

“Europe through a student’s eye”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are students of the 1st Model Senior High School of Halkida, representatives of the Seniors and Juniors Ambassadors schools group of the European Parliament. Thank you for this kind invitation.

In our group we learn about the institutions and bodies of the EU, we work together with the guidance of our teachers on the values of Europe, we envision its future. We critically discuss current European issues and try to share all this with our classmates by organizing various actions.

What we understood from the beginning with our work in the program, is that we are also European citizens. A great privilege, which secures us equal rights in a space larger than the strict limits of our small, beautiful country. At the same time, it creates for us the need to get to know Europe, focusing our interest on decisions concerning our daily life and our future.

Therefore we studied the policy of the European Union on climate change, energy, human rights, health. And we didn't stop there: We participated in the public deliberation on the future of Europe with two interventions. The first concerned a comment on the democratic deficit. We judged it to be the lack of information and the reproduction of stereotypical perceptions. To deal with this, we made together with our classmates from the ICT Club a mobile phone application that notifies the user about the latest posts on our school's website, where the infopoint we have made for Europe is also hosted.

Our other intervention was about Europe's health policy and the development of volunteering, a practice that Europe favors and which suits the character of young people. So we undertook our first crusade to spread to our school community - students, parents and teachers - the voluntary donation of bone marrow for the treatment of cancer. We submitted our proposal to the Dialogue for Europe, while at school we organized a big celebration on World Childhood Cancer Day honoring the little fighters of this disease .

We also pondered over what profit we have as a local community from Europe. In the past we had also wondered what Europe does for our daily lives. Then we looked around, and discovered many projects that were done with the funding of the European Union. In fact, we were enjoying the fruits of one such project every day and we didn't even know it: our school Library! This time we interviewed the special adviser of the Region of Central Greece, Ms. Kehri, who gave us a lot of information about the European programs and funding that our Region uses, and we had a constructive discussion about the challenges and opportunities that a young person in Europe has.

Our European identity is characterized by the common values we want to have and defend as a European society. Values that regulate our daily life, our security, our future. The values we dealt with were gender equality, the protection of women from violence, democracy and peace. MEP Ms Vosenberg spoke to us about the relevant European legislation and we approached the causes of violence and the painful consequences of stereotypical perceptions in a special way. We chose works of art

(paintings, photographs, sketches, constructions) to "narrate" the causes of violence experienced by women in their own shocking way.

Our future is secured if democracy and peace prevail in Europe. The war in Ukraine shocked us and still worries us. We stood in solidarity with the Ukrainian people by taking the lead in our school for the collection of food and pharmaceutical materials, participating in the initiative of the Region of Central Greece. We protested by painting and making posters with an anti-war message. This is how we awakened our classmates.

Europe needs active citizens, and we have the will to be such. We learned in the program to work together with groups from other schools for common goals. And this is one of the gains we have from the Ambassador Schools program of the European Parliament. We need Europe to continue to defend Democracy and Peace. We want it to ensure our future and prosperity. Journalists have an important role in making the wishes of the people of Europe known to its Governing Bodies. Please continue your work tirelessly! Thank you!

