



EUROSIM 2025 – Reflection Paper

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Reflection on Participation in the EUROSIM 2025 Simulation as the Minister of the Environment of Lithuania

The EUROSIM 2025 simulation, held in Antwerp, was a unique opportunity to experience the European Union's legislative process in the context of a real challenge: the European Green Deal and the proposed regulations regarding microplastics. As the Minister of the Environment of Latvia (alter ego), I had the honor of participating in this simulation, which aimed to develop effective solutions to prevent plastic pellet losses and reduce microplastic pollution.

Preparations:

The preparation process for the simulation was incredibly intense and demanding, but also inspiring, as I gained more confidence in playing the role of a minister. The challenges initially included understanding the detailed aspects of the microplastic regulation and developing a strategy that would satisfy both the interests of Latvia and the broader goal of environmental protection across the EU.

The preparation phase for the EUROSIM 2025 simulation was a critical stage that required both solid theoretical knowledge and practical skills. As the Minister of the Environment of Latvia, my task was not only to familiarize myself with the working documents regarding microplastic regulation but also to understand the broader EU policy framework that influenced the entire simulation.

The first step in the preparation was to thoroughly review the documents related to the proposed microplastic regulation. In particular, the analysis of the "Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution" was crucial. This document not only outlined the specific rules for preventing plastic pellet losses but also emphasized the need for cooperation between member states to achieve the common environmental protection goal. This was the foundational base on which I had to develop Latvia's position as the Minister for the Environment and a member of the council.

Next, according to the preparation schedule, I participated in several sessions aimed at better understanding the procedures and structures of the European Union, including the actions of the Environment Council and the European Commission. Negotiation simulations and personal mock speeches were held to familiarize participants with the decision-making process at the EU level. Each member state and participants representing various EU bodies and institutions had to develop their own strategy and position, considering both national interests and EU environmental goals. In these preparations, consultations with other participants played an important role.

With the help of simulation mentors, I was also able to prepare a detailed analysis of potential scenarios and challenges that could arise during the negotiations. An important aspect of the preparations was also the development of substantive materials – both those related to the microplastic regulation itself and supporting documents, such as reports and meeting notes, which provided insight into how similar issues had been discussed in the past.

Another step was the internal analysis of Latvia – how the country would react to different proposals, what priorities it would have in the context of environmental protection, and what kinds of compromises we would be willing to accept during negotiations. I also had to analyze how the new regulations would affect the industrial sector in Latvia, especially concerning

plastic and pellet production, and how to balance environmental protection with economic needs.

The preparations for the simulation thus required not only knowledge of documents but also negotiation skills, the ability to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, and openness to cooperation with other countries. Thanks to these preparations, I was able to fully engage in the simulation and represent Latvia's interests in a substantive manner.

The preparations focused on presentation skills such as body language, speaking ability, and voice intonation. All of these tips were very valuable, but what was lacking was the establishment of a common group negotiation strategy.

Simulation:

The simulation process itself was an interesting experience that allowed me to feel firsthand how the negotiation process in the European Union unfolds. The preparation for the Council sessions allowed me to deeply understand the microplastic issue and the challenges related to implementing regulations at the national level. My goal was to ensure that Latvia's interests were appropriately represented, considering both environmental protection and economic needs.

However, during the simulation, it became clear that the majority of participants had backgrounds in political science, which led to a lack of understanding and revealed gaps in knowledge of law and the legislative process. As a result, I frequently pointed this out. In fact, the situation seemed almost life-like, as there was a noticeable "collision course" between people with legal training and those with political science backgrounds, where in reality, political will and desires clash with legal possibilities. During the simulation, phrases such as "we don't care about the law, we want this and that" were heard, a scenario one can observe in real political life when politicians may have different attitudes toward the "rule of law" and try to prioritize political will.

My Strategy and Goals:

My strategy was based on balancing the interests of Lithuania with the broader needs of the entire EU in terms of environmental protection. The goal was to reach a compromise on the microplastic regulation that would be acceptable to as many member states as possible.

Although I did not achieve all of the goals, such as securing full support for more ambitious regulations, I am proud of the progress that was made. In the future, I would focus on even more effective communication with other environment ministers to ensure better coordination of actions and increase support for the most ambitious solutions.

One of the most important takeaways from this simulation is how crucial cooperation and dialogue between member states are. I understood how important it is to listen to others, understand their perspectives, and search for compromises together. Although the differences in the interests of individual states were visible, the common goal of environmental protection allowed us to find common ground.

I did not feel entirely comfortable with my alter ego, as I represented a small country, but I believe that through me, it became somewhat "bigger" during the simulation. Like many others, my goal was to push through my amendments, but in practice, I focused on improving the

legislative proposals/amendments from a legal standpoint, preventing the acceptance of provisions that were legally unfeasible, such as allowing member states to decide in areas of exclusive EU competence. Of course, it was a simulation, but it was still necessary to ensure that legally nonsensical proposals were not voted in favor of, as the simulation ultimately represents a segment of reality.

Conclusions for the Future:

Participating in EUROSIM 2025 was not only an educational experience but also a practical lesson in negotiation. If I were to participate in a similar simulation again, I would focus on better preparation for negotiations, placing greater emphasis on understanding not only the regulation itself but also the group strategy during voting, which influences the positions of individual states. It is also key to engage in creating a common, flexible action plan that can be adapted to different stages of the legislative process and focus on team cooperation strategy.

Summary:

From the perspective of an EUROSIM 2025 participant, I can say that this experience allowed me to better understand the dynamics of EU negotiations, particularly regarding important topics like microplastics and environmental policy. Although the process was not without difficulties, significant progress was made, and the lessons learned will certainly contribute to further enhancing my negotiation skills and a better understanding of Latvia's role in shaping environmental policy within the European Union.

I am aware that this was only a simulation, but it was somewhat surprising to see that individuals with political science backgrounds had rather unstable positions when it came to adhering to the letter of the law. Therefore, it might be a good idea to place more emphasis on an introduction to jurisprudence in political science studies, because they don't really have knowledge about European Union law.

Meanwhile, our group was excellently prepared in terms of legal knowledge. I personally graduated in law, specializing in EU and international law, and two and a half months at the Europa Institute gave us a significant advantage in terms of knowledge of law and procedures compared to other participants. This sometimes had positive effects, but at other times it caused friction. I believe we managed quite well, despite not everyone playing "fair play" during these negotiations, much like in real life, where different interests collide and competition is often ruthless.

In the end, these negotiations turned out to be more realistic than expected, which I consider to be a value in itself.

The EUROSIM 2025 simulation was an excellent opportunity to learn and practically apply knowledge about the European Union's legislative process.