Autorité pour les partis politiques européens et les fondations politiques européennes

EU competition for school classes of age 16+

Who are we?

The Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations (www.appf.europa.eu, the "Authority") is an independent body of the European Union tasked by law with carrying out registration and verification procedures, controlling compliance and - where necessary - imposing sanctions on European political parties and European political foundations. The Authority also contributes to democratic awareness at European level by ensuring visibility of key documentation with respect to European political parties and European political foundations. Additionally, the Authority contributes to securing the integrity of European elections against misuse of personal data. In all its fields of activity, the Authority works in close cooperation with other EU institutions and bodies, in particular the European Parliament, as well as with competent national authorities.

What are we offering?

The Authority is organising a competition for school classes in the European Union.

1) Eligibility:

School classes composed of pupils of at least 16 years of age from schools across the European Union are eligible to compete. The competition takes place between entire school classes from different schools under the guidance of at least one and maximum two teachers per participating school class[1].

2) Topic:

"How can EU trade agreements promote democratic values (including human rights, the rule of law and good governance)? And what can limit their effectiveness in this respect?"

3) Requested form of submissions:

- **Essay** prepared by the class and addressing the above topic in full respect of political pluralism, i.e. without focusing on specific political parties (maximum 5 pages and 15,000 characters including spaces) in an official language of the European Union **AND**
- A short **video presentation** (maximum length 3 minutes) of the proposals contained in the essay in an official language of the European Union, involving the entire class.

1 Only one application per school and per school class is possible. A school class defines as one entire grade-level group of pupils. If there are parallel grade-level groups of pupils that follow the same overall studies programme in the same school, each of them is one school class (but only one of them can apply). All pupils of the applicant school class must be involved in the project. Sub-groups of a school class following an optional course, or sub-groups of a school class having been selected to follow a specific curriculum based on individual merit, are not considered a school class.

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Note: We reserve the right to disregard submissions that do not fulfil these conditions.

How will we proceed?

1) Pre-registration:

- **Deadline for pre-registration: 15 November 2026** by email to application@appf.europa.eu.
- Please identify the applicant class, as well as the name of the school of which this class is a part. Please provide a contact email and postal address. One phone number of a teacher should be provided to enable any logistical contact that may be required.
- In order for the Authority to reserve translation capacities, please also inform the Authority in which official language of the Union your submission will be (you do not need to give advance information on the content of your later submission at this stage).

Note: We reserve the right to disregard applications that do not fulfil these conditions.

2) Submission

- **Deadline for submission: 15 December 2026** by email to application@appf.europa.eu. Essay text (in .docx or .pdf format) and video files may be provided either by attachment to the email, or by means of a link to a cloud storage service hosted in the European Union[2].

Note: Submissions that are incomplete or received after that date will not be considered.

3) Selection process:

- The Authority will first assess eligibility and compliance with formal requirements of the submissions, if needed in cooperation with Member States of origin of submissions.
- A jury set up by the Authority will then propose an assessment against selection criteria of all submissions that were found eligible and compliant with formal requirements. However, depending on the number of participating classes in each Member State, the Authority may previously ask Member States to propose a list of the 5 best submissions from their jurisdiction, in which case only those would be presented to the jury for assessment. The Authority will provide secretarial services to the jury.
- Selection criteria:
    - The submissions have to address the topic above.
    - Your own reflections are essential - the contribution of future voters can help shape the European Union! Do not hesitate to be creative, while keeping in mind the practical effects! Hence, while you are allowed to use any publicly available sources for your research, the final submission must be your own creative work, *i.e.* no copy-paste or AI-generated text can be accepted.
    - Both essay and video count toward overall assessment, weighted 50% each.
- Taking into account the proposals of the jury, the Authority will designate one winning submission. The Authority may choose to publish the winning submission.

2 The responsibility for the choice of platform remains with the applicants.

What is the award for the winning class?

- Visit and guided tour of one of the European Parliament's places of work (Brussels or Strasbourg, to be determined in light of parliamentary sitting calendars).
- Meetings with European personalities at that occasion, before the end of 2027 at a time to be chosen by the Authority, including travel cost, one night accommodation reimbursed and daily expenses allowance for the winning school class (max. 30 pupils, plus max. two teachers)[3].

How will personal data be protected?

Personal data are processed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data (Official Journal of the European Union L 295, 21 November 2018, p. 39–98). Applicants are invited to consult the privacy statement annexed to this competition notice, which explains how the Authority processes personal data in relation to the procedure.

3 For detailed information on the amounts and reimbursement procedures, please refer to the Authority's rules on reimbursement on experts' travel and accommodation costs and payments of a daily allowance, which will be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the winning class' pupils and accompanying teacher(s): https://www.appf.europa.eu/appf/en/home/legal-background .