



FOR YOUrope 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.**

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.