

BRNO HOSTED THE 85TH INTERNATIONAL SESSION OF EYP

31 July 2017, Brno

The City of Brno was the host city for the 85th International Session of EYP, which took place between 19 to 30 July 2017 and over 300 students from 40 European countries participated. It was thus the biggest of its kind in Europe. The European Youth Parliament (EYP) is a student pan-European educational network of organisations, and has been a platform for students' self-development for 30 years.

The participants had a chance to enjoy extensive programme, which helped with their communication and language skills, argumentation or teamwork abilities and critical thinking. The official language of the session was English, which served as the main language throughout all students' discussions. The discussed topics were connected to the session theme "*Seeking the heart of Europe*", which served mainly to reflect upon the importance of active citizenship in daily life, significance of cooperation towards common goals and exploration of the culture and sights of Central Europe.

The main part of the schedule was the so-called Committee Work, during which the students discussed current issues of European or global extent, sought possible solutions and created a resolution – a document that summarises the given problem and the suggestion for its solution. "*On one hand, the Committee Work is a wonderful chance to get to know or befriend each other, nonetheless it is also an opportunity to deepen one's knowledge about the given topic,*" said Natalia Drozd (UA), an international Organiser. Individual resolutions were then presented to other participants during the General Assembly. Those resolutions, which successfully passed the voting will be then handed over for reflection to decision-makers, e.g. the Government of the Czech Republic, MEPs or European Commissioners. "*Such opportunity provides us with an important lesson about being more tolerant, understanding, reasonable and organised – all thanks to teamwork, active discussion and knowledge-sharing,*" Natalia added.

The 85th International Session of EYP took place under the auspices of the European Commissioner Věra Jourová, the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic Bohuslav Sobotka and the Mayor of the City of Brno Petr Vokřál. Thanks to the cooperation with three local universities – the Masaryk University, Mendel University and the Brno University of Technology – the event gained an added value in the academical sphere as well. "*As a result of attending this sort of events, young people can discover opinions of their peers from all over Europe and learn that European cooperation is built on dialogue and tolerance. That is why I support young Europeans engaging in internationally organised discussions of current affairs, since it is these young people who are to decide on the direction that Europe will take in the future,*" said Bohuslav Sobotka, the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic.

An important aspect of the conference was the inspiration to active citizenship, to which one whole part of the programme (Active Citizenship Night) was dedicated. The Active Citizenship Night was organised in cooperation with the Karel Janeček Foundation and the participants had the chance to hear interesting stories and discuss the topic of active citizenship on local, national or supranational level. Furthermore, the participants could create a project of their own, which would enrich or improve today's society. Particular

projects then entered a competition using the voting method *Democracy 21*, whilst the winning project is to be financially awarded after the session.

The theme of active citizenship was also included in two other parts of the session's programme. The first of which was the Visegrad Impact Night, which was organised as an NGO Fair, bringing together NGOs from the countries of the Visegrad Pact, which the participants then could discover more about, discuss particular topics or issues with the NGOs' representatives and find out more about how active citizenship on a daily basis works in the given countries. The participants also had the opportunity to come together and join a subevent before the Visegrad Impact Night, which was setting the new Czech Record of the biggest human EU flag, which was successfully set.

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The Schwarzkopf Foundation is the international umbrella organisation of the European Youth Parliament (EYP). EYP Czech Republic is a National Committee in the EYP network.