

19th Edition of the NSTF - Mini European Assembly kicks off
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Friday - the end of yet another tiring week of school, work and on the brink of starting the heavenly weekend! But, also, the day when 8 delegations representing different countries and stemming from the University of Malta, Junior College, De La Salle College, St. Aloysius College and M A Refalo Post-Secondary School, Gozo, got together to discuss: "The Reform Treaty – What Future for the EU?" This first session of the NSTF – Mini European Assembly held at the Courts of Justice brought to a start the 19th edition of this annual competition. The session was chaired by the Hon. Mr Justice David Scicluna with the Hon. Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando as keynote speaker. Mr Francis Stivala, Secretary General of NSTF introduced the session.

The team representing Estonia presented a report about the topic, giving a detailed analyses of the build up to the Treaty, establishing a Constitution for Europe and the subsequent ratification process which came to an abrupt halt following the Dutch and French referenda. The report also covered the various public and political administration opinions of the 27 member states of the European Union whilst raising the question as to what will happen after this treaty and the various scenarios that may develop.

Through the various interventions during the session it was clear that the represented countries were in favour of the Reform Treaty with the exception of Norway, which not being an EU member, held a neutral position. The Turkish delegation, whose country is hoping for future accession into the EU, approached the topic in a very constructive manner given the good effects the treaty has had on Turkey.

The Portuguese delegation presented a Resolution including the proposal to hold an EU-wide referendum on the matter of the ratification of the treaty so as to increase the European citizens' participation in the process of building the future of Europe. A similar approach was taken with the suggestion of a referendum as to whether the European Parliament should operate solely from Brussels, rather than keeping its current two site format of Brussels and Strasbourg. The resolution made several other proposals including an animal rights charter, the encouragement of the entrepreneurial culture in our society, the strengthening of a European Army, and that Europe should start tackling the question of alternative sources of energy at a domestic level.

Following amendments proposed by other delegations the resolution was put to the vote, passing unanimously. The unanimous vote positively reflected the willingness of the participating delegations to move towards strengthening Europe. This first session was positive not only for the experience it offered to us students who were taking part but also for the ideas which came up and the enthusiasm shown towards European Affairs.

The participants will be meeting at five plenary sessions of the NSTF Mini European Assembly over this scholastic year, discussing a different topic at each. The second session will be held on the 28th December at the Ministry for Gozo.