European Commission

YOUrope FOR Youth

#EUnarrative

TIPS & TRICKS FOR MODERATORS

From preparations beforehand to handling the debate on the day: here are some essential tips for moderating lively and stimulating discussions.

Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

BEFOREHAND: LIAISING WITH THE ORGANISERS

> **Finalise** the debate format.

> **Discuss layout** of room and technical resources needed.

> **Share information** about the debaters/speakers.

> **Decide on the use of polls** and potential questions.

> **Prepare for contingencies:**

- Backups in case a speaker drops out.
- Responses to potential controversies.
- Keeping the debate civil and constructive.
- Have a plan if there is a practical problem in the room (for example too hot).

BEFOREHAND: RESEARCHING

- Read up on the **New Narrative for Europe** (NNfE) initiative, its achievements and aims.
- **Research young people's opinions** on the EU in general.
- **Read up** on the specific debate subject matter.
- **Examine** the different perspectives.
- **Identify key issues** that could come up and draft polls.
- **Research the speakers' backgrounds**, especially how to pronounce their names. If relevant, contact them for a short briefing in advance.
- Work out timings.

BEFOREHAND: CONSIDERING INTERACTIVITY

> **Draft poll questions**, in close cooperation with the organisers.

> **Prepare backup questions** to use to encourage audience participation in the open Questions & Answer session if necessary.

> **Use open questions** to stimulate debate. **For example:** Why? How much? What is the solution?

> **Always have more polls and questions** prepared than you will probably need, just in case!

> **Plan interactivity** at strategic moments, for example when teams need time to prepare their responses or to give the proceedings a different momentum.

BEFOREHAND: SCRIPTWRITING

> **Prepare a script** of bullet points with key timings, speakers names, opening, interactive polls, questions and conclusion. The opening can include:

- A welcome to **debaters** and **participants**.
- An introduction to **the New Narrative for Europe (NNfE)**, enlarging the debate on the future of Europe.
- An introduction to **the specific event**, including an explanation of the debate format.
- **Practical information** (e.g. keep mobile phones on silent).
- **An introduction to the topic**, poll questions, general conclusions and details on follow up activities. Always ensure avoid jargon and use appropriate language for the target audience.

> **The conclusion usually includes:** a brief summary of the event (prepared from your notes taken during the debate); information on forthcoming activities (similar or arising from the debate); and thanks to speakers, organisers and the audience.

BEFOREHAND: REHEARSING AND TIMEKEEPING

> **Work out your timekeeping system.** It should be clear for the speakers, but discreet and not too distracting. Options to choose from include:

- **High tech solutions** like stopwatch apps and traffic light systems installed on lecterns.
- **Holding up coloured cards** or ones showing how much time is left.
- Using a small bell.

> **Rehearse your script out loud**, as though it were the actual debate.

> **Check timings** and make sure you have built in enough flexibility to deal with any unexpected problems on the day.

ON THE DAY: MAKING FINAL CHECKS

> **Visit the room beforehand to:**

- **Check** the layout of furniture.
- **Confirm** technical equipment works.
- **Listen** to the acoustics and work out how loud you need to speak.
- **Check** your eye contact and sight lines with organisers, debaters, audience and technicians (if present).
- **Make sure** water, pens and paper are provided (as agreed with organisers beforehand).

> **Confirm speaking order with teams** and if necessary apply any last minute changes as per your pre-prepared contingency plans.

> **Explain your timekeeping system to speakers**, make sure they know their allocated timeslot and emphasise that you will interrupt them politely but firmly if they overrun.

> **Make sure** your speakers know when you will start so they are ready on time.

DURING THE DEBATE: MONITORING THE TIME

> **Timekeeping** is essential.

> **At the start, and before each section**, remind the speakers (and the audience) of the time available.

> **Explain your timekeeping system** and say that people overrunning will be stopped.

> **If a speaker does go over**, interrupt politely but firmly at the first possible moment and ask them to conclude as they are already running over. Keep calm and never be aggressive or annoyed.

> **If they continue**, interrupt them again and say they are going to have to stop there and ask them to take their seat. Move swiftly on to the next speaker.

DURING THE DEBATE: MONITORING YOUR DELIVERY

> **Take time to monitor your performance.**
  You want to be animated but not too much, firm without being rude, open and friendly.

> **Are you speaking at the right pace?** Too fast? Too slow?

> **How is your posture?** Your body language?

> **Are you gesturing too much?** Are you too rigid?

> **Are you making eye contact** with the audience and the speakers?

> **Do not forget to smile!**

DURING THE DEBATE: MONITORING THE ROOM

- Can everyone **hear?**
- Is the **audience following** the content? Is it pitched **too high? Too low?**
- How is the **audience's mood? Engaged? Bored?**
- Is it time to introduce a poll to **boost the energy in the room?**
- Is it too **hot?** Too **cold?** Too **airless?** Too **noisy?**
- **Apply your pre-prepared contingency plan** if you need to open windows or switch off the air conditioning, for example.

DURING THE DEBATE: ENCOURAGING INCLUSIVITY

> **When introducing the audience Q&A**, remind people to keep their questions short and to the point, and to say who the question is for.

> **Be clear on how much time there is for questions** so people know what to expect.

> **When choosing questioners**, it is usual to adopt a first-come-first-served approach. However, do try to be inclusive:

- **Try to bring in people** from all parts of the room, including those sitting to the side or at the back.
- **Ensure a gender-balanced** pick of questions.
- If questions are all concentrated on one side, **specifically ask for questions for the other side**.

> If there are **a lot of questions**, you can take them in groups of three – though make notes so you remember what has been asked and who should respond.

> **Tell speakers how long they have to reply** and be strict on timekeeping to get as many questions in as possible.

DURING THE DEBATE: ENDING ON A HIGH

- As the debate goes on, **make notes of the most salient**, interesting or even humorous points raised to use for your brief summary at the end.
- **Thank everyone involved**, including the audience.
- **Send everyone off with information** on additional resources and future initiatives to keep the momentum going after the debate.
- **And conclude with a big round of applause** – you all deserve it!

AFTERWARDS: FEEDING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

> **If arranged prior to the event**, provide the organisers with a brief summary of the main points raised during the debate and the final outcomes.

> **Provide the organiser/s with feedback**, with any lessons to learn when planning future debates.