

The new European Union in the world

Chat transcript

Age group: 14-20

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[Ana] Hello everybody!

[EUN-Petru] Hello everybody and thanks for joining us today!

[Guest61939] Hello from Bucharest Romania we are four kids aged 13-14 from school
191 our teacher Andreea S. is here with us too. Greetings from Romania!

[Ana] Hi from Brussels!

[vlaicu-team] hello everybody! we're from Constanta.

[Ana] welcome!

[vlaicu-team] Can the EU be a model of organisation for other continents?

[Ana] Of course it can! And that is what we are trying to do!

[Guest98208] What's your opinion about Romania? Has it made any progress since it
started to prepare for the EU?

[Ana] Indeed Romania has made loads of progress although there is still some work to
do!

[EUN-Sophie] How can the enlarged Europe compete with nations like the United
States without a common foreign policy? Do you think a common foreign policy is ever
going to be agreed in a Europe with 25 members?

[Ana] But we do have a common foreign policy since 1993!

[vlaicu-team] Will EU be the same as USA?

[Ana] The EU will be what the EU citizens wants it to be.



[Robles] How will decisions be taken among so many countries?

[Ana] This is why we have been working on a new Constitution for the EU. We are more, but we are also ready to make the necessary changes to work better together.

[lukasbank] The Balkans have shown that the EU appeared not be able to take the lead in this terrible regional crisis. Are there any effective political and military instruments developed in such cases in order to secure the human rights, stability as well as to defend EU interests?

[Ana] Since 1999 we have a special defence identity and common actions have been launched in Congo, Bosnia and other regions.

[vlaicu-team] No, what we meant was if EU will have an only leader, just like USA?

[Ana] As I said that will have to be decided by the citizens and its representatives in the drafting of a new Constitution.

[EUN-brigitte] Do you mean that we have had a common foreign policy (enlarged EU) since 93?

[Ana] Yes! It was adopted in Maastricht.

[Guest98208] Do you think that the enlarged EU will be a very stable organism like the USA?

[Ana] The enlarged EU has already managed to reunify a continent through peaceful means that is already a great achievement!

[vlaicu-team] Every country has its own educational system. Will the enlargement affect it with something?

[Ana] Policy on education is harmonised among the member states.

[g3_Piotrek] What do you think: should the EU have their military forces used for very immediate and effective actions in Europe in case when stability of any European country is in danger?

[Ana] This is what the EU with its new defence policy is trying to do. We are at the start but we want to be more ambitious in this field.

[g3_jacek] What are the most important financial instruments in the EU (except the budget) to help developing countries?

[Ana] We have many financial assistance programme if you go to the website of the EU you will get all the info on that.

[Robles] Will the EUN constitution be enough to help us function as a whole? What other organisms or measures have to be created to foster a joint way of working?

[Ana] As you know this is a very complex issue. We are working hard to make sure that especially the decision-making mechanisms will work smoothly.

[g3_jacek] How much money was spent on humanitarian aid in the past few years?

[Ana] I have not got all the figures but the EU is the biggest donor in the world!

[g3_karol] What kinds of help are provided to developing countries?



[Ana] There is financial assistance as well as strong technical assistance in fields where these countries need help. Our political relations are also reinforced.

[Catalina] What good things do Romanian children gain if we enter the EU?

[Ana] The EU is very concerned about child welfare. It has made a big point to the Romanian authorities to improve overall conditions of children in order to become members soon.

[g3_Piotrek] As far as solidarity with other countries and regions is concerned, how is the EU going to help fight the spread of AIDS in Africa?

[Ana] There are several assistance programme tailor-made for each country that deals with this terrible problem that concern us all.

[lukasbank] Is the EU involved in any trans-national cooperation aiming at solving the problem of AIDS (mainly to lower prices of some basic and important medicines)?

[Ana] We are in touch with international organisations better placed to deal with this problem and provide all the financial assistance we can.

[g3_jacek] What are the most important EU directions of further liberalisation of world trade rules?

[Ana] On trade as you know we depend on the WTO next round.

[vlaicu-team] Does EU mean a bigger economic and political power of the members? Do you think that each country of a continent should be part of a union?

[Ana] The new enlarged Europe will mean a market of 500 million people! As you can see that will certainly bring greater prosperity for most of our citizens.

[Ionela] Will it be possible to make interchanges between the high schools from Romania and from other countries?

[Ana] There are several exchange programmes - please check the EU site.

[g3_karol] If respect for human rights is an EU priority across the globe, should the EU get involved into trade with the countries where human rights are abused especially with China (but also with Russia see Chechnya, and some Arabic countries)?

[Ana] We are aware of these terrible problems and we try to influence positively the development of these countries through greater prosperity. We certainly deal with these human rights issues through parallel channels.

[GIL] What do you think about rich countries? Should they lend some money to poor countries?

[Ana] Of course! the EU is founded on solidarity - see how well it has worked for Spain! We should be all more generous.

[lukasbank] Which developing countries are to be of particular benefit to the EU as a result of liberalisation of world trade?

[Ana] We all agree through the WTO rounds that there is a general interest in trade liberalisation. All countries will benefit from that including the most developed.



[lukasbank] Is the EU going to close their borders for political immigrants? If not, which help is going to be provided to them?

[Ana] The EU does not want to be a fortress, indeed we are open to political immigrants. This is decided by each member state and the applications need to be duly justified.

[mjg] Will all the new countries adopt the euro on 1 May?

[Ana] No. In order to have the euro the new countries have to fulfil certain criteria. When they do they will certainly adopt the euro if they wish to.

[Eloy] How will the increasing of countries in EU influence in current member states?

[Ana] The new countries are bringing bigger markets, therefore more economic potential plus a great cultural and regional diversity.

[g3_jacek] How much should a government of an EU Member interfere in customs of religious communities? (I refer to the last decision of the French Parliament to ban religious symbols in schools.)

[Ana] We all believe in some common values present in the UN charter. One of them is to respect religious freedom. The way that is done is up to the responsibility of each member state.

[school191team] Is the EU going to cooperate with NATO in maintaining the world peace?

[Ana] We are already establishing many links with NATO. A cooperation that we hope to increase in the future.

[lukasbank] Do you travel?

[Ana] Of course! I love it!

[EUN-brigitte] What are the current agreements between EU and US about nuclear weapons?

[Ana] Nuclear policy is the responsibility of the member states.

[Catalina] Can I go to high school in one of the EU countries?

[Ana] Yes why not? I am sure you will enjoy it - check the web for youth programmes.

[Ionela] What responsibilities do people have whit the new constitution?

[Ana] There are no new responsibilities it is just that we all member states will have to ratify it and therefore we take action about our future.

[Catalina] If I want to visit Andorra do I need a visa?

[Ana] Sorry, Andorra not in the EU so I do not know what their visa requirements are.

[lukasbank] Do you know Romano Prodi?

[Ana] Yes I do! From pictures and TV like you! But they tell me he is a nice chap.

[g3_Piotrek] Have you ever spoken to Mr Bush?

[Ana] But who do you think I am? I am just a humble EU official!

[mjg] Will migration from the new EU countries increase?



[Ana] We are not certain, but most possibly, given the great advantages the new market will bring.

[Catalina] If we enter the EU do we need any more visas?

[Ana] No.

[Catalina] Have you ever been to Brasov, Romania?

[Ana] Not yet but I am DYING to visit your beautiful country.

[g3_M_W] What kind of help, in your opinion, is the most effective to combat poverty in developing countries?

[Ana] To teach them to help themselves is the best tool.

[vlaicu-team] Which year is the greatest - I mean the one when all the European countries will be part of EU?

[Ana] Do you have a crystal ball? I do not know but we are getting bigger and bigger...

[vlaicu-team] Yes, but what about the traditions? Wouldn't they be affected by the fact of this enlargement?

[Ana] Our motto is "united in diversity". We look forward for the wealth of these different cultures.

[Catalina] Are international adoptions of children legal or illegal?

[Ana] I am sure if the proper procedures are respected you can have adoptions legally.

[lukasbank] to Ana: Where are you from?

[Ana] lukas I am from SPAIN.

[lukasbank] Thanks! I am from Poland.

[school191team] What plans has the EU in store for the countries which will join?

[Ana] No specific plans - they will be part of our decision-making mechanisms and they can therefore influence their own development. We will give assistance to those who need it.

[vlaicu-team] When will the enlargement finish?

[Ana] I cannot tell you. I can only assure you that we still have three candidates Romania Bulgaria and Turkey and that Croatia has applied formally for accession.

[Catalina] Where from can we take some Spring Day 2004 posters?

[Ana] My friends here tell me you can get it from the web good luck!

[Catalina] We are a secondary school in Brasov. We would like to invite you to spend a wonderful holiday in Brasov. It's worthwhile!

[Ana] Thanks for the invitation!

[school191] If new countries join the EU, will their students benefit of more scholarships abroad?

[Ana] The educational programmes available to the EU students are already open to the candidate countries so you can all already benefit.



[Ionela] Our politicians are corrupt and they help illegal adoptions. It is horrible.

[Ana] As you know the Commission gives its opinion of each country's progress every year. This year there has been mention of the absolute need to better things in this respect.

[Micha] What do you think about Poland?

[Ana] I had the chance to live 6 months as a student and I had the greatest fun. I think it will be a great asset to our Union.

[Catalina] When is a country ready to join the EU (the most important features)?

[Ana] When they fulfil the political and economic criteria and when they are able to take up the obligations of membership.

[Ionela] Can we send and receive volunteers to talk with the students about different cultures?

[Ana] Sounds like a good idea. But we have to check whether it is feasible.

[EUN-Petru] I am sure this chat has been an interesting experience for you all! A big thank you to our guest and see you next time!

[vlaicu-team] Thank you for answering us, a very good day. Bye!!

[Catalina] To Ana: It was a wonderful experience to have this chat with you today. After all, we all are Europeans.