# MEPS´APP Portfolio

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**Participants:** Oliver Antsov, Margen Peterson, Iida Heinonen, Jenni Penttilä, Jennifer Richards, Safia Khatun Sashe

## 1. Description of the terms of reference and goals of the project

The European Parliament has created a role-playing game located in Brussels and Tallinn which is called "Parlamentarium". The game is a live role-playing game where participants play as a member of the European Union Parliament and make EU-related decisions with their group as a political party. The game is well structured and planned and the key idea is to teach participants about EU decision-making but also improve cooperation skills via departing on actual issues and themes. The Parlamentarium live roleplay is designed for groups of secondary school students. ( European Parliament, 2022).

Our project and foundation lie in making this game a remote version with more accessibility to get more people to play it. We as a team decided to achieve these by creating a mobile phone app to the current game which everyone could play as an educational classroom game in schools. The basic idea was to implement this game for example in secondary school students' Social Science studies curriculums of private and public schools in EU countries.

The division of the roles in the team are listed below (with all of the team member committing to do extra work and help each other as a team).

● Oliver Antsov- responsible for the technical aspects of the game

● Margen Peterson - responsible for the technical aspects of the game

● Iida Heinonen - creating the marketing strategy → two-phased plan with emphasis on social media marketing (has the original idea of the project)

● Jenni Penttilä - the project manager with help of other team members and takes responsibility for the storyline of the game. (has the original idea of the project)

● Jennifer Richards - the visual side of the project → main focus on characters of the game

● Safia Khatun Sashe - responsible for the prototype process (Figma)

## 2. The importance of the problem, its description, and choice of methods

The project is based on the current Parlamentarium game that exists in Tallinn, Estonia, and in Brussels, Belgium. Therefore, the objective of this project was to make the game more accessible, as in the aftermath of Covid-19 it has become crucial to increase the possibility to engage with remote versions of the game. The aim is to create every EU country and its citizens the possibility to play the game no matter what location, since due to the changing world it has become increasingly harder to travel and of course, it is more beneficial for the learning that the game can be played with a low threshold in schools and there would not be a need to travel to a completely different country to participate in the game. This would create equality in learning and get young people to be interested and learn more about the EU Parlament functions and its decisions that affect our everyday lives.

Two main studies have had the guidelines for our project and how to move forward with creating our app: one being the research done by Kantars public (2022) Qualitative Assessment of the European Parliament's Visitor Center's Role Play Game and the second one being the report carried by European Parliament itself: Report - European Parliament's Physical Role Play Game Analysis and Update Recommendations. These are the theoretical framework of the project →

1) This research was based on the studies of Kantar public (2022) Qualitative Assessment of the European Parliament's Visitor Center's Role Play Game [1] and Learning Designs (2022) European Parliament's Physical Role Play Game Analysis and Update Recommendations [2].

2) Report - European Parliament's Physical Role Play Game Analysis and Update Recommendations. (16 June, 2022).

From these theoretical frameworks and the basis of research, we got the pros and cons of the current state of the game. Mainly the cons were the time management in the game which made it hard to keep up and understand the instructions. Also, one key factor for not being satisfied with the current game was the game was not perceived as very fun. Too much "hard knowledge") and public speaking and debating skills made some of the participants anxious.

Additionally, the subjects of the exciting game were seen as heavy, dense, and too complex. (Report, European Parliament's Physical Role Play Game Analysis and Update Recommendations, 16 June, 2022).

These findings are relevant to our project because it shows that the game is still to be changed: by designing a mobile app from the existing game we can tackle the findings from the research.

To put in shortly our game builds its goals to make it accessible to everyone and everywhere which tackles the current problems of the live roleplay. Our game brings learning about EU-Parliament closer to every student and makes the learning process more existing with familiar surroundings of the classroom, teacher, and fellow students. Games are the future of learning and developing a game can be done anytime and anywhere which makes our app a fundamental aspect for future development opportunities.

## 3. Description of activities and reaching the stakeholders

As initially, we are planning to make this mobile app game for secondary school students, Social Science studies curriculums of private and public schools in EU countries, our focused stakeholders would be secondary school students and teachers. Primarily we discussed with some teachers and students from Estonia about how to engage them with the games. Teachers will suggest to students in the classroom to play this game as an extracurricular activity and give some extra marks to the students as a real-life project participation as this EU Parlamentarium-based game will help students to know much better about the Parlamentarium activities, negotiation, debating, etc. A four-member team needs to be made and the class teacher monitors everyone's activity to see how smartly students can take decisions. Age or gender is not such major things to notice as we are focusing on students and teachers.

## 4. Sustainability of the project

The topic of sustainability of the project is difficult for our developed app. On the one hand, the MEP's App is already somewhat sustained for near-future time - since there isn't anything significant to further develop and there is a scenario currently in place, then the game is ready to be played.

However, as the years go on, there needs to be a change of scenario(s) that are up-to-date as well as appealing to secondary school students, which then are discussed and played in the game. For that to take place, we need to strongly cooperate and work together with the Visitors Services Coordination Unit of The European Parliament. There also needs to be some sort of partnership with various educational institutions in place because in the end, their members are our app's stakeholders. At the present moment, we have had a game-playing session with one of the workers over at The European Parliament Communication department and are waiting for his final overall response to our project.

For our game/app, Iida and Jenni will have ownership of the project outcome(s). The reasoning for that is simple - they had the original idea of creating an app based on the Parlamentarium's role-playing game.

## 5. Summary of the results and annexes

The project focused on porting an already available game in real life to be fully playable in an application form (website in this case). To manage this, we first decided what were the pros and cons of the original game. Based on those criteria we decided what the main challenges were going to be ▤ Challenges .

In order to start making the actual application we needed to write down a strict structure for the game. This was based on the original game with some changes that we deemed important ▤ Events of the game .

Another important aspect was to choose an attractive debatable topic for the game. This resulted in a brainstorming where we achieved ▤ Story . Albeit this does not reflect in the resulting game due to a time crunch.

And most importantly the resulting game can be seen on https://parliamentapp.vercel.app/ and the source code can be found on https://github.com/TLUPeterson/parliamentapp

All of the files can be found on:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1zXWecqEuPox9MkNx3C-UF084Q6pIb4i1

❏ **Project action plan** - *Sample action plan:*
Can be seen here: 📄 Project Plan

❏ **Media coverage**

The media coverage was mainly the part of marketing strategy via doing the leaflets for TLU Digital Learning Centres' Facebook page which our LIFE Supervisor posted. We have made a two-phased marketing plan which covers marketing plans for the public sector and the second fave targets social media. For this project it was not necessary to implement these marketing plans because taking into account the timeframe of the project (the app itself) there was no possibility of actually launching the app itself. But the plans are made to show how it could be done.

Here are some examples of social media content of our MEPs´ App:
→

EUROPEAN UNION

# MEPS' APP

**LETS NOT MAKE IT DULL...**

**LETS MAKE IT A DEBATE !**

**TRY THE MEPS'APP AND STAND FOR YOUR PARTY'S FAVOR!**



EUROPEAN UNION

# MEPS' APP

## WHY STUDY WHEN YOU CAN PLAY?

TRY THE MEPS' APP AND UNDERSTAND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WITH YOU BEING ONE OF THE DECISIONMAKERS!



EUROPEAN UNION

# MEPS' APP

## YOU CHOOSE WHAT TO VOTE

**PLAY THE MEPS' APP AND CREATE A BETTER TOMORROW WITH YOUR PARTY!**

# ❏ <u>Self-reflection report about the learning experience of each team member</u>

**Jenni Penttilä:**

I was the project manager and responsible for the storyline planning and overall planning of the game, also with the help of Iida we took care of the communication of the project. When it comes to our team, the members worked very hard on their parts of the project and the teamwork was on point and we discussed actively the project development and timeline of the project. We achieved every goal we made which I am very happy about.

I learned a lot about time management and what it means to manage a project. It is a time-consuming task and a little stressful to make sure every milestone is completed in a correct manner. Also, it was a great learning experience for me when it comes to creating a game. It is a somewhat difficult task to create a game and a story world around it. There are many aspects to think about and so many problems that should be fixed but the solutions are not always so easy to find.

**Iida Heinonen:**

Teams, roles, and my contribution:
My role in the MEP´S App team was one of the original designers (the game idea came from me and Jenni) but moreover, the Marketing Plan and everything related to it was my major role. I also took care of the communication via team members on our platforms together with Jenni.
Group dynamics and collaboration went really well. Everyone participated in their tasks and was always helpful to each other. Really proud of this part about our team! This has been said via clear communication and division of work we did not have any conflicts to solve.

Personal development:
Personally, I learned a lot from team working skills and maybe moreover I learned to recognize the team member's strengths and skills. Also, my own EU knowledge has certainly grown via this project and also the understanding of how important learning is in general. One key personal development was also learning about marketing strategies for the public sector.

**Safia Khatun Sashe**

I was responsible for making the prototype of the MEP's App using Figma. As a team member I must say all the team members did so much hard work for maintaining the standard of this project. I am so happy with my team members. The playing and making some new features was much challenging for us but we proudly manage as a team. Work deadline and report creation was also tough, but all team members managed their time very productively, thus helping us to make a successful ending project.

Personally, to play the game in the EU parlament and know much more about the EU inside job was more thrilling and exciting for me. I enjoyed it a lot. And for skill development I enhance my knowledge more about time management, team communication, idea generation and technical perspective more details about figma tools. Maybe in future if I get an opportunity I will be more involved with this EU Parlamentarium project.

**Margen Peterson**

As a developer of the web app, my role was to initialize the creation of the app and maintain it. I was responsible for writing functionalities and ensuring the flow of the app.
Overall, I found the experience of the project both challenging and rewarding. One of the biggest challenges was time management or rather the lack of it. But in the end teamwork was quite successful and I would say that we can be quite happy with the results. Although maybe making an actual app wasn't the correct move and insead we should have stuck with creating a hi-fi prototype in order to convey the idea more easily. At the current state inner workings of the app is fine, but it may not seem like that to the actual user, as the front-end of the app is uninviting.

In terms of personal development I was able to get more in touch with the workings of the EU parliament. I also improved my knowledge of working around with databases and making a multiplayer game in general.

**Jennifer Richards**

My role in the MEP's App team was the visual side of the project → my  main focus was on designing characters for the game. And taking part in group discussions about the storyline of the game and the general fine tuning. The group dynamic and collaboration was great. Everyone did what they were assigned in a timely order. There were no conflicts to resolve. My team members did a great job. I applaud the effort and precision in doing the various tasks.

I learnt more about the European parliament in general and how to formulate a game. Bringing up ideas and making sense of it to tailor it to what we want for the game was really great. The most difficult thing was realizing we actually had to see it through to the end, i.e. actually creating the game app.

The project was a very extensive task of creating an online and more accessible version of the European parliament game. I feel grateful to have been a part of this experience of creating a game from scratch. The supervisor did a good job in introducing us to the game and encouraging us to think outside the box.

**Oliver Antsov:**

My role in the project was heavily linked with the technicality of the app. Since I am studying Computer Science, it was pretty much a logical role choice for me. I also helped other team members with various smaller tasks.

In my honest opinion, I really enjoyed working with each and every one of our team members. Everyone worked hard towards the end goal, helped each other when needed and overall I believe that our group did an excellent job. There were no conflicts along the way whatsoever and everyone contributed well.

During the LIFE project, I learnt a lot more about the structure of the European Parliament. When it comes to difficulties, I would say that the app development process was, at times, rough. In the end though, those obstacles were tackled and the app was successfully launched.

To summarize, I think that this was a fascinating experience. The topic of the European Parliament suited me well and most importantly, my team members were an amazing group of people to work with! In the end, I am really happy that I chose this LIFE project.

## Sources

Report, European Parliament's Physical Role Play Game Analysis and Update Recommendations, 16 June, 2022).