

MEP BSR Organiser's Guide



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Introduction

MEP sessions can be quite varied and may be organised on a small or large budget. In this document you will find some advice based on the experience of previous organisers. The events are listed in the order of the [sample programme](#), but there can be some flexibility in the order and nature of the events within the session.

Roles and Responsibilities

MEP BSR office

- Provide funding from registration fees
- Invite delegations
- Arrange and receive payment of registration fees
- Choose presidents and CPs
- Provide inductions/information for presidents and CPs
- Work with CPs to produce committee questions and compile committees
- Compile participant lists and contact information; share this with local organisers
- Receive travel forms; share with local organisers
- Collect information on dietary requirements and special needs; share this with local organisers
- Collect consent forms for posts on social media
- Print the programme
- Bring the MEP BSR banner

Local organisers

- Local funding
- Hostel accommodation for students
- Host families for students
- Reserve Hotel accommodation for teachers
- Catering
- Transport to and from the airport and between events
- Produce lanyards/badges
- Venues and equipment for all events and meetings
- Social events including the cultural evening, tour/cultural activity, goodbye party.
- [Link for steps to organise a session!](#)

Teachers

Before the session:

- Collect and communicate information about delegates including committee choices, contact details, dietary requirements and communicate this to organisers

During the session:

- Ensure students attend all events
- Ensure students meet all expectations of conduct
- Ensure students get home on time and safely
- Arrange and attend delegation meeting and delegation meal (usually Friday morning and evening, respectively)

Funding

Participant fees

Organisers of a regional session will receive app. €80-100 per participant.

Grants

If possible, start seeking out funding at least a year in advance. You may choose topic issues which will align with a certain organisations' values. Below are some financiers of previous MEP sessions across Europe:

Erasmus+ (the most important financier of MEP)

Europe for Citizens (hard to apply successfully than Erasmus+, but possible)

Political parties (e.g. Farmers Union. Ensure a cross-section)

Cultural Finnish Cultural foundation

Regional Authorities (e.g. Finnish State Department)

Educational foundations

European Commission

BNP Paribas

WWF

Greenpeace

Sponsorship

Below are some possible sponsors you might wish to contact

Host schools

In some cases, host schools are able to provide some financial support for an MEP session.

In almost all cases, schools can provide venues and some catering.

Universities

Universities are often prepared to offer free usage of lecture halls or seminar rooms in return for a chance to talk to the students about their university and put their logo on the programme booklet.

Businesses

Some local businesses may be able to provide rooms or services for free or at a discount in return for publicity.

Many large businesses and banks have corporate social responsibility programmes or funds to which you could apply.

Local and national government

Local and national governments are often keen to invest in and build relationships with young people. You may be able to secure funding or use of venues and rooms in government buildings. Be ambitious - perhaps you can arrange to use government or council chambers for the General Assembly.

However, navigating the bureaucracy of government can be challenging and authorisation process may be complex. Leave lots of time for securing government funding or venues and draw on inside contacts if you can.

Accommodation

Host families

Finding host families is one of the biggest challenges facing MEP session organisers. Start putting together a list of host families as soon as possible. Generic requests for hosts (e.g. whole-school emails) may not deliver many responses, but one-to-one requests have a high success rate.

To save time, collect as much information about host families at the initial sign-up phase. You will need to know name, phone number, email address, home address, sleeping arrangements for the guests, allergens in the home and preferences for male or female guests.

When recruiting host families you may wish to consider some criteria such as: connection to the school; proximity to the venues; suitability of the sleeping arrangements; language spoken; gender.

To ensure your host families understand, and meet your expectations, provide them with as much information. In the [MEP Organiser Guide folder](#), you will find a host-family guidance sheet and FAQs. It is also advisable to provide a face-to-face briefing for host families.

Hostel

In the event that you cannot accommodate all the students in host families, you may need to put some students in a hostel.

For student safety, it is preferable to hire a whole hostel so that you are not sharing with other guests. You will need to provide breakfasts and evening meals to the students in the hostel, so a hostel with catering provision may be a good idea.

Consider the ratio of teachers to students you would like in the hostel (e.g. 1:10) and identify teachers who are prepared to stay in the hostel. You may wish to offer free or discounted accommodation to teachers who stay in the hostel as an incentive.

Ensure there is a clear curfew for students staying in the hostel and check that everyone has returned on time.

Hotel accommodation for teachers

To be reserved by the local organisers, but booked and paid by the teachers. Agree with the hotel a deadline for holding the rooms and share the information with teachers to book independently. Be aware that hotel costs may be prohibitive for some teachers and be ready to organise hostel or host family accommodation for those teachers.

Catering

The session should be fully catered, with the exception on one evening meal, when the delegations usually organise their own meal out together (usually Friday night). For students in host families, breakfasts and some evening meals should be provided by the hosts ([see sample programme](#)). The students appreciate when the catering is varied and includes healthy food.

Dietary requirements

Request information about the delegates' dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, nut-free) from the teachers as soon as possible. You should communicate this with host families and all caterers in advance. Ideally named food should be set aside for those delegates with dietary requirements, plus extra for students you don't know about.

Catering suppliers and venues

- School caterers can often provide buffets or packed lunches
- Local restaurants and cafes can arrange buffets, vouchers, menus or off-site catering (may need to seat students in shifts)

- 'Pot-luck' of dishes provided by the host school community

Arrivals

Communicate with teachers early and try to arrange for all delegations to arrive at similar times to one or two airports if possible. Arrange to meet the delegations at the airport and arrange a coach or other transport to bring them to the hostel/to meet their host families if possible. A spreadsheet of each participant, their host family or hostel location, arrival time and pick-up location is recommended.

Travel during the session

Travel cards are often one of the largest expenses for a MEP session. You may be able to reduce costs by asking for a group discount, buying student tickets, or booking venues within walking distance of each other.

Teacher welcome briefing

Usually on the first evening of the MEP event, teachers come together for a meal and briefing. This is a chance to get to know your colleagues for the session and give out any extra information that is not included in the programme, such as meeting places, small changes to the schedule, or curfews.

Location: restaurant, pub, bar, school.

Additional info: to keep costs down pre-order sharing food and drinks. Ask for a private or quiet spot where you give deliver your briefing without disturbing other tables. Schools or the school community may also be able to provide a buffet.

Opening ceremony

The opening ceremony will include an opening speech by a representative of MEP BSR, followed by two or three guest speakers then speeches from heads of delegations. Guests may include e.g. local dignitaries, historians, the director of the host school. Ideally the opening and guest speeches last around ten minutes each. Heads of delegation have 3 minutes to speak about their country.

Time: 1.5 - 2 hours

Location: lecture theatre, chamber music hall, national library, conference centre, theatre.

Layout: President and Vice President sit at a table on the stage facing the audience; microphone or lectern to one side of the stage for speakers; delegates sit in rows in their

national delegations; CPs sit with their national delegations; front row reserved for organisers and guest speakers.

Equipment: Two microphones (for President and speakers); laminated country flags to mark where delegations should sit (provided by MEP BSR).

Additional info: Along with the GA, this is the most grand and formal event of the session, so try to seek out a suitably impressive venue.

Committee meetings

Committee meetings begin after the Opening Ceremony. A committee is led by a committee president and usually contains 12-15 delegates. Committees work together for one and a half days to write resolutions relating to their issue. During this time, the President and Vice President circulate between committees to observe and advise. Remember to leave time at the end of the committee meetings for the Corrections Panel to review the resolutions. Ideally the resolutions should be printed and distributed to delegates on the same day they are submitted so they can be read before the lobbying session.

Time: At least one and a half days

Location: University seminar rooms, local government boardrooms, meeting rooms of local businesses, library meeting rooms, conference centres, hotel conference rooms, school classrooms.

Layout: Boardroom-style

Equipment: projector and screen, country flag for each delegate

Additional info: Though it is ideal to have all the committee meetings in one building, you may need to have several venues. Universities and businesses may offer free spaces in return for a chance to address the students. School classrooms can work, but it is preferable to have a more professional environment.

Correction Panel

During the corrections panel, teachers are paired with committee presidents to proofread and correct format the resolutions. Following the correction panel **you will need to print a copy of the resolutions for each delegate to be distributed before the end of the evening.**

Time: Two hours

Location: university seminar room, local government boardroom, meeting room of local business, library meeting room, conference centre, hotel conference room, school classroom, cafe.

Layout: tables and chairs for up to ten people to work at their laptops.

Equipment: teachers bring their own laptops.

Additional info: You might simply use one of the committee meeting rooms for the corrections panel. Consider how you will quickly print the resolutions and distribute them to delegates that evening. You could use the printers at your school, or go to a printing shop.

Cultural evening

The cultural evening usually takes place after the committee meetings have finished. It is a chance for the students to relax, have fun and learn about the host country.

The basic requirements are food and seats, but you might also consider showcasing your culture through e.g. local cuisine, live music, traditional games, folk dancing, or a quiz. To make the event fun and engaging you could also consider arranging a photo booth; DJ; or a competition. This event needn't break the bank. You might be able to draw on your local or school community to provide venue, decorations, food, music etc.

Delegation meetings and Lobbying

Delegation meetings should take place before lobbying begins. The delegation meetings are a chance for delegates to discuss the resolutions, clarify their understanding, and prepare amendments for the lobbying session. During the lobbying session, the delegates who have written amendments walk around trying to gain support and signatures from other delegates. When lobbying closes the amendments are handed to the President for consideration.

Time: 1.5 hours for delegation meetings; 2 hours for lobbying

Delegation meeting location: delegation meetings are informal and can take place in cafes or the hostel/hotel (you may wish to ask delegations to arrange their own meeting venue).

Lobbying location: large hotel conference room; large library conference room; large local government conference room; school hall.

Lobbying layout: standing space all delegates to circulate and chat; some tables or high bar tables for writing and signing amendments.

Equipment: paper for writing amendments

Additional info: provide water/coffee/tea for the lobbying as there is lots of talking. Some hotels may offer free use of their conference rooms if you book a lunch or several rooms for teachers there.

Tour/cultural activity

Time: 2 hours

Location - tour of a local area of historical significance

Additional info: Lobbying is likely to continue during this time.

Board meeting/Teachers meeting

All teachers and organisers will meet for a board meeting to discuss MEP BSR past, current and future events.

Time: 2 hours

Location: hotel conference room, school classroom, university seminar room

Layout: boardroom-style

Equipment: projector and screen

Additional info: provide refreshments, if possible.

General assembly and Closing Ceremony

The General Assembly (GA) is a formal and prestigious event. It is sometimes opened by one or two guest speakers. During the GA each committee introduces and defends its resolutions, before they go to a vote. At the end of the GA is the Closing Ceremony which comprises of speeches from the President and a representative of MEP BSR.

Time: 8 hours (including breaks)

Location: Government or local government chambers; university lecture theatre or graduation hall, exhibition centre; conference centre; music venue; banquet hall; school hall or gym; theatre.

Layout: Audience in rows lecture or theatre-style; tables and three chairs on the stage facing the audience for President, Vice President and one CP; chairs on the stage facing the audience for one committee; seats around edge/at back of room for teachers to observe.

Equipment: two fixed microphones (one for the president, one for the speakers), two radio microphones (one for the committee on stage, one for questions from the audience); projector and screen; laminated country flags (provided by MEP BSR).

Additional info: there are short breaks throughout the day when you will need to provide water. You might also want to provide a 20- minute coffee/snack break in the morning and/or afternoon.

Goodbye party

A small event with food and music or perhaps just a meal. Bear in mind that the students are often keen to leave and spend time with their new friends!

Other considerations

- Water: this should be available at every venue
- Lanyards or badges: should be provided for delegates
- [Programme](#) - printed by the MEP BSR office (or host)
- Breaks: factor in time for regular coffee/rest breaks
- Special needs: ensure you collect information on allergies, disabilities and other special needs in advance and make necessary arrangements
- Accommodation: ensure you have spare accommodation places in case of emergency
- Alcohol: if alcohol is available for teachers, consider how you will ensure students to not have access

Essential Questions for organisers

Finance

- What is your budget?
- Who will sponsor your event? What do they expect in return?
- When will you be able to access the finance and make payments?

Accommodation

- Hosts
 - Do you have info on pets; transport; sleeping arrangements?
 - Have you ensured genders will sleep separately?
 - Have you briefed hosts on expectations and responsibilities (incl. curfew, meals, communication)?
 - Have you checked in regularly to ensure your hosts are still on board?
 - Do you have contact details for all hosts?
- Hostel
 - Are other guests present? If yes, how will you ensure safety of students?
 - Which visiting teachers want to stay in the hostel?
 - Will you place students in the hostel if their accompanying teacher is staying elsewhere?
 - Do you need extra supervision (e.g. local teachers)?
 - Will you brief students on expectations (curfew, conduct)?
 - Have you assigned students to rooms? Will you mix or group by country?
 - Have you collected info on dietary requirements, allergies and informed caterers?
 - Do you have spare places in case a host drops out or doesn't match?

Catering

Good food is essential for a happy session. Positive feedback is received when food is varied, healthy, substantial and when food is available and clearly labelled for vegetarians/vegans/allergies (e.g. coeliac/gluten intolerance, nut allergy, lactose intolerance).

- Which meals will be provided by host families?
- Is the catering varied and healthy?
- Have caterers been informed of dietary requirements in advance?
- Will you set aside food for participants with dietary requirements? How will you ensure this is not eaten by other students?
- Have you ensured water is available throughout the session?

Arrivals

- When will attendees arrive and at which locations?
- What are your meeting points (e.g. airport, train station, school or hostel)?
- Who will meet the participants?
- Have host families been informed of pick-up times?
- Will someone take the teachers to their hotel?

Travel during the session

- Is everything within walking distance?
- Which students will have transport provided by hosts?
- Will you provide a travel pass?
- Do events line up with transport hours of service?

Venues and equipment

- Committee work
 - Do the rooms have projector screens and ample power sockets?
 - Have you prepared country flags for each student?
- Lobbying
 - Have you printed the [amendments form](#)?
- General Assembly
 - Do you have access to microphones and a projector screen?
 - Do you need volunteers to help pass the microphones if there is no permanent audio system to make GA run smoothly?
 - Is the equipment reliable and are the acoustics good?
 - Who will set up the equipment and be on hand if there is a technical issue?

Good luck with your MEP Session!