

European Science Parliament 2009-2010

Europe – Science – Participation. These are the defining key words of the European Science Parliament (ESP), a cooperation of the City of Aachen and RWTH Aachen University, setting new standards in the field of innovative communication of science and political participation.

E-Participation

During its two-year legislative period, the ESP deals with a socio-political topic of European importance. First of all, the Board of Directors chooses the topic in cooperation with the users, followed by discussions on the online platform in English. There is no limitation on access. Interested persons of all ages and professions may ask complex questions, exchange arguments and thus enhance the knowledge of all participants. This Online-Stage, allowing for a low-threshold access to the issue, furthermore serves as a preparatory phase for the two-day ESP Conference, to which the most enthusiastic disputers are invited. In addition to that, more scientists, politicians and citizens are invited to Aachen to take part in the ESP Conference.

Conference in Aachen

Aachen – home of the International Charlemagne Prize and the RWTH Aachen University is ideally suited for this unique connection of Europe and scientific discourse. Participants come together in the border triangle of the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, an example for vivid European integration. Here, they work on the topic in thematic groups and are supported by experts' keynote presentations. In order to provide a multi-disciplinary view, besides plenary sessions and votings, innovative methods are used, such as the Knowledge Café. In addition to that, the close connection to the Internet is maintained during the Conference, as intermediate results and visual impressions are broadcast in real-time to the ESP's website by a Live-Blogging-Team.



Aachen Declaration

At the end of the ESP, the participants conjointly pass the 'Aachen Declaration', which is later forwarded to the patron of the ESP and European institutions.

After the first edition of the ESP concluded on 9th and 10th October 2008; and the Aachen Declaration on energy, titled 'Europe Energised – will lights go out in 2050?', was handed over to the EU-Commissioner for Science and Research and Patron of the ESP Janez Potočnik and other officials in Brussels in February 2009, the second ESP has now begun its work.

H₂O – More than just a drop

Involving the users' choice the new topic of the ESP was decided to be 'water' in May 2009. Once again, the ESP applies itself to a topic that is of enormous importance for Europe (and beyond) and provides vast possibilities of discussion due to the large number of connected problems. As the 'driving

force of all nature' (Leonardo da Vinci), water plays an important role through all times of human life: As vital resource which, as a result of pollution and scarcity, is on the verge to become a luxury good, and which is used in order to apply pressure in political conflicts. But also as force of nature, directly and indirectly endangering human existence in the form of floods. This background provides quite a number of possible interconnections between the sciences and the humanities. Aside from technological, socio-political and economical aspects of the topic, the question for individual responsibility is posed as well.

By now, discussions in the moderated forums are taking precise forms. Until December, an ever-growing number of users will be interchanging information online. In January 2010, the attendants of the conference are going to be chosen by a jury. Afterwards, further preparations for the conference, taking place March 24/25 in Aachen, are on schedule.

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