

EUROSIM

A. General Overview

Simulations are scenarios that allow participants to experience the complexity of decision-making, governance, and diplomacy. Participants take on different roles, such as government officials, diplomats, or heads of state, and participate in simulated scenarios to learn about the dynamics of politics and international relations and make decisions that affect the outcome of various legal situations. Here is a general overview of how simulations work, using EUROSIM as an example:

I. What is EUROSIM about?

EUROSIM is a student simulation of the decision making-process of European Union. It was founded in 1988 and takes place on an annual basis since. The four-day simulation is carried out at either a European or US-American university or institution.

Each edition of the simulation aims at educating students about currently relevant and pressing issues within European Union policy. As such, EUROSIM allows the participants to gain a unique experience of what it means to be a decision-maker.

II. What is the purpose of EUROSIM?

Simulations have become an integral part of education in various forms. At their core, simulations are powerful tools that recreate real-world scenarios in a controlled and often interactive environment. The main purpose of a simulation is to provide a means for understanding a complex system.

During EUROSIM students learn:

- To understand how the European Union functions.
- To familiarise themselves with a vital and currently relevant European issue that might be of importance for their future careers.
- To negotiate, to debate and to gain public speaking skills.

III. Duration and size of EUROSIM

The course takes place over the span of an entire semester (generally the winter semester). The simulation itself takes place over the course of four days (8 hours per day).

B. Organisational Aspects

Before a simulation can begin, some information and organizational aspects must be considered.

I. Key data of EUROSIM

- Size: approx. 150 students from 19 universities
- Duration: 4 days
- Venue: Conference Center or University facilities organised by the host institution
- Participants: Bachelor- and Master Students of International Relations, Political Science and International and European Law Studies
- Costs: Conference fees, travel and accommodation costs, annual consortium fees

II. Administrative workload

How far in advance do you need to start planning?

Generally, the overall topic of the next edition and the preliminary role distribution among participating universities or institutions is decided upon at the running EUROSIM edition.

The planning begins during the summer break before the beginning of the new semester. Before the course starts you need to start planning the provisional schedule (the sessions) and the first travel arrangements (checking flights, creating budget etc.)

It is also important to contact/stay in touch with the respective Consortium at the beginning of the semester.

Who needs to be involved?

Several groups of people need to be involved in the planning and organisation:

- The Head of Program (or persons responsible for planning of the course)
- Consortium (persons responsible for the EUROSIM organisation and coaches from other participating universities)
- A jury comprising of lecturers and research assistants for the selection sessions

At this point, you should have received all the relevant information (i.e. when the course will begin, when the sessions are scheduled, the topic of the EUROSIM edition etc.).

At the start of the semester, you need to:

- Create the official course (i.e. on moodle)
- Advertise EuroSim on different platforms to attract candidates, i.e.:

- Hold a mini-presentation introducing EuroSim to students in the first weeks of the semester
- Distribute posters around the campus

Once you know the number and names of participants, you can continue with your travel arrangements (booking flights, bus, accommodation, visa if needed, etc.)

III. Timeline

When creating a timeline for a simulation, it is necessary to break down the different stages of development and skill acquisition into manageable steps. Here is a schedule that was used for EUROSIM:

1. Begin with a two-hour selection session in the first weeks of the semester.
2. Preparation sessions during the semester broken down into:
 - I. Knowledge Session
 - II. Public Speaking Training Session
 - III. Drafting Session
 - IV. Mini-Simulation as a final rehearsal
3. Simulation itself
4. Aftermath:
 - I. Evaluation paper written by students.
 - II. Grading by the teaching staff/coaches

IV. Selection procedure

The selection process for students participating in simulations can vary depending on the purpose and nature of the simulation. It is important that you define the objectives of the simulation and the specific skills, knowledge or qualities you expect from the participants. For EUROSIM, this is the procedure used to select participants:

What is the process of selecting the participants?

- Students have 90 seconds to give a convincing speech on a certain topic of current relevance in European Affairs, in front of the other candidates and a jury.
- Students have approx. 3-5 days to prepare for this speech.

- All candidates must deliver their presentation freely; presentation media and handouts are not allowed.

What are the evaluation criteria?

- Appearance, mimic, gesture, use of voice and the ability to persuade

Who is the jury?

- Lecturers, EUROSIM coaches and research assistants

What is the outcome?

- The 10-15 most convincing students are selected as the EUROSIM team and receive an invitation to the first preparation session.

C. Substance

Substance refers to the core content of the simulation. It is the heart of the simulation where participants engage, learn, make decisions, and experience the intended outcomes - regardless of the focus of the simulation, the content plays a central role in achieving the simulation objectives.

I. Learning outcome

Simulations provide students with a hands-on, experiential learning experience. By taking on roles and engaging in simulated scenarios, students can gain practical insights into real-world social, legal and political dynamics.

EUROSIM as an experiential learning method that offers many benefits to participants, including developing public speaking and negotiation skills, enhancing knowledge of European politics, fostering critical thinking and research abilities, and promoting teamwork.

It provides a platform for participants to engage in constructive dialogue and collaborate in finding solutions to current European Union issues.

i. Content/Knowledge

- Theoretical knowledge of the topic is the backbone of a successful participation.
- A simulation allows students to apply their knowledge in a practical setting.
- In this sense, EUROSIM bridges the gap between theory and practice, enabling students to see the relevance and applicability of theoretical concepts.

ii. Transversal Competences

What skills do participants need for EUROSIM?

- Active engagement
- Problem solving skills
- Research skills
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Leadership and initiative
- Interpersonal skills
- Enhanced understanding of different perspectives
- Cultural and global awareness
- Communication skills
 - Public speaking
 - Negotiation
 - Gestures and mimics
 - Written communication
- Reflection and self-assessment

How can participants acquire those skills?

- The preparation consists of several training sessions
- Each session aims at acquiring or improving the abovementioned transversal skills

What tools do you use to practice the competencies?

1. Individual Presentations on various topics
 - ***Skills acquired:*** public speaking and research skills.
2. Group presentations
 - ***Skills acquired:*** public speaking, research, collaboration, and teamwork.
3. Drafting of legal documents
 - ***Skills acquired:*** Research, collaboration and teamwork, problem solving, understanding of different perspectives.
4. Mini-Sim
 - ***Skills acquired:*** public speaking, negotiation, research, collaboration and teamwork, cultural awareness.
5. Individual Feedback Sessions:

- Provide timely and constructive feedback to students on their performance.
- Offer specific examples of their strengths and areas for improvement and provide suggestions for further development.

II. EUROSIM at a closer glance

To gain an understanding of the teaching method, this section provides a step-by-step overview of the content of EUROSIM beginning with the selection session to the simulation itself.

A step-by-step guide:

Create a task sheet for each session.

- I. The task sheet you have prepared should be given to the candidates one week prior to the session.
- II. It should include:
 - Information on how to conduct research.
 - The premise and rules of procedure of the session
 - The task itself

In the following, you will find manuals for each task sheet.

1. Selection Session

The aim of the session is to select the participants for the simulation. This is measured based on the participants' ability to act as politicians.

In this session the evaluation is mainly based on an oral presentation including their appearance and ability to persuade.

Example task:

Should the EU adopt a tougher stance in the rule of law crisis with its Members

Hungary and Poland?

PRO: *Yes, the EU is based on fundamental values and should show it!*

AGAINST: *No, the Member States are still sovereign and adhere to Art. 2 TEU!*

2. Knowledge Session

The aim of the session is to deepen the knowledge of the simulation's topic, to promote teamwork and cooperation and to cope with pressure.

This session consists of two parts:

- Knowledge-based lecture by coaches or external lecturer
- Extensive research by participants, followed by an academic presentation during the session

Example task: Extensive research by participants

You will be part of one of the three groups which cover different aspects of our main theme: The European Social Climate Fund.

The members of each group will have to do research and present their results to the rest of the EUROSIM team and to the supervisors. Each group will have 15 minutes at its disposal to present their findings. Following each presentation, a Q&A of another 10 minutes among the participants and the supervisors will take place.

Topic: The European Green Deal and the “Fit for 55” Package

- 1. Please define both terms and take a look on all relevant legal sources in this context.*
- 2. Explain the legal background and the competences in this field based on EU primary law.*
- 3. Which Member States are more active in this field and which Member States block?*
- 4. What should the Commission do to reach its ambitious goals towards Climate Change?*

3. Public-Speaking Session

The aim of the session is to assess, train and improve the participants public speaking skills.

This is done by simulating a public speaking setting like a press conference and assigning different roles (not the final ones) to the participants.

What is trained here is the ability to deliver a specific and precise political proposal on the assigned topic as well as playing the assigned role and deliver the speech as the alter ego would.

Moreover, the participants’ ability to listen actively and defend their proposals and speak persuasively is put to the test.

Example task:



This session will be your premiere as an EU-politician/decision-maker. Please note that this is not the final role assignment! The session will consist of two groups which cover the two topics of EuroSim 2023. The goal of this session is to simulate a press conference!

Topic: The EU Social Climate Fund

Based on what you learnt last week and during your research, would the MEP you play, vote in favor or against the proposal? Why? What would you change?

Role: MEP of a European Parliament Group

After this third session you should have received the role allocation by the organisers of the simulation. These roles should be assigned to your participants according to performance and suitability

They can range from MEPs, Head of States, Journalists to members of the European institutions. Special roles like the European Commission or EP rapporteurs require additional sessions for drafting.

4. Drafting Session

These sessions are only included into the course, if you play the European Commission or EP rapporteurs.

The commission drafts the legislative proposal for the simulation based on a real-life Commission proposal.

The most important task is to alter and reduce the original proposal and emphasize the most contentious topics to be discussed at the simulation.

It helps to research different member state opinions to determine the hot topics.

Keep in mind that this proposal will be the basis for the whole simulation.

5. Mini-Sim Session

The aim of this session is for participants to familiarize themselves with their alter-egos and the rules of procedure of the simulation.

Participants will impersonate their alter-ego and try to express their opinions.

They are expected to research on the personal (official) views of their alter-ego and act accordingly

This is done by simulating one of the different committee meetings.

This is the final session before the individual feedback.



Example task

In this session, all participants will work on Art. 4 of the new REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing a Social Climate Fund.

The setting will be an informal meeting between Head of States, Council-Members, MEPs, the Commission (a bit like the trilogue-procedure in the EU).

Kindly note that this procedure is not exactly how it works in real life or even in the simulation, but this setup will allow you to train your roles and to get a feeling what to expect from Eurosims in Wales.

Art. 4 deals with the content of Social Climate Plans and is crucial for the whole regulation. It allows us and the negotiators to add or subtract elements.

Your task is, to discuss and customize this Article. Your amendments or specific proposals should be led by the position of your alter ego (Member State/ Party).

Instructions:

- *Each participant should prepare on the position of its party or Member State and come up with a set of new amendments, which should be included in the preamble*
- *The Commission must prepare an introductory statement to present their proposal.*
- *Based on the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, the two Chairpersons will make sure to conduct the meeting, lead through the agenda and allocate speaking time, so all members have the opportunity to present their positions, and generally ensure that the Rules of Procedures are duly complied with.*
- *Our journalist is allowed to follow the whole discussion and prepare questions to ask at the end! The chairs should grant her the right to speak.*
- *Also, she must prepare a brief summary of the negotiations and conclusions to present at the end.*

6. The EUROSIM Conference

During the 3-day simulations participants are divided into different groups of approx. 30 people per room: European Council, Council, 2 Committees of the European Parliament.

There are also special floating roles (they “float” from one room to another and can request to speak there or observe the debate): European Commission, journalists, NGO-representatives.

Journalists can set up their own news channels (via e.g., Twitter) and interview the European Decisionmaker.

As soon as the participants enter the conference venue in the morning, they should play their role until the simulation ends for the day. Coffee breaks can be used to negotiate and form alliances or persuade fellow MEPs etc.

An agenda and timetable are set up by the organizers. The debates are led by specific Rules of procedure. The simulation ends with a formal vote on the legislative proposal which was changed and amended during the process.

The last day of the simulation is divided into 2 parts:

- Formal Voting, last speeches by High representatives (Commission President, European Council President)
- Award ceremony for best performances in the different groups.

III. Assessment

Assessing a student’s participation in a simulation requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that considers various aspects of their engagement and performance.

The following guidelines can be used when assessing a student’s participation in a simulation:

- Active involvement
- Preparation and research
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership and Initiative
- Communication ability
- Teamwork
- Reflective learning
- Peer evaluation

Active involvement:

Students’ level of active involvement throughout the simulation, their participation and contributions in discussions, the quality of their questions, and their ability to represent their assigned role effectively are assessed.



Preparation and research:

Students' understanding of the assigned role, their knowledge of the topic, and the extent to which they have used credible sources to support their arguments and positions is assessed.

Interpersonal skills:

A student's ability to engage constructively with peers and to compromise and find common ground with other participants is assessed.

Leadership and Initiative:

Student's ability to take charge, guide discussions, propose solutions, and motivate others and to organize and facilitate the work of committees or teams is assessed.

Communication ability:

A student's ability to articulate ideas clearly, speak confidently and persuasively, and write concise and well-structured position papers is assessed.

Teamwork:

Student's ability to work effectively with others in a team or committee setting assessed. Their willingness to listen to others, collaborate on drafting resolutions, and contribute to group decision-making process is considered.

The assessment process should be carried out with fairness, objectivity and a focus on academic growth and learning. The goal of such an assessment is that students learn from the feedback.

IV. Evaluation

After the simulation students are required to write a reflection paper evaluating their overall experience of the preparation and simulation.

Reflective learning:

Students are encouraged to reflect on their simulation experience and provide self-assessment. They need to critically evaluate their performance, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and demonstrate a willingness to learn from the experience.

Peer evaluation:

A peer evaluation component where students provide feedback on each other's participation could be included. This can provide valuable insights and multiple perspectives on individual contributions.

D. Materials



Attached you will find supporting materials such as videos, links, and sample sheets.

