the efforts for a more sustainable society and in order to achieve EU sustainability goals. At the international level, the Conferences of the Parties (COP) under the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have produced the most comprehensive and inclusive piece of climate governance so far, the Paris Agreement in 2015. Many countries have then adopted multi-sectors action plans so to put in practice strategy to meet the Paris' goals. In order to do so, the EU has embarked on a deep reform of its economy, so to ultimately making it carbon-free by 2050. The Union is striving for a long-term leadership in clean technologies and it aims at becoming the recipient of a great amount of investment so to fund this transition and boost European firms' competitiveness. Therefore, different stakeholders within societies are calling for the mainstreaming of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations in the decision-making process of financial actors, fundamentally moving towards long-term profit paradigm.

In addition, the proposal takes into consideration: firstly, the rapidity of the development of the knowledge of environmental impacts and thus the need of flexibility in the legal framework and secondly, the complexity, detail, granularity and resources required to develop this comprehensive framework.

## **6. Limits of the Regulation**

### ***Insufficient attention to the “Social Pillar” of sustainable investments (Art. 15)***

Such Regulation would help increasing the awareness regarding the importance of the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Factors in the investment decision-making process. However, some concerns have been raised over the second pillar, the Social one, which might not be fully contemplated by the Regulation. The Commission does take into consideration this aspect, by calling for a socially just transition, as heralded in 2017 with the declaration of the European Pillar of Social Rights by all EU Institutions, although not specifically regarding the Reg. 2018/0178.

### ***Financial disclosure (Art. 4.2)***

As introduced before, the Regulation introduces the obligation for financial market participants to disclose certain information regarding those products that they market environmentally sustainable. Such approach has been deemed necessary in order to build confidence among investors. However, it remains unclear to a certain extent the considerations that institutional investors make when contemplating sustainability risks in their investment decision-making process.

### ***Impact Assessment - Flexibility and Adaptability***

In order for the Union to reach its environmental and climate commitments, private investments need to be mobilised and reoriented. In order to achieve this, there is the need of a long-term planning as well as regulatory stability and predictability for investors, in order to avoid disproportionate costs on financial market participants. At the same time, it would



be of such importance that the legal framework continues to evolve with the rapidity characterized by the development of the financial market and by the continuous development of the criteria defining environmentally-sustainable investments. Hence, the present Regulation shall be flexible and adaptable in the long run.

## **7. Commission Notes**

### **Environmental Objectives (Article 5)**

Specifically, the environmental objectives targeted by the Regulation are enumerated in Article 5 and further defined in the following articles: climate change mitigation (Article 6); climate change adaptation (Article 7); sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources (Article 8); transition to a circular economy, waste prevention and recycling (Article 9); pollution prevention and control (Article 10); protection of healthy ecosystems (Article 11).

It is important to enunciate in a clear way these objectives in order to pursue the global efforts to a more sustainable path for our planet and economy, aligning with specific international provisions under the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change and the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The unanimity for these objectives is required for accelerating the process of implementation of policies that are environmentally sustainable. Although, it is of the same importance to keep constant track of the development related to the criteria defining these objectives, having regard to the rapidity of the environmental changes is facing our planet.

### ***Platform on Sustainable Finance (Article 15)***

As stated in Article 15 of the Regulation, the Commission shall establish a Platform on Sustainable Finance, composed by members from the European Environment Agency, the European Supervisory Authorities, the European Investment Bank, the European Investment Fund and by experts representing relevant private stakeholders or appointed in a personal capacity, with proven knowledge and experience in the areas covered by this Regulation.

This Platform will assist the Commission in the progressive development and the update of the EU classification system. It will carry out other tasks necessary to achieve the objectives of the sustainable finance action plan, and particularly advise the Commission on the need to amend the framework set out by this proposal. It will also be tasked to monitor and report regularly to the Commission on capital flows towards sustainable investment.

The implementation of this platform is crucial for the effectiveness of the aforementioned taxonomy and for the broader achievement of the Commission Action Plan on Financing Sustainable Growth.



# Commissioner Profile 2



Dear participants,  
welcome to this year's VeUMEU! I hope that this year we will have a great time at the simulation and successfully achieve all our objectives.

I would like to tell you a little about myself so we can get better acquainted. My name is Khrystyna Kurylo and I am one of the two commissioners at this edition of our simulation. I am a 22-year-old student working towards my Master's degree in Comparative International Relations at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. I am originally from Ukraine, however I found my interest in politics and law-making during my

exchange program to the US where I had the privilege to take a class on government throughout my senior year.

Throughout my senior year of high school, I was able to participate in class simulations and take a trip to the US Capitol to see Congress members and observe how laws are written. My interest in the field of political science grew even more at a North American University in Lithuania where I did my bachelor's degree on International Relations and Development where I learned more about the structure of the EU and its inner workings.

I'm excited to be a part of the VeUMEU Team this year. For some of you this might be the first Model European Union that you have attended. I share your excitement as it is my first MEU as well. For the many others who had the chance to participate in previous additions, welcome back! I hope that you all will have a great time and that we can persevere through these challenging times and have an unforgettable experience!

Looking forward to meeting all of you and to working side by side,

# Introduction to Proposal 2

## 1. Proposal Overview

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU

In 2015, the Commission announced a package on work-life balance to replace the current legislation. The ratio for the new package consists in increasing female labour participation, balancing gender participation in childcare activities traditionally predominantly performed by women, and improving negative demographic trends. The current legislative framework has been evaluated as inadequate to deal with these challenges. This proposal for a Directive is part of a package of measures to deliver on the Commission's commitment. The package aims at addressing women's under-representation in employment and supporting their career progression through improved conditions to reconcile their working and private duties. It means to build on the existing rights and policies and further improve the situation by introducing new policies for both women and men, thereby addressing the equal treatment and opportunities in today's labour market, promoting non-discrimination and fostering gender equality which all constitute the general objective of this Directive. Additionally, the specific objectives of the Directive are defined as follows:

- to improve access to work-life balance arrangements – such as parental leaves and flexible working arrangements;
- to increase take-up of family-related leaves and flexible working arrangements by men.

This proposal is meant to strongly benefit individuals, companies and the wider society. While parents and carers will profit from work-life balance better adapted to the needs of today's families, an increase in women employment, their higher earnings and career progression will positively impact them and their families' economic prosperity, social inclusion and health. Companies will benefit from a wider talent pool, a more motivated and productive labour force as well as less absenteeism. The rise in female employment will also contribute in addressing the challenge of demographic ageing and ensuring Member States' financial stability.

## 2. Useful Definitions

The Commission evaluates that for the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions from Article 3 shall apply:

(a) "paternity leave" means leave from work for fathers to be taken on the occasion of the birth of a child;

(b) "parental leave" means leave from work on the grounds of the birth or adoption of a child to take care of that child;





(c) "carer" means a worker providing personal care or support in case of a serious illness or dependency of a relative;

(d) "relative" means a worker's son, daughter, mother, father, spouse or partner in civil partnership, where such partnerships are envisaged by national law;

(e) "dependency" means a situation in which a person is, temporarily or permanently, in need of care due to disability or a serious medical condition other than serious illness;

(f) "flexible working arrangements" means the possibility for workers to adjust their working patterns, including through the use of remote working arrangements, flexible working schedules, or a reduction in working hours.

### **3. Previous Legislations and EU Commitments**

Creating a more family-friendly work environment has been for a long time on the European policy agenda. The EU has been working on reforming family leave policies in Member States since the 1980s. Its efforts resulted in two currently valid directives: the 1992 Maternity Leave Directive and the 2010 Parental Leave Directive.

Maternity leave policies in EU Member States are governed by the 1992 Pregnant Workers Directive, which sets the minimum period for maternity leave at 14 weeks, with 2 weeks' compulsory leave before and/or after childbirth and an adequate financial support subject to national legislation. In 2008 the Commission tried to replace this directive with a more suitable framework. The proposal was to extend the duration of maternity leave to 18 weeks in accordance with the guidelines of the International Labour Organization. At least 6 weeks would be compulsory after confinement, with an allowance amounting to full salary. This was accepted in 2010 by the Parliament, which extended the proposal to 20 weeks of maternity leave and 2 weeks of paternity leave under the same conditions. However, having been deadlocked in the Council, the proposal was withdrawn in July 2015. It was replaced by the new work-life balance package proposal called to modernize family-related leave mechanisms and flexible working arrangements. The draft proposal also introduced a right to two weeks paternity leave. The package tackled the challenge of work-life balance for working parents and carers, which is expected to be particularly beneficial for gender equality in the labour market, but it did not change the duration of maternity leave.

In the European Union, parental leave is regulated by a 1996 Directive, last amended in 2013. The implementation of this Directive varies greatly among Member States and parental leave overlaps other types of leaves granted to families. The European Parliament called for an evaluation of its implementation and for revision of both the Directive and related legislation.

### **4. Legal Basis**

Equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union. Under Article 3(3), paragraph 2, of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), promoting equality between women and men is one of the European Union's aims. Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) further states that the Union must aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equal standing between women and men in all activities.



The proposal also facilitates the exercise of the rights recognised in Articles 23 and 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which specifically refer to equality between men and women and to the reconciliation of family and professional life.

The proposal is based on Article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Article 153(1)(i) TFEU foresees that "(W)ith a view to achieving the objectives of Article 151, the Union shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in the following fields: (...)

(i) equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work;"

Article 153(2)(b) TFEU establishes that "(T)o this end, the European Parliament and the Council: (...)

(b) may adopt, in the fields referred to in paragraph 1(a) to (i), by means of directives, minimum requirements for gradual implementation, having regard to the conditions and technical rules obtaining in each of the Member States. Such directives shall avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal constraints in a way which would hold back the creation and development of small and medium-sized undertakings.

There is already an EU legislative framework in place in relation to work-life balance policies including Council Directive 2010/18/EU, of 8 March 2010. This illustrates the common agreement that EU-level action in this area is necessary, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

Article 153(2)(b) in combination with 153 (1)(i) TFEU foresees explicitly that the Directive will be the legal instrument used in order to establish minimum requirements to be gradually implemented by Member States.

## 5. Context of the Directive

In 2015, the employment rate of women (age 20-64) reached 64.3%, compared to 75.9% of men. The gender employment gap in the labor market is most acute for parents and people with other caring responsibilities. On average in 2015, the employment rate of women with one child under 6 years of age is nearly 9% less than women without young children, and in several countries this difference goes over 30%. Similarly, women are much more likely to assume the role of informal carers for elderly or dependent relatives than men. Women are also far more likely to work part-time due to caring responsibilities. This contributes substantially to the gender pay gap (amounting to 28% in some Member States), which over the working life accumulates into gender pension gap (on average 40% in the EU) and results in higher risk of female poverty and social exclusion, especially in old age. The projections on the baseline scenario show that the above challenges will not be sufficiently addressed without EU action. The gender employment gap is expected to still amount to 9 percent in 2055.

One of the main causes for this problem is an inadequate work-life balance policy. Unbalanced design of leave between genders, insufficient incentives for men to take leave to care for children and/or dependent relatives, limited possibilities to make use of flexible working arrangements, insufficient formal care services and economic disincentives have all been shown to exacerbate the female employment challenges.



The current legal framework at the Union and Member States' level provides limited provisions for men to assume an equal share of caring responsibilities with women. For instance, there is currently no EU legislation providing for paternity leave or leave to take care of an ill or dependent relative, with exception of absence for force majeure. In many Member States, there is a lack of paid leave arrangements for fathers compared to mothers. The imbalance in the design of work-life balance provisions between women and men can thus reinforce gender differences in work and care. Involving fathers in work-life balance arrangements such as leaves has been shown to have a positive impact on bringing up children, reducing the relative amount of unpaid family work undertaken by women and leaving women more time for paid employment.

## 6. Limits of the Directive

Existing legislative measures are not sufficient to address the challenges of combining properly work and family obligations in today's economic and social environments and ensuring equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work. Common EU-level action is able to provide common standards and be much more efficient than if it were done individually.

The analysis of the problem to be addressed and the information currently available on the subject matter clearly show that:

- only EU-level action will address differences between existing national legal provisions on paternity, parental and carers' leaves and on flexible working arrangements; whilst EU-level action will not prevent Member States from offering higher levels of protection.
- only EU level action will provide common minimal requirements for work life balance supporting equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work; Common minimum standards are particularly relevant in the context of free movement of workers and the freedom of providing services in the EU Internal Market.

### Impact assessment:

Throughout the Impact Assessment work, a range of non-legislative and legislative measures were considered across all areas shown to be important for addressing women's underrepresentation in the labour market, namely: maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, carers' leave, flexible work arrangements.

Following an assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of each option, a preferred combination of options was identified. The preferred combination includes:

- Maternity leave: non-legislative measures to enhance the enforcement of current legislation on dismissal protection, raise awareness on the dismissal of pregnant women and give policy guidance on facilitating successful transitions between maternity leave and employment (including breastfeeding facilities and breaks).
- Paternity leave: introduction of an individual entitlement of 10 working days, paid at least at sick-pay level.



- Parental leave: revision of currently existing entitlement in order to provide for (i) the right for flexible uptake (i.e., part-time, piecemeal), (ii) 4 months leave non-transferable between parents, and (iii) payment of 4 months at, at least, sick-pay level.
- Carers' leave: introduction of an individual entitlement of 5 days per year, paid at, at least, sick pay level.
- Flexible working arrangements: right for parents of children up to 12 and carers to request flexibility in working hours, schedule or place of work for a set period of time, with no obligation for the employer to grant the requested change.

### **Budgetary Implications:**

The proposal does not require additional resources from the European Union's budget.

## **7. Notes**

### ***Article 5 – Parental leave***

The Parental Leave Directive (2010/18/EU) already provides for individual rights of at least *four months* to parental leave on the grounds of the birth or adoption of a child to take care of that child. This provision therefore builds on the existing rights for parents and improves those rights for both women and men. It will contribute to the achievement of gender equality by promoting the participation of women in the labor market, making it easier for men to share caring responsibilities on an equal basis with women, and closing gender gaps in earnings and pay. Allowing fathers to assume parental responsibilities thus helping divide caretaking much more equally will allow mothers to pursue more labor market opportunities leading to better employment coefficients. Communication between workers and employers may allow for better reintegration measures to facilitate the return to work of both parents.

### ***Article 9 –Flexible working arrangements***

The Parental Leave Directive already provides for the possibility to ask for two types of flexible working arrangements (working patterns and working hours) for parents returning from parental leave. The current proposal extends these two existing forms to a third form of flexible working arrangement (remote working possibilities) and further extends the personal scope of those rights to all carers and workers with children up to a given age, which shall be at least twelve.

In order to encourage working parents with young children and carers to remain in the labour market, they should be able to adapt their working schedules to their personal needs and preferences.

This provision therefore introduces the *possibility* for the above-mentioned workers to make use of (i) reduction in working hours, (ii) *flexible work schedules*, and (iii) remote working possibilities.

# The European Parliament



## CONTENTS

<b>Staff Profiles</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Role of the European Parliament</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Factions' Positions for Proposal 1</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Factions' Positions for Proposal 2</b>	<b>37</b>



# Staff Profiles

## PRESIDENT



Hello everyone!

I am Caterina Cognini and I am more than pleased to announce to you that I will be working with you all as President of the European Parliament in this fourth edition of the Venice Universities' Model European Union. I am a third-year student of the bachelor's degree Philosophy, International and Economic Studies and I am also a student of the Ca' Foscari International College.

Last year, I had the opportunity to spend the whole academic year in Erasmus in France at Sciences Po. In Paris, I was able to deepen several branches of the institutions of the European Union, since a great part of my exchange program focused on the study of the EU functions and structure.

This will be my second year attending a VeUMEU, since in 2019 I participated as a representative of the French European Green Party in the Greens/EFA group of the European Parliament. It was a great experience that shaped and enriched my academic and personal education. It also allowed me to approach concretely the reality of the European Institutions, in addition to connecting me with people from all around the world with my same interests in the EU.

VeUMEU is a great opportunity for all of you to challenge yourselves, to be active, and to step up. This is the only way to get the most out of this adventure. Clearly, it will be different from all the other editions, but I am sure it is going to be a meaningful experience, thanks to the work and collaboration of everyone. I look forward to meeting you and starting to work all together as a group, as the European Parliament. Seriousness and participation are fundamental aspects, but fun and laughs won't lack.

Best of luck to you all with your preparation for the VeUMEU 2020!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caterina Cognini".



## VICE-PRESIDENT



Hello everyone!

I am very glad to welcome you to the fourth edition of the Venice Universities' Model European Union.

I am Nadia Dalla Gasperina and I have recently graduated from Ca' Foscari University in Philosophy, International, and Economic Studies. I am now pursuing my Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe in Forlì. During my experience at Ca' Foscari, I had the opportunity to travel around Eastern Europe to volunteer and I made many friends from all around the world. I am also a member of the

Venice Diplomatic Society and serve as the graphic designer. I love engaging in practical and local activities in the field of social work and education, but I am also interested in exploring all the quibbles and technicalities of international diplomacy! That is why I am so excited for you to be here, taking the opportunity to experiment how the European Union works and building up experience for your future career!

My first experience in a Model event was in fact last year's edition of VeUMEU, where I had lots of fun while also learning a ton on how the European Parliament works in practice. I admit it was not easy at all: lots of documents to read and study, debates in the making, and public speeches for three days straight, but I am very happy to have experienced such a lively and interesting environment! I am extremely honoured to serve as Vice-President of the European Parliament this year.

My advice for you is: do not be afraid! The more you do, engage, speak, and the more mistakes you make, the better! Participating in the VeUMEU is a unique experience so give it your all, it will be worth it! I am confident that in just a few days we will be able to analyse, discuss, and resolve important issues in a professional way, while enjoying interesting debates and fun moments.

I want to welcome you all again and cannot wait to see you all in action!

Tighten up your suit, the ride is about to begin!

*Nadia Dalla Gasperina*



## SECRETARY



Dear delegates,

I am very pleased to welcome you to the fourth edition of Venice Universities' Model European Union. My name is Irina Popescu and this year I have the honor to serve as the Secretary of the European Parliament.

I am currently enrolled in the second year of Bachelor's in Philosophy, International Studies and Economics at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. I am originally from Moldova where during my high school years I was involved in projects aiming to improve the living conditions in my community. I was a member of my school Debate Club but also had an opportunity to participate in a state simulation, travel to different cities in my country and play in social theatre to highlight the problems of young people.

After coming to Venice, I decided that it would be interesting to broaden my volunteering experience, thus I became part of the Venice Diplomatic Society and Extinction Rebellion. Being a member of these organizations helped me enrich my knowledge about the problems our world is facing today but also take action.

I believe that every person can make this world a better place and it's our duty to do so, that's why I am very excited about events such as the VeUMEU where people have an opportunity to discuss, debate, engage in conversations, and build long lasting connections. So, take advantage of this and don't forget to have fun!

Looking forward to seeing you all in November.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Irina Popescu'.



# Role of the European Parliament

## The European Parliament: Overview.

The European Parliament was established in 1952 as a Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community. Later, in 1962, it was appointed as the European Parliament where the first direct elections were held back in 1979. It is located in Strasbourg (France) and Brussels (Belgium). Since the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, it is composed of 705 MEPs (Members of the European Parliament), and the current president is David Sassoli. There are three main roles of the European Parliament:

1. Legislative: it passes EU acts based on the EU Commission's proposals, it has the main voice on international agreements according to the TFEU (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), and it reviews the Commission's work program.
2. Supervisory: it monitors the democratic scrutiny of all EU institutions, it examines citizens' petitions and sets up inquiries, and it discusses monetary policy with the European Central Bank (ECB).
3. Budgetary: it approves the EU budget.

### How does it work?

The work of the European Parliament entails two stages:

1. Committees: they prepare legislations. The Parliament relies upon 20 committees which examine the proposal for legislations, and the MEPs may amend or reject these proposals.
2. Plenary sessions: their aim is to pass legislations. This important passage occurs when all the MEPs vote for the proposed legislations to be passed.

The number of Members of the European Parliament is 705 and they are grouped by political affiliation.

### The European Parliament at VeUMEU 2020

During VeUMEU 2020 there will be the same political groups as in the real Parliament. The only difference is that, due to the reduced number of participants, the MEPs will not be 705 but around 50. Each of the MEPs will belong to a specific party, thus everyone will represent the ideas of their party and the faction they belong to. In the model, each group will have a leader, who is expected to represent the faction in the conferences and during the sessions.

The main work of all the MEPs will be taking place during the plenary sessions and the faction meetings, a crucial moment for our model. During this important debate, MEPs are expected to come up with amendments which will be discussed during the plenary session. Each faction or group (say, all the GREENS from the different countries) will be expected to gather and write amendments they believe crucial during their faction meeting.



## **The Plenary Session of the European Parliament**

The plenary session of the VeUMEU EP will be chaired by the President and the Vice-President: they will be in charge of guiding the meeting through smooth and effective debates. Both the President and the Vice-President will be MEPs, as in reality, BUT they will not take part in debates nor vote during the session.

The importance of the plenary session is to create an effective and working environment for the amendments to be passed or rejected. Under the plenary session, each group will have to present its own line of argument: it will be used to reach consensus (or majority) in the Chamber. The work of the MEPs is to shape the Parliament's general position on the topics we will be discussing. During the plenary session, the talks will go through debates in which the position of each group will focus on the "topic of the day". No other topics will be discussed during the session due to the lack of time (be prepared not to waste time during the meetings by talking about completely other things! Remember that inappropriate speeches will be cut off by the President of the EP).

## **The Faction Meetings at VeUMEU**

The main purpose of the faction meeting is to give MEPs time to debate and form their position within their groups. There will be no other part sharing that moment, as it is a "private time" for the groups' MEP. The faction will be chaired by the group leader. The main goal of the private meeting is to agree on the line of the faction's argument: this is to say that during the faction meeting all the MEP are free to propose their opinion (of the party they are representing). This is why it is crucial to know what is the point of view of the party you are presenting (your personal opinion is not important now!).

The faction meetings will be taking place during the Parliament conference as a way to define which is the group's argument's line. Yet, group leaders shall be very effective in paving the path for the success of their own group. Here, the role is to be aware that some MEP might disagree on something and the standpoint of the faction might not be reached immediately. If so, the leader might use a voting system inside the faction to define the viewpoint.

Negotiations with other factions should be reached ONLY AFTER the group has fixed its own ideas.



# Factions' Positions

***Dear Participants,***

*Here you will find a brief description of the factions' positions of the European Parliament regarding the topics of discussion, as well as some useful links to get you started. Please, keep in mind that the following statements are to be considered as **general remarks** about the policies or political trends of the parties: they can guide you in understanding how to better represent your faction and develop ideas and positions accordingly. However, they cannot substitute your own research on the topics. If you happen to have any doubt, do not hesitate to ask the Commission.*

*Best of luck to all of you,*

*The Parliament Team*

## Proposal 1

### **Identity and Democracy**

The ID groups scores really low in policies about sustainability. It puts industry before sustainability and environmental protection, investments are directed at short-term industrial gains rather than supporting investments that may have an impact in the long-term. Most group members support the production of oil and gas, although some parties are taking action in their own countries. They also are sceptical about the scientific foundation of climate change.

<http://www.caneurope.org/publications/press-releases/1758-defenders-delayers-or-dinosaurs-where-do-eu-political-groups-stand-on-climate-change>

### **Non-attached members**

The Non-Attached members think that economic growth and sustainability must go hand in hand. The general orientation of the faction is in favour of the development of a framework to facilitate Sustainable Investment in the European Union. In fact, understanding the need of the global strategies of nowadays, they remain committed to the fight against climate change and for environmental protection.



## **ECR**

The ECR does not support the adoption of the framework for sustainable investments, as it believes that it will impose costs on countries that are already in economic difficulty and that need to catch up in the sustainable economy sector. They deem it will be an extra burden on taxpayers and citizens rather than a form of support. Moreover, it is not yet clear what forms of energy are really green, so this regulation may support impractical ideas. The group members also support gas and nuclear energy.

<https://ecrgroup.eu/article/the-new-taxonomy-will-make-eu-citizens-and-businesses-pay-the-price-for-imp>

## **Greens/EFA**

The Greens/EFA strongly support the regulation since it will shift financial flows away from dirty, carbon intensive investments and into sustainable economic activities. The regulation will demand accountability from all financial investors claiming that they contribute to environmental sustainability by forcing them to disclose the share of their investments into activities that are considered sustainable. All investment in coal cannot be considered sustainable.”

<https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/press/compromise-on-sustainable-investment-will-boost-greener-economic-activities/>

## **GUE/NGL**

The GUE/NGL group strongly supports this regulation and share the belief that all the EU policies should be coherent and aligned with sustainable development goals, which direct the rapid transition to a sustainable society. Climate action must be the number one priority, particularly as it collates with maybe other struggles such as decent jobs, high living standards as well as gender and racial equality. They view the EU taxonomy as necessary step to end “the constant growth model of capitalism: *“This means regulating to ensure sustainable production and sustainable systems all around us and fight for new economic and social policies.” “There is the need to completely transform the direction of the EU’s trade, commercial and investment policies, ensuring only environmentally and socially sustainable trade and investments.”*

[https://www.guengl.eu/content/uploads/2019/04/Manifesto\\_Climate\\_web.pdf](https://www.guengl.eu/content/uploads/2019/04/Manifesto_Climate_web.pdf)

[https://www.guengl.eu/content/uploads/2017/05/Midterm\\_online-.pdf](https://www.guengl.eu/content/uploads/2017/05/Midterm_online-.pdf)

## **EPP**

The EPP faction is committed to combating climate change as its dangerous effects will further increase the levels of poverty and conflicts in the developing world, as well as the consequent migratory pressures. The EU must gradually reduce the CO2 emissions and focus on more sustainable energy resources. The EPP group also supports the shift towards a more sustainable agricultural model and towards smart farming since these policies will create more jobs in the rural areas and develop new sustainable technologies.

<https://www.epp.eu/papers/a-sustainable-europe/>



## **S&D**

The S&D strongly support the regulation since they are working on lowering Europe's carbon emissions and its transition towards a carbon-free energy system. Transition also includes supporting businesses and redressing industry. *"As Socialist and Democrats, we are convinced that the European industrial policy strategy should promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and significantly raise the industry's share of high-quality jobs and well-being. We fight for climate neutrality, sustainability, innovation and competitiveness and we insist on striving for social inclusiveness that leaves no worker or region behind."*

<https://socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/financing-green-deal-not-single-euro-public-funding-must-flow-harming-our-people-and>

<https://socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/industry-future-will-be-green-sustainable-and-social-propose-sds>

## **Renew Europe**

The Renew Europe group members support the regulation as they believe EU policies must be in accordance with the Paris agreement of 2015. They also believe that Europe must reach climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest. *"Reaching climate neutrality is the Thirty Years' War of our generation. There is no time to waste because floods, droughts, lower farm yields are already a reality and hurt our people and our economy."*

<https://reneweuropengroup.eu/en/news/1642-european-parliament-continues-to-lead-the-way-on-climate-change/>

# Proposal 2

## **Identity and Democracy**

The ID faction is very conservative. For most group members, the role of men and women is separate and different, hence there is no need for women to spend more time at work instead of taking care of the family. They do not share the belief that men do get more opportunities than women, but simply that women need to learn to make their way in the working environment. Their gender policy is directed towards strong protection of the traditional family. They reject any attempt at creating supra-national laws and strongly believe in the sovereignty of the Member States.

## **ECR**

Although right-wing, ECR members believe in the freedom of the individual and personal responsibility. Therefore, they are divided in their opinion, most parties endorsing gender equality in the workplace, others being more conservative. Rather than rules and sanctions, they aim at making the workplace as flexible as possible. Member States should create their own maternity and paternity leave rules adapted to the population of their country, offering women the right to equal opportunities.

[https://ecrgroup.eu/article/womens\\_rights\\_committee](https://ecrgroup.eu/article/womens_rights_committee)



### **Non-attached members**

The non-attached members are usually populist parties. The members do advocate for women's rights and gender equality in the workplace, how they generally want to both establish less rigid work frameworks for women so they are able to take care of children and work, and to extend the period of paternity leave. They support higher salaries during maternity leave.

### **Greens/EFA**

The GREENS/EFA, as a left-wing faction, strongly support the directive. They welcome the introduction of paternity leave at a EU level and of further measures meant to encourage men to take on more care responsibilities at home. However, the group is not satisfied with this proposal, since it believes that more should be done, adding further benefits: *"The right to five days off to care for children or relatives is a good start, but we think that much more needs to be done. Still in most EU countries, women continue to bear the big part of the care work. We call on member states to not be restrictive when transposing the Directive and to ensure at least 80% of payment for all leaves."*

<https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/press/work-life-balance-directive/>

### **GUE/NGL**

The GUE/NGL strongly support this directive since one of their main goals is to reach gender equality in the European Union and since they believe the directive is one of the key elements in the European Pillar of Social Rights. *"Work-life balance is crucial in addressing gender inequality and discrimination in employment. A real social Europe is at stake and we need to push ahead for decent pay equal leaves for parents. The duties and rights for men must be the same as women in care duties."*

<https://www.guengl.eu/macron-must-unblock-work-life-balance-directive-for-sake-of-equality/>

### **EPP**

The EPP faction is committed to defend equal rights for both parents and achieve gender equality. Further, they consider that a better work-life balance will have positive effects on businesses and workers since it will increase their productivity, close the gender pay and pension gap. *"In the EPP Group are committed to defending women's and carers' rights. We will stay united before the Council and the Commission during the negotiations to ensure that we give both mothers and fathers the opportunity to have equal rights to take care of their children and to pursue their professional careers."*

<https://www.eppgroup.eu/newsroom/news/work-life-balance-parliament-prepares-for-negotiations>

### **S&D**

The S&D are devoted to their common goal: improving the lives of working parents, carers and their families, a goal which they consider to be an urgent one for the EU citizens. According to them, the solution lies in paternity, parental and carers' leaves.

*"The S&D Group is leading the fight for a progressive and ambitious Work-Life Balance Directive to enable parents to balance their work and private lives without*



*having to choose either the one or the other...The proposals will bring to reality the principles of the EU Social Pillar, ensure gender equality at work and in caring responsibilities and close the gender pay gap. It aims to ensure that working parents and carers be able to juggle their professional and personal responsibilities”.*

<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/newsroom/sds-call-council-join-fight-improve-lives-working-parents-and-carers-eu>

### **Renew Europe**

The faction’s aim is to reach gender equality, which cannot be achieved without concrete actions to close the gender pay gap or take the gender dimension into account when it comes to new challenges such as digitalization, AI or climate change. Therefore, they support the directive since it will enable women, who are traditionally penalized in work environments, to devote themselves to and pursue their careers without having to compromise with the necessity of family life.

<https://reneweuropesgroup.eu/en/news/1450-gender-equality-long-awaited-strategy-is-a-good-starting-point-now-action-needs-to-follow/>



# The Council of European Union



## CONTENTS

<b>Staff Profiles</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Role of the Council</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Countries' Positions for Proposal 1</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Countries' Positions for Proposal 2</b>	<b>54</b>





# Staff Profiles

## PRESIDENT



Honourable Delegates,

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to the Council of the European Union at Venice Universities' Model European Union 2020. My name is Maddalena Sartor and I am delighted to serve as President of the Council of the European Union during one of the most remarkable times of human history.

I am a second-year student of the Master's degree in International and Cross Cultural Relations at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, and my passions range from languages and cultures to foreign affairs and multilateral diplomacy. Youth leader and human rights advocate, I

strongly believe that youth participation in any form is the key element to achieve significant changes worldwide and build the future we want.

In 2017, I participated in my first Model United Nations in Venice, where I got to know the Venice Diplomatic Society and when my long journey into diplomacy officially started. Indeed, in the last few years I have taken part in a number of international conferences as delegate, chair and member of the Secretariat, having the chance to travel around Europe and to the United States. I have also been serving as a member of the staff in the organization of many non-formal educational programmes for youngsters offered by territorial institutions and NGOs.

What I enjoy the most about models is the chance to meet new people and new cultural sensibilities that would widen my own personality and vision of the world. Moreover, these events have offered me the possibility to develop my debating and diplomatic skills in a healthy yet competitive environment, encouraging me to go beyond my limits and fears. For this reason, I am sure you will have an unforgettable experience with our committee, here at VeUMEU 2020.

I look forward to meeting you all in November and seeing what each and every one of you have to offer.

Best of luck!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maddalena Sartor'.



## VICE-PRESIDENT



Hello, everybody and welcome aboard of the VeUMEU train!

I candidly hope VeUMEU 2020 is going to be a blast for all of us. First things first, however, I would like you to find out more about me. I am Oleksandr Seredyuk, a 21-year-old Master's student born in Ukraine. I hit off my university education in Lithuania at a North American University where I obtained a degree in Political Science and enriched my cultural experience with people from over 20 countries in the world. Throughout high school and the Bachelor's, I became increasingly interested in the area of IR and politics as they are pivotal with regards to development and peace

resolution. VeUMEU is a tremendous opportunity for me as I am poised to transform mostly theoretical political and philosophical knowledge into boisterous practice.

While I have not had a whole lot of experience participating in Model events, I am looking forward to jumping onto the bandwagon! I have previously co-organized a Speech and Debate club at the aforementioned university of mine which worked like VDS' Debating framework albeit with the use of a different, namely Karl Popper's, system. That boosted my confidence in Public Speaking and the use of negotiation skills in front of audiences which I am hoping to make use of at VeUMEU 2020. I joined VDS in the Fall of 2019 as soon as I found out there is a youth organization which encourages student activities and organizes events, debates and just serves to be an astounding place to meet new friends and future colleagues. I am hoping to further VDS' purpose by inputting my skills and perseverance no matter the challenges.

I am confident that our combined work will let us all not only resolve important issues on our playground but also have fun as we will be dealing with complex and thought-provoking issues. This is a great chance to bond, build up interconnected teams, and prepare for the future, however opaque it seems at the moment.

Take it easy, buckle up for the ride, and enjoy while it lasts!

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.



## SECRETARY



Hello dears!

I am Elnora Anvarova, a second-year student of Philosophy, International and Economic Studies at Ca' Foscari and a student of the Globalization Program at the Venice International University. Before securing my bachelor's degree at Ca' Foscari I had the experience of being part of the organization team of the Conversation Club at the National Library in my hometown. As I was given a chance to be the leader of debate club, I improved my social and leadership skills.

My participation in various conversation clubs, and leadership in debate club led me to develop a deep interest in MUN simulations. The first experience in MUN was quite challenging for me: I was accepted as a delegate to the biggest International Union Conference in Central Asia 2019. The experience that I gained in the Conference made me realize about the major forces of Political and Economic Sciences in the development of constructive diplomatic relations between countries.

Another MUN conference dedicated to Gender Equity in different spheres of our life was a second push for me to opt for the field of study that I am pursuing now. The MUN simulations made me believe that Laws and Norms are the principal elements to regulate nations successfully.

I am too excited to serve as Secretary of the Council of the European Union and I believe that with you we will be able to broaden our academic horizon and to learn how to solve complex challenges with a global mindset.

# The Role of the Council

The Council of the European Union was established in 1958 and is located in Brussels, Belgium. Together with the European Parliament, the Council is the main decision-making body. The Council is formed by the government ministers of each EU country. Each time the Council meets, being formed by ministers in charge of a specific matter, it assumes different configurations depending on the issue.

The Ministers' duties include: negotiating and adopting EU laws together with the European Parliament based on proposals from the European Commission, coordinating EU countries' policies, developing the EU's foreign & security policy, concluding agreements between the EU and other countries or international organisations, and adopting the annual budget for the EU together with the European Parliament.

Moreover, the Council defines and implements EU foreign and security policy on the basis of the guidelines set by the European Council. Together with the High Representative of the Union for the Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, it ensures the unity, consistency, and effectiveness of the EU's external action.

The presidency of the Council rotates among the EU member states every six months for a 18 months period. Member states holding the presidency work together closely in groups of three, called "trois," in order to set long-term goals and prepare a common agenda determining the topics and major issues that will be addressed by the Council. This is with the exception of the Foreign Affairs Council, which is always chaired by the elected EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (currently Josep Borell).

Discussions and decisions are public. Depending on the issue under discussion, the Council of the EU takes its decision by simple majority (14 member states vote in favour), Qualified Majority (55% of member states – namely 15 countries out of 27 – representing 65% of the population of the Union vote in favour), or unanimous vote. In order to pass, substantive votes require a qualified majority; a simple majority, instead, is required for procedural votes.



# Countries' Positions

**Dear Participants,**

*Here you will find a brief description of the Member States' positions in the Council of the European Union regarding the topics of discussion, as well as some useful links to get you started. Please, keep in mind that the following statements are to be considered as **general remarks** about the policies or political trends of the States: they can guide you in understanding how to better represent your country and develop ideas and positions accordingly. However, they cannot substitute your own research on the topics. If you happen to have any doubt, do not hesitate to ask the Commission.*

*Best of luck to all of you,*

*The Council Team*

## Proposal 1

### Austria

With the Vienna Stock Exchange being part of the “Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative” of the United Nations, Austria is strongly committed to counteracting climate change on the capital markets. Guided under the Sustainability and Diversity Improvement Act (NaDiVeG), the country is also committed to guaranteeing that Austrian companies comply with a high level of transparency on the type of resources they use, meeting the sustainability requirement. While supporting the establishment of a comprehensive EU Taxonomy and calling for a quick adoption of it, Austria is one of the countries not recognizing nuclear power as “sustainable”, “transitional”, or “cost-effective” in the process of ecological transition. In particular, according to Minister Kurz, the inclusion of nuclear power in this eco-label could send wrong signals to the financial market actors and divert investments away from environmentally sustainable activities.

<https://www.wienerborse.at/en/about-us/sustainability-and-social-responsibility/sustainable-investing/>



### Belgium

In 2018, Belgium raised the second largest green government bond in the world with the objective of financing the transition towards a sustainable economy. Specifically, the 4.5 billion bond was devoted to projects in the following five green sectors: clean transport, biological resources and land use, renewable energy, the circular economy and energy efficiency. Moreover, the Belgian government works closely with many private, public and civil actors to promote sustainable investment, and to guarantee transparency, accountability and quality within the sector. The main example of such governance is the Belgian Sustainable and Socially Responsible Investment Forum (BELSIF) - a non-profit association that plays a key role in the field of socially responsible investing. Examples of external Belgian partners are the European Investment Bank and the Eurosif. However, with the fast development of many European economies in the green sector, Belgium ranks under the average in the 2018 EU 28 Eco-innovation Index, meaning that there is still much room for improvement in the country's eco-innovation performance.

<https://greenfinanceplatform.org/financial-measures/browse/country/belgium-82>

[https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/indicators/index\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/indicators/index_en)

### **Bulgaria**

In 2017, Bulgaria was ranked last under the Eco-Innovation Scoreboard, portraying a poor performance in circular economy and eco-innovation. Nevertheless, the Bulgarian government has been placing great effort in implementing several Operational Programmes since 2013 aimed at improving the overall country's performance. The main challenge for eco-innovation in Bulgaria remains the fact that stakeholders are reluctant to invest in these areas due to consequences of the economic crisis. Although the country welcomes the general dispositions of the Commission Proposal, it does not support the inclusion of gas and nuclear in the category of so-called "pure green" investments under the EU taxonomy.

### **Croatia**

Croatia welcomes the proposal for the creation of an EU taxonomy and tries to offer a pro-business-oriented environment that encourages new investments in the country and ensures stability. The Croatian market potential with a population of only 4.1 million is relatively small in global terms, but Croatian consumers and companies have already proven that they have the ability to absorb new technologies very rapidly, especially after the 2018 Act on Strategic Investment Projects.

<http://investcroatia.gov.hr/en/about-us/>

### **Cyprus**

Feedback received from the market reveals a general trend towards improved governance and greater transparency in Cyprus, as companies are actively taking steps to become more aligned with current developments, in compliance with the most recent legislation and EU directives. Cyprus has long standing ties with the EIB, which is one of the most reliable partners for Cyprus in financing projects in all sectors of the economy with exceptional favorable terms. Similarly, the Cyprus Entrepreneurship Scheme (CES) strongly contributes to sustainable growth and employment at national level by facilitating access to finance for Cypriot SMEs. (<http://mof.gov.cy/en/international-financial-institutions/institutions/european-investment-bank-eib>)



## **Czech Republic**

*The Czech Green Investment Scheme (GIS)* programme launched by Czech Republic in 2018 sets an example of the use of a crediting approach to voluntarily recycle the carbon revenues of transactions under Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol. In 2010, the Czech government also adopted the Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development that aims to reform the energy sector, increase green policies and make the management of the services of its ecosystems more effective. The Czech Republic supports the realization of an EU taxonomy, affirms the importance of nuclear energy to fight climate change, and recalls the imperative of a fully informed and objective assessment of sustainability of all available energy technologies on a non-discriminatory basis.

<https://greenfinanceplatform.org/sites/default/files/downloads/resource/Low%20Carbon%20Cities.pdf>

## **Denmark**

Denmark supports the EU Commission's ambition to not only set requirements for businesses in relation to achieving a sustainable transition, but also to support this transition through the enhancement of EU-investments to flow in their direction as well as a strategy for encouraging private investments in sustainable solutions. Following the Covid-19 outbreak, securing investment flows towards sustainable solutions and encouraging sustainable transition for investors is of paramount importance to rebuild the economy across the EU countries. Denmark also approves the further development of the EU-taxonomy to ensure a common language on what a "green" investment is and a level playing field when it comes to rules and regulations.

<https://www.danskerhverv.dk/siteassets/mediafolder/dokumenter/02-horingssvar/2020/renewed-sustainable-finance-strategy.pdf>

## **Estonia**

Although Estonia does not find itself exposed to exceedingly urgent environmental issues, it is considered to be one of the most resource intensive countries throughout the EU and is strongly encouraged to progress towards more efficient solutions for its economy and industry. EU funds are a key asset for protecting the environment in Estonia, using natural resources more efficiently, and creating a less energy- and carbon-intensive economy. In recent years, the Estonian government is boosting green investments in various areas, such as innovation and research, and low-carbon economy as well, as it is promoting sustainable and quality employment and education.

[https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report\\_ee\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/report_ee_en.pdf)

<https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/projects/psd/eften-baltics-sustainable-property-fund.html>

## **Finland**

Finland has been very supportive of taxonomy (classification) of investments and it has been at the forefront of negotiations throughout its presidency in the Council of the EU. Finland's minister of finance stressed the importance of drawing funds from not just the public sector, but from the whole economy. Social responsibility goals and good governance are some of the priorities Finland has put forward, and making things easier for investors will allow everyone to have greater confidence in investing green and in making the world more sustainable.



<https://eu2019.fi/en/-/milla-kouri-sijoitusten-kestavyyden-maarittely-etenee-eu-ssa>

<https://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/green-list.18eg/>

<https://vm.fi/en/-/sijoitusten-kestavyyden-maarittely-etenee-eu-ssa>

## **France**

France is a champion in sustainable investments and is a proponent of a European law governing this. France has already been requiring companies to declare their carbon footprint, which is a progress in meeting climate targets in the area of pension funds and investments. AMF, an independent public authority, stresses the necessity to make sure that rule clarity and transparency of investments are enforced. Focusing on ESG (environmental, social and governance) rather than CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is an important part of seeing how a company is doing and serves as a more objective evaluation of the motivator to become better/receive more investment because it demands metrics. France plans on giving two full years to share experiences and best practices related to portfolio's climate footprint and policies, before objectives and targets are fixed. France is also supporting atomic energy projects and would like to deem them green too - a resolution disputed by those member-states without nuclear power plants or those who would like to move away from nuclear energy.

[https://www.jsafrasarasin.ch/internet/ch/en/sustainable\\_investment\\_spotlight\\_stricter\\_european\\_regulations\\_favour\\_sustainable\\_investments\\_en.pdf](https://www.jsafrasarasin.ch/internet/ch/en/sustainable_investment_spotlight_stricter_european_regulations_favour_sustainable_investments_en.pdf)

<https://www.amf-france.org/en/professionals/listed-companies-issuers/decrypt-regulation/sustainable-finance>

<http://www.eurosif.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/The-French-Energy-Law-editorial.pdf>

## **Germany**

Germany welcomes the Proposal, a great step toward the further development of a sustainable European finance market and a common understanding of sustainability in Europe. The State supports the proposed introduction of a classification system (taxonomy) to create the necessary transparency for sustainable investments and to avoid greenwashing. The proposal will likely lead to a binary system: either an economic activity is sustainable or it is not. A gradation would lead to more transparency for the market and could help avoid unjustified interference into member states' policy areas. Germany is concerned with the formulation of forest policies which are the competence of Member-States and that the EU should not have power to amend such policies.

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/CM-2023-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

## **Greece**

Greece places great emphasis on creating quality, resilient, reliable and sustainable infrastructure which contributes substantially to economic development, social prosperity, and affordable and accessible services for all. To this end, the Greek government has taken initiatives and measures towards the development of a National Strategic Transport Plan (NTPG). For Greece, it is of great importance to open up possibilities for greater funding thus strengthening its shipping power, creating more jobs and ensuring the security of agriculture and





forestry management. Up to date, Greece has passed a few laws tackling the ease of investing and better licensing and achieving an EU wide taxonomy system is a way to attract even more investment and make progress for Greece and the EU on the whole.

<https://gslegal.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/VNR-Greece-2018.pdf>

### **Hungary**

Hungary generally welcomes the Proposal as an important step to mitigate climate damage. The state acknowledges the need to tackle environmental issues while safeguarding the security, stability, and affordability of the energy supply in the long term. Hungary supports Germany on the need to observe the use of delegated acts (delegation of sovereignty of Member-States to the EU to amend non-essential elements of the EU law or framework law). Also, as a state that has a nuclear power plant, Hungary considers nuclear energy as a sustainable and safe energy source in the long term. The state believes that nuclear energy extracted safely could guarantee a swift reaching of climate neutrality in all of the EU. Hungary is also concerned with the widening scope of the regulation. Extending the scope to products that do not pursue any kind of environmental, social or governance aim would only add to the administrative burden of market participants without providing further useful information to investors.

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/CM-2023-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

### **Ireland**

Ireland is committed to its positioning as a green financial centre and strongly supports the creation of a EU framework where taxonomy will play a fundamental role in the transition to sustainable finance by helping investors and companies identify environmentally friendly economic activities. The Ireland for Finance Strategy for the development of Ireland's International Financial Services sector (IFS) to 2025 comprises sustainable finance as a key pillar citing that 81% of asset managers have in place a responsible investing policy. Sustainable finance includes green bonds, socially responsible investing (SRI) investments, environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors, as well as sustainable infrastructural investments, climate finance, and performance bonds.

(<https://www.irishfunds.ie> )

### **Italy**

Italian interest groups and the state are positive about formulating the taxonomy of investments thereby helping tackle climate change. Italian market is highly receptive to the use of green bonds. With this, decision-makers and key players would like the proposal to build a system of adequate incentives to encourage companies to issue green bonds, in relation to the real environmental impact of the project (this would be the task of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and regional authorities). One of such incentives could be covering contractual charges relating to external verifiers by the government. It is also recommended by the decision-makers that simplification of the rules be executed along with sufficient training for sustainable investment advisors to find the appropriate combination of investment objectives and clients' ESG preferences. Therefore, the Proposal could include some sort of framework or instruction to combine ESG competences and training courses for on boarding advisors. Finally, it might be useful to lower taxes on SRI products for both issuers and investors. These incentives will have to ensure symmetry and balance in the market activities of financial players.



[https://finanzasostenibile.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Manuale-Europa\\_ENG-WEB.pdf](https://finanzasostenibile.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Manuale-Europa_ENG-WEB.pdf)

### **Latvia**

Latvia has been able to coordinate some negotiations in terms of sustainable investments and the country has been vocal about its support for the Proposal. The Ministry of Finance believes it's important to have more investment to tackle environmental issues. Latvia considers the private sector indispensable in the fight against global warming. Clarity, transparency and expanding role of national banks and governments in clearing up the doubts and nudging the investors in the right direction are the incentives to beat.

<https://www.fm.gov.lv/en/news/50211-latvian-presidency-in-a-short-period-of-time-has-achieved-an-agreement-on-the-regulation-on-the-european-fund-for-strategic-investments>

### **Lithuania**

Lithuania, being one of the most progressive countries in terms of investment and start-ups in the EU in recent years, has been supportive of the European Commission's initiative to promote sustainable investment. Lithuanian officials eye for Lithuania becoming a hub for green and sustainable investments that could strand funds for both European and extra-European initiatives and channel them into sustainable projects through commonly set tools and Lithuania's expertise will be at hand. With the initiative, actors/companies who were not decided on where to invest now will be able to learn about taxonomy (classification) and invest in projects that are now classified as green. For Lithuania and the EU at large, this will mean greater transparency in terms of law and more development and cash flow for sustainable projects which will ultimately help save climate.

<https://www.sorainen.com/publications/big-time-for-green-and-sustainable-finance/>  
<https://finmin.lrv.lt/en/news/good-news-for-lithuania-ecosystem-for-sustainable-investment-is-underway>

### **Luxembourg**

Since Luxembourg has been promoting sustainable investments for quite a while before European Commission stepped in, as one of the leading financial centres for sustainable finance in the world, Luxembourg warmly welcomes the ambitious EU action plan proposed earlier in the year. Focusing on transparency and clarity, Luxembourg also stresses the need for ESG and green labelling for investors to have a clear understanding where environmental risks are. Luxembourg recalls that nuclear energy is not a safe nor a sustainable energy source. A credible taxonomy does consequently not allow for nuclear power generation and nuclear fuel cycle projects of any kind to qualify as sustainable activities. "Do no significant harm principle" needs to be enforced, or otherwise, this would mean risk creating long-term "lock-in effects" into such technologies, thereby generating an indefinable amount of additional costs, and would hence run counter to the overall objective of the sustainable finance agenda.

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/CM-2023-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

<https://www.luxembourgforfinance.com/leo-article/the-eus-ambitious-plan-to-lead-the-way-in-sustainable-finance/>



## **Malta**

Malta has always kept a close track with the importance of protecting natural resources and believes that it determines our future. The year 1986 was the period for the adoption of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. This proposal was innovative at that time, putting forward the concept that the seabed, ocean floor, and subsoil are the “Common heritage of Mankind”. Between 1982 and 1984 Malta called upon the UN for the creation of a forum aiming to take immediate action towards climate change and propose legal and political measures to address global warming. The proposal of Malta led to the two international legal instruments which became important precursors to the Paris Agreement on climate change in 2015. Over the past decades, Malta turned from a developing country into a developed state in the 1990s. According to the analysis of the current moment, Malta has established a strong economy due to the growing services sector and diminishing unemployment rate.

## **Netherlands**

In July of 2019, the Dutch finance sector signed a climate change agreement with the government to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions involving five sectors: electricity, agriculture, environment, transport... The financial support was from the private sector and the government acclaimed the difference it made and support it brought. Furthermore, Netherland became one of the countries that actively stepped into the “Sustainable Development Goals” that has been adopted by the UN to tackle climate change, poverty, injustice and inequality. The Netherlands has chosen an ambitious approach to implementing the SDGs. Separate working groups from each ministry have been established. The data shows that the Netherlands is doing well on many SDG targets. For example, the majority of the population feels safe and the crime rate is decreasing. Also, life expectancy has risen, corruption levels are low and the life-long learning is high.

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=332&menu=3170>

## **Poland**

In the year 2016, when Poland became for the first time sovereign to issue a green bond, the topic of green bond has dominated at the governmental level on the sustainability of the financial system in Poland. In 2018 the second green bond was again reignited and the organized conference in 2018 on the topic of sustainable finance mainly focused on the regulation and development of the tools and the mechanisms towards sustainable finance. In recent years, Poland has become very attractive in terms of investment by other states. Factors that attract foreign investors are, for example, the high level of innovation that Poland tends to demonstrate, qualified workforce and economic competitiveness. The result of the new investment was an establishment of new laboratories, research companies, chemical companies etc. in Poland. Moreover, Poland has been known for the high share of coal in electricity production. Therefore, Poland is truly concerned with its agenda on the establishment of more sectors on renewable energy. More and more enterprises are willing to reach renewable energy sources instead of conventional ones due to the increasing awareness of the area of environmental protection.

<https://www.roedl.com/insights/internationalisation/investi>



## **Portugal**

Portugal 2020 in agreement with the European Commission received from the EC at around 25 billion euros for stimulation growth and the creation of employment. In the mission listed, Portugal aims to have a greenhouse gas emission equal to that of the year 2000s. The point of the mission is to have 31 percent of energy come from renewable sources, along with increased export from promotion of sustainable development. Another improvement that comes from Portugal's mission on sustainable development is on the quality of water. Since the beginning of Portugal 2020 , 100% of urban and rural drinking water and bathing water meets the health standards. Air quality has been improved too, as of 2019 Portugal has had satisfactory air quality as well as reduced the pollution rates that used to have risk on human health. Portugal is on target to achieve the goals outlined in Portugal 2020. With the aid of European commision, Portugal has environmental and social goals outlined in the partnered agreement.

<https://ec.europa.eu/commission/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe/investment-plan-results/investment-plan-portugal> .

## **Romania**

Romanian Chamber of deputies on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investment claims as follows: Romania has explicitly shown in the proposal for sustainable investment in 2018 that the trade agreement with the third countries is to be analyzed to reach and limit taxonomy for activities in the area of climate change. Furthermore in the year 2019, on the new category of low-carbon benchmarks, the EU has been complimenting a set of rules to encourage investors to be more aware of the impact of their business on the environment. Thus, Romania has done an agreement on a proposal introducing a new set of obligations on how financial companies integrate environmental, social and governance factors in the investment decisions. Romanian presidency of Council in 2019 took as a main objective of sustainable development a strategy to increase competitiveness in the area of digitalization, entrepreneurship and the consolidation of the EU Industrial policy. As to the safety measures, it aims to invest for the new security challenges.

<https://www.romania2019.eu/home/>

<https://secure.ipex.eu/IPEXL-WEB/scrutiny/COD20180178/rocam.do>

## **Slovakia**

Slovakia is in support of the efforts related to the Taxonomy proposal. Regarding the energy related provisions, Slovakia stresses the importance to respect technological neutrality. Climate Change as Slovakia points out should be tackled swiftly while the stability of the energy supply is ensured. According to experts, nuclear energy is important to tackle climate change, therefore Slovakia sees a need to respect high safety and security by maintaining current nuclear supply. Undoubtedly, support has been shown by Slovakia for the climate neutrality of the EU by 2050. Recent updates on the sustainable investment/development of Slovakia shows an agreement between EIB (European Investment Bank) and SIH (Slovak Investment Holding). The agreement is to create ample conditions for the development of energy efficiency solutions across Slovakia. The support that will be provided to Slovakia by EIB will enhance the support to public projects across the country, creating energy efficiency and leading towards achieving climate targets.



The founding agreement makes decent progress as Slovakia now is able to deliver high-quality technical assistance to its municipalities and other public entities.

<https://www.themayor.eu/en/slovakia-and-eib-commit-to>

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/CM-2023-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

### **Slovenia**

Eco-Innovation in Slovenia in the years 2014-2015 has shown numerous opportunities as well as challenges towards a circular economy and eco-innovation development. Although Slovenia is the third most fostered country in Europe (2014-2015) with natural capital, high level of biodiversity and rich natural habits, systematic and economic challenges remain and prevent Slovenia from the circular economy. The fact is that the main drivers for the eco-innovative and circular economy products and solutions were local companies, non-governmental organizations and private sectors. This accounts for the lack of financial support. In the years 2013 and 2014 Slovenia has not changed significantly in terms of the rank in the EU Eco-Innovation Scoreboard. However, in 2015 Slovenia has improved in indicators on employment and turnover in the eco-industry with the fact that the country had a green early-stage investment. Overall, according to EU standards Slovenia did show an improvement and the strategic objectives of Slovenia needed political framework that leads to circular economy and eco-innovative development in the areas of climate change, automotive technologies, efficient electric mobility, sustainable construction....etc

[https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/sites/ecoap\\_stayconnected/files/field/field-country-files/slovenia\\_eco-innovation\\_2015.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/ecoap/sites/ecoap_stayconnected/files/field/field-country-files/slovenia_eco-innovation_2015.pdf)

### **Spain**

Spain is integrating SRI (Sustainable and Responsible Investment) in its agenda. The main goal is a long-term approach that includes environmental, social and governance criteria in the process of the study, analysis and selection of securities in an investment portfolio. Sustainable and responsible investment includes some traditional ways of investing such as investment funds and pension plans that take into account the ESG criteria either. These days, the importance of such an investment is expanding as the international initiatives related to fighting against climate change (Paris Agreement) are integrated. The result of such an initiative tends to follow the path of growth. In the years between 2015 and 2017, the growth rate of 10%, represents a share of the domestic market for collective investment institutions and pension funds of 46% respectively.

[https://www.spainsif.es/wp-content/uploads/dlm\\_uploads/2018/](https://www.spainsif.es/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/)

### **Sweden**

Swedish Investors for Sustainable development (SISD) is a partnership composed of the 20 largest financial sectors on the Swedish market as well as Sida. This sector works closely with the pressing issues of our time in partnership with the Sustainable development Goals (SDGs). SISD was formed in 2016 and works to analyse the role of investors, risks and opportunities related to the 2030 Agenda. Also, Sida has been commissioned by the Swedish government to develop new forms of finance development. The main aim was to find more potential actors that will take more fruitful initiatives and mobilize more resources in order to accelerate the reduction of poverty in the world. The program for the development financing has been



established by Sida. These include the partnership with USAID (United States Agency for International Development). The mission is to solve development challenges by using scientifically tested products and models. Another project is Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development. The project aims to reduce the rate of poverty together with the twenty leading companies with the Swedish connection that work for the good leadership in sustainable development.

<https://www.sida.se/English/partners/Resources-for-specific-partner-groups/Private-sector/Collaboration-principles/swedish-investors-for-sustainable-development/>

#### **OTHER USEFUL LINKS:**

<https://www.votewatch.eu/en/term9-regulation-of-the-european-parliament-and-of-the-council-on-the-establishment-of-a-framework-to-faci.html>

[https://europa.eu/european-union/topics\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/topics_en)

<https://medium.com/carbonclick/what-is-esg-and-why-is-it-important-f9036bb96d66>

<https://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/green-list.18eg/>

## Proposal 2

Relevant numbers for the time of leave and payment can be found at:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635586/EPRS\\_ATA\(2019\)635586\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635586/EPRS_ATA(2019)635586_EN.pdf)

### **Austria**

Austria acknowledges the importance of a work-life balance for parents and carers in the creation of a more sustainable and equitable model of living. The 2019 Amendment to the Austrian Paternity Leave Act (VKG) gives neo-fathers the legal right to take unpaid early paternity leave for one month immediately following the birth of the child in addition to the general right to paternity leave, so that parents can jointly care for the child.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1101&langId=en&intPagId=4402>

### **Belgium**

Belgium has a long tradition of paid leaves to combine family, care and work, next to systems of childcare for babies, toddlers and children at school age and family support. In the last decades, Belgium has embraced a lot of EU initiatives, agreements and directives that have allowed its social system to evolve significantly. Because of this evolution, the Belgian legal framework already meets most of the proposals in the Work-Life Balance directive.

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1102&langId=en&intPagId=4415>

### **Bulgaria**

Flexible working arrangements are not common practice in Bulgaria. According to the Bulgarian National Working Conditions Survey undertaken by Eurofound, 13% of Bulgarians have an ongoing struggle to balance work with their personal lives, where the main difficulties are long working hours and the incompatibility of partners' work schedules. The situation is especially challenging for women, who instead take more responsibility for the housework,



childcare and care of elderly relatives when compared to men. To tackle this issue, the Bulgarian government promotes the Proposal of the Commission and agrees in its implementation, should it be adopted.

<https://www.noi.bg/en/>

### **Croatia**

Together with Czech Republic and Germany, Croatia welcomes the general aim of the proposal and supports the competency of Member States for defining the scope of the directive in accordance with their respective national provisions.

<https://www.votewatch.eu/en/term9-directive-of-the-european-parliament-and-of-the-council-on-work-life-balance-for-parents-and-carers-.html#9>

### **Cyprus**

In 2003, the Department of Labour Relations of the Cyprus government implemented its legal framework by introducing the Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure Principal Law, which came into force in the context of the harmonization process with the European Union acquis. According to a national survey released in 2018, a significant 67.8% of the employees do not encounter any obstacles in reconciling work and family life, whereas 94.8% of them have used only maternity or paternity leave as part of work interruption for childcare reasons. In addition, the survey revealed that only a small part of the population make use of childcare services.

[http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dlr/dlr.nsf/page48\\_en/page48\\_en?OpenDocument](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dlr/dlr.nsf/page48_en/page48_en?OpenDocument)  
<https://in-cyprus.philenews.com/cypriot-employees-manage-work-life-balance/>

### **Czech Republic**

The Czech Republic is the country with the largest negative impact of parenthood on female employment in the EU. In this regard, the government believes that increasing the promotion of equal sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men will benefit both citizens and employers. Czech Republic welcomes the general aim of the proposal and considers the wording in Article 2 as providing clarification that the Member States have competence for defining the scope of the directive in accordance with their respective national provisions. The country recommends that a flexible ruling framework regarding the entitlement to adequate income during parental leave is very important to achieve comprehensive successful results.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs\\_autres\\_institutions/parlements\\_nationaux/com/2017/0253/CZ\\_SENATE\\_CONT1-COM\(2017\)0253\\_CS.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/parlements_nationaux/com/2017/0253/CZ_SENATE_CONT1-COM(2017)0253_CS.pdf)

### **Denmark**

The Danish Parliament raised serious concern as to whether the proposal really respects existing national arrangements on work-life balance as it claims to do, and whether the social partners and the Member States have been sufficiently involved in determining the specific provisions for these arrangements. It further pointed out that a small minority of its members find that the Commission proposal violates the principle of subsidiarity. During the negotiations, Minister for Gender Equality Mogens Jensen has repeatedly expressed his concern on the Directive's benefits for



Denmark. Overall, Denmark does not welcome the proposal and regrets a lack of cooperation among its European social partners.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/614708/EPRS\\_BRI\(2018\)614708\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/614708/EPRS_BRI(2018)614708_EN.pdf)

### **Estonia**

Closed to Finland, Estonia is the second top country for parents' work-life balance, securing itself the best result for paid leave available to mothers – 85 weeks at full-rate pay. In addition, it is relevant to say that Estonia offers more out-of-school care services hours than the world's average. It goes without saying that the Estonian government supports the implementation of Directive 2010/18/EU in order to build a more harmonious framework within the European Union on the matter.

<https://www.sm.ee/en>

<https://www.eesti.ee/en/>

### **Finland**

Thanks to its deeply-rooted culture of trust, equality and pragmatism, Finland leads the world in parents' work-life balance and flexible work. This is largely thanks to the 1996 Working Hours Act, which gives most staff the right to adjust the typical daily hours of their workplace by starting or finishing up to three hours earlier or later. Finland has a large set of national norms regulating the working life in all its spheres, placing particular emphasis on gender equality and the importance of family time. Within the EU system, the Nordic country promotes the Proposal and encourages all Member States to take steps forward on the matter.

<https://tem.fi/en/family-leave>

### **France**

France is supportive of the Proposal and would like to have more ground to be covered. There is an absolute need to have a "European Social Union". With regard to parental leave, the National Assembly has declared support for the equality objective between women and men, especially in relation to access to employment, and has called for a major investment plan for childcare facilities, as well as the proclamation of inalienable sexual and reproductive rights, the creation of a mediator for the Euro zone for family separations involving children for binational couples and, finally, new progress in the area of guaranteeing transparency of remuneration at the European level. France stands for a greater level of cooperation which includes organizing social summits every year, broadening the scope of the EU's reach in the matter, legislating social solidarity on the EU level etc. France supports same-sex couples.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs\\_autres\\_institutions/parlements\\_nationaux/com/2017/0253/FR\\_ASSEMBLY\\_CONT1-COM\(2017\)0253\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/parlements_nationaux/com/2017/0253/FR_ASSEMBLY_CONT1-COM(2017)0253_EN.pdf)

### **Germany**

In Germany, one of the parents is entitled to a 12-months leave, while the other one gets two months paid. First, 12 weeks (before and after birth) are paid and then the mother or the father could take extended parental leave for up to a total of 24 months, with a parental allowance of 300 to 1200 Euros (depending on salary), paid by the government for





the initial 14 months. Employees cannot be terminated while on parental leave, and are entitled to the same work hours when they return. Not much is set to change with the arrival of the new Proposal except the additional paternity leave to help the family. Germany supports same-sex couples.

<https://shieldgeo.com/maternity-and-paternity-leave-in-germany-a-guide-for-overseas-employers/>

<https://germanculture.com.ua/daily/maternity-leave-law-in-germany/>

<https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/family-reunification/parental-leave/>

### **Greece**

According to a study done by the European Institute for Gender, Greece is one of the countries with the highest ineligibility rates all across the spectrum. It really depends on the job status of a person to determine if they are eligible for parental leave. This means that if parents are unable to temporarily leave the job to take care of their children, they will most likely end up having no job protection if they do. In Greece, this number reaches 37% of men and women. Greece currently does not support same-sex couples.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-member-states>

### **Hungary**

Hungarian regulations are going to change quite significantly, if the new Proposal is to become a Directive. Generally, Hungary already has some sort of regulation regarding maternal and paternal leave with bigger durations but usually unpaid. With the Proposal, fathers will be allowed to take at least 10 days' paternity leave regardless of their marital or family status as defined in national law. Under the existing Hungarian regulations, fathers are granted five days' paid leave or seven days in the case of twins. Paternity leave will therefore not be a new legal instrument in Hungary, although it may need to be increased. Also, the Proposal aims to establish a minimum period of four months of parental leave, which cannot be transferred between parents. Each member state must ensure that workers may request parental leave on a part-time basis, in blocks separated by work periods or in other flexible forms. In Hungary, parents are entitled to unpaid leave until their child turns three years old, which is a relatively long time. Hungarian law does not recognise flexible forms of parental leave as well as same-sex parents.

<https://www.schoenherr.eu/publications/publication-detail/how-will-new-eu-directive-on-work-life-balance-affect-family-related-leave-in-hungary/#:~:text=Fathers%20will%20be%20allowed%20to,in%20the%20case%20of%20twins>

### **Ireland**

Ireland is among countries with high ineligibility figures for parental leave. Maternity - cumulative leave can last 42 weeks: 100% payment (salary coverage) is provided for the first 26 weeks; the remaining 16 weeks unpaid; For fathers the figure is only 2 weeks and the rate is 240 EUR per week. Generally, one must have been working for your employer for a year before you are entitled to parental leave. Ireland supports same-sex couples.



[https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment\\_rights\\_and\\_conditions/leave\\_and\\_holidays/parental\\_leave.html](https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_rights_and_conditions/leave_and_holidays/parental_leave.html)

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635586/EPRS\\_ATA\(2019\)635586\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635586/EPRS_ATA(2019)635586_EN.pdf)

### **Italy**

Italy is one of the states with a significantly high level of ineligibility for parental leave. The Italian Senate has issued a supportive statement regarding the issue of parental leave and carers. It is said that such an incentive is much more progressive than the legislation in force aids the goal of reducing inequality, allows for a more competitive labor market and serves as a step towards greater growth and employment. It is also stated that the Proposal is in line with the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity with the Italian legislation. Italy currently has only 4 days of paternal leave with the possibility of adding one extra day if the mother transfers it. Italy supports same-sex couples.

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs\\_autres\\_institutions/parlements\\_nationaux/com/2017/0253/IT\\_SENATE\\_CONT1-COM\(2017\)0253\\_IT.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/parlements_nationaux/com/2017/0253/IT_SENATE_CONT1-COM(2017)0253_IT.pdf)

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635586/EPRS\\_ATA\(2019\)635586\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635586/EPRS_ATA(2019)635586_EN.pdf)

### **Latvia**

Latvia entitles to paternal benefits those who have worked 3 months during the last 6 months or for 6 months during last 24 months. Curiously, mothers can receive benefits far greater than fathers. Fathers can get only 10 paid days off after child's birth while mothers can now get up to 70 days both before and after childbirth. Latvia also requires information about the relationship in the household as well as the economic status. Also, Latvia does not currently allow same-sex couples to request paternal leave benefits.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-member-states>

<https://www.vsaa.gov.lv/en/services/for-parents/paternity-benefit/>

### **Lithuania**

Lithuania has one of the most family-friendly maternity leave regulations in Europe. However, in the majority of cases, mothers take the bulk of the parental leave term, which results in larger gaps in their employment. Together with France and a slew of other countries, Lithuania requires a year of prior work to be eligible for paternal leave. Lithuania is set to engage in widening the scope of and conditions of parental leave. This, according to the Migration services and investors, will help bring back Lithuanian expats and channel some workforce into the country. Lithuania currently does not support same-sex couples.

<https://workinlithuania.lt/news/changes-lithuanias-generous-parental-leave-policy-set-become-inclusive-fathers/>

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-member-states>

### **Luxembourg**



Luxembourg is a state where one must work for 12 months for at least 20 hours a week to be considered eligible for parental leave. In Luxembourg, parental leave is

not automatic and needs to be requested from the employer. Fathers can take 'leave due to extraordinary circumstances' (congé extraordinaire) of 10 days for the birth or adoption of a child. Parental leave is open to either parent and provides quite generous remuneration. Luxembourg also supports same-sex couples. The Proposal for Luxembourg is a general consolidation of most of what the country has already done since the legislation in 2010 that is to be repealed.

[www.csl.lu](http://www.csl.lu) › telechargements › publications

### **Malta**

Regarding the overall eligibility (women and men aged 20-49, employed and unemployed), Malta had high rates of ineligibility for maternity/paternity leave in 2016. In addition to high rates of ineligibility Malta had a high rate of gender gap where 43% of potential mothers and 12% of potential fathers are ineligible. Apparently, the gender difference is the result of the differences in the labor market participation. Eligibility for the potential parents in employment. The eligibility of parental leave is expected to be higher for employed than unemployed or inactive. So, for the economically active there was a greater share of mothers than fathers in Malta who were not eligible with the average difference of 11% and 8-9%. Also, Malta demonstrates according to 2016 no eligibility for the same sex couples.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-member-states>

### **Netherlands**

In the Netherlands, the total duration that is available for maternity leave is 12 months, however according to the statistics in the year 2016 parental leave had no income entitlement. With regards to the eligibility condition in the Netherlands, the prerequisite is to be employed at least 1 year and in the same job without any interruption. The data shows that the unemployed citizens in the Netherlands are not eligible to be on paternity leave. Same-sex couples in the Netherlands are eligible for the paternity leave as do the adoptive and lone parents. The ineligibility between women and men in the Netherlands is around 22-23% for men while for women it is 35-35% which shows the gap between genders.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Poland**

Poland, according to the 2016 analysis, has allowed 7-8 months of parental leave and the payment is full at a income-replacement rate. In terms of eligibility, Poland grants parental leave to those countries that have status of employment. So, this factor tells us that unemployed or inactive people are not eligible for parental leave. Also, same-sex parents are not eligible despite of the fact that there might be employed.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Portugal**

Parental Leave Policy in Portugal is designed for 6 months and is based on the relative payment as of that monthly income of the employee. Portugal is the seventh among the EU countries that allow parental eligibility for both unemployed or inactive parents, but it might be with certain additional conditions. Also, same-sex parents are not eligible for the parental leave in Portugal and adoptive parental leaves are only for women, however, lone parents are to be



allowed for the status of parental leave. The gap between gender that is eligible for parental leave is quite big. Women rank at around 25% while men rank between 30-32%.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Romania**

Romania allows for its citizens to have paternity leave for 24 months and with equal payment relative to the usual earning. As of the Employment-related eligibility criteria, Romania does not grant any parental leave for the unemployed or inactive citizens. Also, same-sex couples are not on the criteria of eligibility for the parental leave. However, adoptive and lone parents tend to be eligible. There is a drastic contrast between the eligibility of women and men for parental leave. In the year 2016, women were almost at the 34% in comparison to men that showed less than 20%.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Slovakia**

In Slovakia, the total duration that is available for parental leave is 36 months and the payment tends to be a flat rate that is not equivalent to the income-replacement. Employment related eligibility is only for employed people on the condition that he or she has worked for 270 days. Slovakia does not support same-sex workers and does not grant any parental eligibility, however adoptive and lone parents are eligible. Gender gap does exist in Slovakia where more women tend to be not eligible for parental leave status than men.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Slovenia**

Slovenian government has a maternity leave that is designed for 8 month and 6 weeks according to the Policies in 2016, and the rate of payment is equivalent to that of monthly income. In Slovenia, unemployed people are not eligible for parental leave and employed people also should have work experience for at least 12 months. Same-sex couples are not eligible for the parental leave while adoptive parents and single parents might be allowed to take a parental leave. The gap between gender exists more to the side of men who are more eligible than women. The gap is due to various reasons and it does vary from county to county.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Spain**

Spain grants 36 months of parental leave with no monetary support. In terms of Eligibility-related conditions, unemployed people have no eligibility while employed ones are not required any conditional working days. Also, self-employed citizens are not included in the criteria of eligible people. Same-sex couples are allowed to take parental leave as do the single and adoptive parents. In Spain women are less eligible than men with no significant contrast between.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>

### **Sweden**

In Sweden, unemployed and inactive people are eligible with no conditions to be required. Swedish Government gives 18 months of parental leave with a good



payment that is relative to the income of an employee. Also, no requirements are presented to both unemployed and employed citizens, and self-employed workers are in the list of eligibility for parental leave. Swedish same-sex couples are eligible to have parental leave just like single and adoptive parents. Gender gap regarding the eligibility for parental leave did not exist in the year of 2016.

<https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eligibility-parental-leave-eu-mem>



# The Press “EU NOW” Journal



## CONTENTS

Staff Profiles	63
Role of the Press	66
Case Study: Action in the streets, flame in the streets	69



# Editors' Profiles

## EDITOR IN CHIEF



Welcome everyone!

I'm Anush, and I will be the editor in chief of EUNow, which basically means my team and I will be the eyes and the ears of this simulation, so watch out.

This is going to be my third VeUMEU, which means I'm not new to the experience but I am nonetheless ready to be surprised.

I'm 23, I live in Vicenza, I have graduated in PISE and I'm attending what is hopefully my final year of the MA in International Relations, so my interest in the field is self-evident. I'm very loud about my opinions on the matter as

well, so that might also be the reason why I chose and keep choosing to be in the press team.

I think that although in life it is important to have beliefs, be committed and work hard, we should also not to take ourselves and each other too seriously, so make the best out of all you'll learn in this simulation but remember to have fun.



## VICE EDITOR IN CHIEF

Dear journalists,

I'm Giada, and for this edition, I will be your vice-Editor in Chief for the Press team.

I'm in my final year in Philosophy, International and Economic Studies at Ca' Foscari, but I'm also attending a course in journalism at the Holden Academy. My passion for journalism goes back to when I was a kid and has been growing ever since I became more aware of its importance. Journalists keep our



politicians in check and ensure the truth is delivered to the people (at least when it's quality journalism!).

I have some experience in the field: I have collaborated with several online newspapers and I'm now Editor-In-chief of the VDS Gazette (check it out if you haven't yet!).

I can't wait to see all of you at this VEUMEU to produce some great work together.

*Giada Cristal Santana Eusebio*

## PARLIAMENT COORDINATOR



Welcome Deputies, Ministers and Journalists!

I am Marco Zaupa, I am 21 years old and I come from Vicenza. I am currently attending the third year of my Bachelor's degree in Language, Culture and Society of Japan and a minor in Global Asian Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

I have always had a huge passion for communication and storytelling, and I believe that everything that happens around us, from world changing events to day-to-day life, is just a collection of stories waiting to be told and answers waiting to be given to someone asking the right questions.

This is why last year I took part in VeUMEU as a journalist, following the work of the European Parliament, observing its dynamics and, overall, having a lot of fun with my teammates. It gave me the chance to make a difference by just asking questions and telling stories, and it made me realize that we should never underestimate the power that our words hold.

Now I am thrilled and honoured to be your Parliament Coordinator, and I cannot wait to see you all in action, making this edition of VeUMEU just as unique as the past ones by bringing your own special skills and enthusiasm to the table.

Take your chances, learn as much as you can from this amazing experience, debate your ideas, have fun and never stop asking questions!

See you soon!





## COUNCIL COORDINATOR



Hello everyone!

My name is Greta Bordin and I am thrilled to be able to work with you as Press Council Coordinator in the present edition of the Venice Universities' Model European Union.

I have completed a Bachelor's degree in "Languages, Civilisation, and Language science" with a political- international curriculum at Ca' Foscari University. Thanks to the Bachelor's degree I have discovered my passion for international relations and, in particular, for international law. Indeed, after the degree I decided to pursue the path of international studies. Now, I am a

second-year student of the Master's degree in "Comparative International Relations" at Ca' Foscari University.

Despite my little experience with VeUMEU, over time I developed good communication, organizational, and working team skills thanks to unique opportunities I had studying abroad, especially in Russia.

Having just recently joined the Venice Diplomatic Society, unfortunately, I cannot express clearly and decisively my opinion on this project. Indeed, this edition will be my first VeUMEU simulation. The only thing that I can say is that I am literally looking forward to participate. Having read several positive comments from the other participants on VeUMEU, I will probably wonder why I have not participated to this project before; but you know what they say, "Better late than never". I really hope it will be an extraordinary experience that will allow me to learn, grow and enrich my knowledge both personally and in the diplomatic field. An experience that opens new doors to new perspectives.

I thank everyone with all my heart for choosing me as Press Council Coordinator and for giving me the unique possibility to throw myself into a new adventure full of commitments, cooperation, seriousness and, at the same time, fun and new acquaintances.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greta Bordin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.



# THE ROLE OF THE JOURNALISTS:



The role of journalists is that of collecting information over the course of the day with the end goal of making daily an interesting and informative article for the VeUMEU newspaper “EUnow.” Professionalism and omnipresence are the keywords for the journalists.

Journalists will have the chance to do interviews with MEPs, Presidents, Ministers, and Commissioners. It is crucial that journalists remain in their role even during breaks as they will be able to gather the best, perhaps more elusive, information from other participants. The journalists are the eyes and ears of the conference, and they do not have to miss anything. Indeed, they are expected to keep all participants informed of any advancement in the debates, be it breakthroughs or fall-backs.

Some journalists will be assigned to the Council and some to the European Parliament. Every morning they will have a meeting with their respective Coordinators. There will be two coordinators: one in the Council and one in the Parliament. This way journalists can always count on their coordinator’s support if they have any doubts.

Each article that they write will be collected during the day in the journalists’ Drive (see explanation below), and it will be examined by the Editor in Chief and/or the Vice Editor in Chief. For this reason, journalists will be constantly challenged to write the best articles they can. When writing an article, a Journalist can either write a political one or, sometimes, they can be light-hearted informative pieces on the dynamics between all the participants.

When working on political articles, journalists can feel free to express their political preferences but in that case, they have to be coherent throughout the whole experience.

Moreover, journalists can ask for interviews in order to gather information from individuals or factions and will try and throw participants off during the daily

afternoon press conferences challenging the MEPs and Ministers. During the press conferences, journalists have to make sure everyone is prepared and are in charge of adding some realistic pressure. For this reason, a good journalist is the one that will be able to scrutinise and quote both the good and the bad in every single participant, making them feel the urge to give 100% at all times.

An incredibly fun aspect of being a journalist is gathering questions and information for the press conference at the end of each day at VeUMEU. This is the moment when you can put all the information you have gathered and use it at your own will; you will be given the opportunity to question members of the Parliament and Council, and they, in turn, to retort. You will have the opportunity to take pictures or record short videos. For this reason, your own equipment to write articles and research information is required, namely laptops, cameras, recording devices, pens, notebooks, and so on.

### **FIRST ARTICLE FOR JOURNALISTS**

In order to get familiar with the journalist job, you will be required to prepare a small article before the VeUMEU 2020 of one page maximum about the case study illustrated in this study guide. This short article will be useful for the staff to evaluate your skills and to help you focus on some aspects of the case study in order to be prepared for the first press conference.

The deadline for the submission of this first article is on the **3rd of November 2020**.

### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

A press conference is a meeting in which a person or organisation makes a public statement and reporters can ask questions.

During these press conferences, you will have the opportunity to ask MEPs and Ministers about their statements or daily facts. You should take notes and be ready to ask whatever you consider appropriate, even if it is unpleasant for MEPs and Ministers. You should arrive at the press conferences with clear ideas about all that happened during the day, both in Council and in Parliament, after consulting with the editors first. Listen carefully, ask questions, and record statements and answers because after the press conferences you should produce articles that will be issued in our newspaper EU NOW.

### **EUnow**

EUnow is the official newspaper of the VeUMEU 2020, and it will be prepared entirely by you. More or less, it will be a newspaper of 4 pages in length, and it will be filled with the articles approved by the Editor in Chief for that day. During the debates, you have to catch all the significant moments or events that happen and send an abstract to the Editor in Chief. Each edition of EUnow will have at least one article per journalist, so be sure to produce more than one abstract per day and do all your best work! Make interviews (also during lunch breaks or coffee breaks) to MEPs, Ministers, and Chairs in order to collect as much material as possible: photos, videos, audio recordings, quotes, etc.

EUnow will be divided into 4 sections: the first page will have a special piece of around 1200 words, most likely about the most remarkable event of the day (e.g. opening ceremony, big scoop of the day, award ceremony, a MEP that goes crazy, etc.), and it will have a short editorial of about 350 - 400 words by the Editor in Chief or the Vice Editor in Chief. The second



and the third pages will be dedicated to articles about the Parliament and the Council of 600 - 800 words. Not only articles will be issued but also Tweets, quotes, and photos. The last page will be dedicated to the press conference and your potential short opinion articles.

### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES: GOOGLE DRIVE**

The editorial staff will work exclusively on Google Drive and Google Docs. Once you will have access to Google Drive folder “VeUMEU Press,” you will find two folders: ARTICLES and EDITORS.

ARTICLES: This will be the folder for your articles, and it will contain two folders inside: one for the Parliament and one for the Council. You will upload the abstract of your article as soon as possible in the right folder, renaming it with your surname and keyword of the article (e.g. PINCO\_crazyMEP). After uploading, you will send through the group a message to the Editor in Chief and the staff, and they will evaluate your abstract and contact you if it is worthy of an article. After the approval, you will write down your article and communicate to the staff when it is finished. Then the article will be proofread, edited and uploaded in the folder “EDITORS.” These articles will be published on EU NOW.

### **TELEGRAM GROUP**

At the workshop the staff will ask you to give them your phone number in order to create a Telegram group. The group will be used ONLY for communications among you and the staff, not for spam or other not useful stuff.

### **FINAL ADVICE BY THE STAFF**

To be a journalist is not an easy task. You have to interview a lot of people, pay attention to everything, catch every scoop or interesting piece of news, etc. This is a game and we have to play together. We are here to have fun together and learn how journalism in the EU works. You are very important for the simulation because you have the responsibility of the information of the whole event. Be curious and do not be afraid to be pushy, punctilious, to ask questions, to talk personally with MEP or to become their friends. Do your best. We are here to help you in all the steps of this wonderful experience. Here some final tips by the staff:

- Read carefully the WHOLE study guide. You need to know the two Directives chosen. Obviously, you have to know what they are talking about. You have to know the rules. If a MEP breaks the rules, you can write about it.
- Listen to tips and pieces of advice from the Editor in Chief and the staff. They are here to support and help you, not to judge you. Try to build with them an encouraging and respectful environment.
- If you have some problems, of any concern, talk with the Editor in Chief and the staff.
- It will be stressful and demanding sometimes, but we are a team! We can do it!
- Last but not least... It is a role-playing game and you are a journalist! HAVE FUN!



# CASE STUDY

## Action in streets, flame in the tweets

### PANEM ET MEMES

“He is great and invincible, maybe he is a saint.” writes Italian journalist Stefano Nazi in an article for the magazine “Gente”. The bold (both literally and figuratively) title is followed by a picture portraying Vladimir Putin, current President of the Russian Federation, on a horse, shirtless; another one of him engaged in a judo match, a final one in which he is feeding a baby deer, that cannot but remind, to an Italian observer, a very similar video of former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi performing the same action on a lamb.

These images, apparently harmless, are part of a well thought out political path. The figure of the President is portrayed as that of a strong warrior, gentle caretaker, brave leader. They elevate Putin, in the popular imagination, to a hero-like figure, reaching the point where he is no longer seen as a human being like everyone else. It feels like we are witnessing first-hand how myths are created.

We might think that Europe, where such propaganda is not widespread, is safe from committing the mistake of seeing politicians as something other than ordinary people but it is not so.

The same pictures are here interpreted in a light-hearted manner, turned to jokes. Political satire is as ancient as politics itself, so it does not come as a surprise that with the introduction of the internet we became accustomed to hundreds of photoshopped pictures representing political leaders in any situation imaginable being thrown at us in social media every day.

This shifts our perception of these politicians, turning them either into demonised monsters or caricatures, fictional personas, similar to reality TV characters (a reality TV star actually becoming US president certainly did not help).

In a world this digitalized, in fact, influential figures are inevitably very exposed to online scrutiny. The mediatic power of Greta Thunberg is surely a lesson, as it is the growing interest in her figure opposed to the interest in her cause.

Even US elections are very personality-centered instead of policy-centered, which year after year strays the debate away from political action and more towards a popularity contest. People are less and less informed on what is actually going on, and more and more on the private life of politicians, even to the extent of what they ate for lunch. This is not coincidental, and not necessarily the sign of a more vapid general population: it is exactly the goal of the twenty-first century approach to politics.

What is worrying is the trivialization of serious issues: we may commit the mistake of underestimating and ignoring problems because we are too busy making fun of them.

The other dangerous aspect is accountability: seeing political figures as jokes and caricatures does not allow us to hold them as accountable for their actions, that are brushed off as a joke, or as the delusions of a madman, instead of seeing how they actually affect the life of thousands and sometimes millions of people.

Juvenal used to argue that food and entertainment keeps people away from revolting, so maybe what keeps the modern man out of political life is the illusion that sharing a Facebook post is equal to political participation. Politics and entertainment overlap



to the point in which public opinion is easily conditioned by what appears on one's social media feed. Of course, everyone having a platform is actually a step towards wider horizons of democracy, but it's alarmingly easy to forget the real life consequences of on-line actions.

## **ARE HUMAN RIGHTS THE NEW #TREND? - AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

Donald Trump's first rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma was a failure because of a Tiktok challenge. Thousands of Gen-Zers bought tickets for the convention, without any intention of actually going. Many filmed themselves, starting a trend that quickly became viral. As a result, the number of people expected to participate was much larger than the actual number (estimated around 10000 instead of 6400). Some newspapers defined the whole situation as a joke, but others claim it was political activism. I don't necessarily think it is such a clear - cut case. In the last month, we've seen how social media seem to have had a direct positive impact on political engagement, especially on the younger generations. In a way, the internet does have a democratizing effect on politics. Voters can directly contact politicians and grassroots movements can make use of cheaper ways to mobilize resources. The internet brings down the opportunity cost of getting informed and increases the coverage on groups usually underrepresented. It has the potential of amplifying voices that are usually silenced in the political discourse and the one of challenging mainstream media. But we have also seen how political messages are conveyed through trends and hashtags. Language is often humoristic. Even memes are used to visually represent tragic situations of oppressions. Taking into account the thousands that participated in the challenge, it is hard to determine whether it was one or the other and that has frustrated researchers since the birth of online social movements. It is extremely difficult to ascertain who plays a role in the movement and who is just tagging along.

Social media activism does not mean real activism. Performative activism consists in using a certain hashtag or posting content in line with social protesting, without making any effort to work towards change. Being outspoken online is only a minor factor in bringing about reform: policies are influenced by those who sign petitions, protest and put pressure on their local representatives. The two can go together, but one does not follow the other. Many fear the new wave of political activism might be a trend that will soon be replaced by the next one and not have long – lasting consequences.

Social media are both a curse and a blessing in the making of social movements. Online platforms do contribute to SMOs scaling (expansion), as leaders use them to spread awareness and to their strengthening as well. Users can exchange opinions and support online. Their virtual efforts contribute to the shaping of a clear collective identity – a necessary component of a solid social movement. These effects are visible on the BLM movement. It grew rapidly thanks to Twitter, Instagram and Tiktok, where thousands of creators posted infographics, art and videos encouraging people to become active protesters and donate. More importantly, because of the way the internet works, content became homogeneous, targeting a certain kind of user and with a consistent meaning, reinforcing a precise narrative regarding what happened and what needs to be changed. Many believe this is a pivotal moment that will change power dynamics within society in the US and beyond, the long - awaited chance to dismantle a system of oppression that exists



since the independence of the country. Nevertheless, the way social media shape social movements has made them inclined to failure and here is why.

First of all, SMOs created online tend to have a horizontal structure: there are no proclaimed leaders and every member has the same amount of agency and power. They are decentralized - composed of small local organizations loosely related between each other. Furthermore, when SMOs start online, their activism is disruptive and explosive - that might have to do with the radicalizing effect of the internet. The altogether of these characteristics makes it harder to translate social unrest into channelled action and therefore reform. Finally, these movements are based on visual and sensitive content – images and videos are the quickest way to get a response, but they do not inspire structured action. It has been historically up to leaders to shape it, mobilize resources and get in contact with governing elites. Without them, it becomes harder for movements to transform their proposals into reality.

Let us think about the revolutionary spirit that drove the Arab Spring in 2010. Social protests erupted violently in Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and large parts of the Middle East, after a vendor set himself on fire in Tunisia to denounce the harassing practices of the police.

Yet, after an initial momentum, the demands for human rights protection and fair governance remained for the large part unresolved. The movement lacked leaders capable of transforming protest into a political program. Authoritarian regimes were succeeded by more authoritarian regimes and, in some cases, even civil war and chaos.

We have witnessed chaos in the streets of Minneapolis and then of every state in the US, after the recording of George Floyd’s murder on camera shook the internet. It led to a spike in consensus to the Black Lives Matter Movement, too. At least online. Since September 2016, the hashtag BLM has been retweeted over 30 million times.

Is it enough to hope the BLM movement will accomplish what the Civil Rights Movement tried to achieve?

There has been an exponential increase in social protest. Heavy criticism towards systemic racism all over the world has brought tangible results. In Minneapolis, where the protest started, the City Council banned chokeholds and will soon vote on a proposal to dismantle and reform the police. Both New York City and Los Angeles’ administrations vowed to cut police budgets and divert funds to youth and social services. At the federal level, the US Congress unveiled the Justice in Police Act of 2020. The plan entails: ban on chokeholds and on certain no – knock warrants, but also a national registry to track police misconduct and allow for greater criminal and civil penalties for police officers. These are long needed policies, but they are not enough. POC experience the effects of structural violence every day. Racism jeopardizes black people’s right to health and safety, a sustainable income, education and work opportunities. Oppression has perpetuated for generations, creating a deep and hurtful divide between the white majority and the black minority. It follows the police system is not the only one plagued by racism. If protesters want change, they better be more ambitious in their demands and be ready to go from the streets to electoral booths.

# Additional Staff Profiles

## LEGAL ADVISOR



Hello everyone!

My name is Sara Dal Monico and I will be your Legal Advisor in this new edition of the VeUMEU. I am not new to VeUMEU simulations - this one will be my fourth - nor to the role of the Legal Advisor.

I have a degree in Comparative International Relations and I am currently attending a PhD in Law, Market and Person at Ca' Foscari University. Simulations, both of the EU and UN, have played a crucial role in helping me decide my career path and have also been incredible life experiences.

Therefore, I could not stress how excited I am to see you all participating, especially under the particular circumstances of this edition of our VeUMEU. I am positive that this will be, despite all adversities, a wonderful experience and a great opportunity for all of you.

I can't wait to see you all engaged and ready to work together!  
Keep up the good work,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sara Dal Monico'.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER

I'm not saying that you have to avoid watching the Social Dilemma just because it only provides with a relatable perspective about negative effects of social networks: contrarily, please, go and watch it! But clearly, bear in mind that the other (bright) side of the coin has to be considered. Si non, I wouldn't have any reason to be here (sigh).

Hi! This is Filippo. Possibly many of you have already known or met me somewhere around Venice back in the days (I'm currently based in Milan): otherwise, I'm pleased to meet you! We'll have so much fun together at VeUMEU 2020, it's a promise. At the





VeUMEU2020 I'll be your Social Media Manager, Social Network Content Creator or whatever you want to identify me with.

I don't want to spill too much tea about me: I'll just let you know that I was a Cafoscarino, an old acquaintance of the organizing committee and that I've really paced a lot the rooms you'll be playing in. Honestly I can admit that I have matured a good experience in UN and EU models both in Italy and in the US over the last 3 years - as you can read on the staff introduction post about me (if you missed it, go and check it out, with all the other posts you'll find! I'd deeply appreciate that).

Since you are reading the Study Guide, it means that you've successfully won the call: so, congratulations! VeUMEU is one of the major events reserved for students organized systematically every year in Venice: each member deserves our most heartfelt thank you for the constant commitment. VeUMEU is a great all around experience, during which you can't even consciously figure out how many skills, competences and capabilities you learn by doing in just 3 days: it's useless to make a complete list, because it'll never be enough. VeUMEU is an opportunity to catch when it comes, because it gives you the chance to meet peers and specialists, be informed about international concerns and issues, but above all that might open uncountable doors: VeUMEU has completely changed my life both personally and professionally, and from the bottom of my heart, I fully hope it will reserve a lot for y'all too. Remember to do your best, take the best and be the best.

I don't want to bother you any longer: just want to remind you to use #VeUMEU2020 #FestaEUVenezia2020 in order to create flow of information and conversation online; follow the accounts of VeUMEU; tag us when posting; and above all, feel free to send original content ... super excited to see what's going to happen!

Good luck!

*Schiavina Filippo*



*Contents and Design edited by*

*With the gentle concession of materials by*

