



## THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT PROGRAMME

The Young People's Parliament Programme, approved by [Resolution no. 42/2006 of 2 June 2016](#) is an initiative of the Assembly of the Republic, aimed at students from the 2nd and 3rd elementary school cycles and secondary school students from public, private and cooperative schools. Schools may be from the Mainland, the Autonomous Regions and overseas constituencies in Europe and outside Europe.

The programme culminates in two National Sessions at the Assembly of the Republic every year:

- One Session aimed at students from the **2nd and 3rd elementary school cycles**;
- One Session aimed at **secondary school** students.

### 1. Goals of the Programme

The goals of the Programme are:

- To educate students on citizenship, and promote the interest of young people in civic and political participation;
- To publicise the Assembly of the Republic, the significance of parliamentary representation and the rules governing parliamentary debate, as well as the decision-making process of Parliament, in its capacity as representative body of Portuguese citizens;
- To promote democratic debate, respect for diversity of opinions and rules for making decisions;
- To encourage reflection and debate on a theme defined on an annual basis;
- To provide experience of participation in electoral processes;
- To encourage the development of argumentative skills to defend ideas based on the respect of values such as tolerance and the will of the majority;
- To underline the importance of their contribution in solving questions affecting their individual and collective present and future, through the dissemination of their proposals in political bodies.

The Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science shall draw up the guidelines for the Young People's Parliament Programme and monitor its implementation.



## **2. Partnerships**

The Assembly of the Republic shall, via the Young People's Parliament Team, ensure the overall coordination of the implementation of the Programme in partnership with the following entities:

- The Ministry of Education via the Directorate-General for Educational Establishments (DGEstE)
- The Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira
- The Directorate-General for Consular Affairs and Portuguese Communities
- The Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, IP (IPDJ)
- The Regional Directorates for Education and Youth in the Autonomous Regions of the Azores
- The Regional Directorates for Education and Youth and Sports in the Autonomous Regions of the Azores

The terms of cooperation and consolidation of competences of each entity, with a view to developing and implementing this initiative, are laid down in the [Protocol](#) on the Young People's Parliament Programme, established in 2015.

## **3. Stages of the Programme**

The Young People's Parliament programme will be developed in several stages throughout the academic year; those phases will be similar for both the elementary and secondary education Sessions:

### **Stage 1: School**

- Debate on the theme selected on an annual basis: it may be carried out internally or with guests (local entities, experts, etc.).

In addition, the school may also hold a special debate, with the participation of a Member of the Assembly of the Republic, upon invitation addressed to the Assembly of the Republic, within the time limits set out in the Programme calendar, via a form made available for that purpose on the website of the Young People's Parliament. This debate will preferably be held on Monday.



Schools in the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, may also invite a Member of their respective Legislative Assembly. For that purpose, an invitation must be addressed to the services of the Assembly, within the time limit set out in the Programme calendar.

- The electoral process, including the formation of candidate lists for the election of members of parliament, the campaign and the election of members of parliament to the School Session;
- The School Session, where the Draft Recommendation of the school is approved and the representatives to the District or Regional Sessions are elected.

### **Stage 2: District/Autonomous Region**

- District/Regional Sessions, bringing together members of parliament representing the schools in each district or autonomous region, in order to approve the Draft Recommendations to be submitted to the National Session of the Young People's Parliament and elect the members of parliament who will be representing them in this Session.

### **Stage 3: Assembly of the Republic**

- The National Session of the Young People's Parliament, bringing together the young members of parliament, at a national level, representing each district or autonomous region, where, after holding debates in Committees and in the Plenary Sitting, the final Recommendation on the theme selected for that edition of the Young People's Parliament is approved.

## **4. Programme calendar**

The programme calendar shall be set on an annual basis and disseminated on the Young People's Parliament website. In general terms, it relies on the following structure:

<i>June&gt;July</i>	Decision of the Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Culture on the themes to be discussed during the following academic year and definition of possible adjustments to the model of the Sessions.
<i>August&gt;October</i>	Registration of schools.
<i>October&gt;January</i>	Holding school debates, election of young members of parliament to the School Session, adoption of the Draft Recommendation on the theme and election of school members of parliament to the District/Regional Session.



*February>March* District/Regional Sessions with the young members of parliament elected in all schools in the constituency and attended by a Member of the Assembly of the Republic. In these sessions, the Recommendation of the constituency is approved and the schools that will be representing the young people in the district or autonomous region at the National Session are elected.

May National Sessions at the Assembly of the Republic (elementary and secondary education), over a period of two days:

1st day: Committee meetings, chaired by Members of the Assembly of the Republic. Each Committee discusses the Drafts submitted by five or six constituencies, adopting a joint text.

2nd day: Plenary Sitting. The proceedings are always led by a Bureau of elected young people. During the first part, there is a “Question time” for Members of the Assembly of the Republic; it should be noted that all Parliamentary Groups are represented. During the second part, the young people discuss the measures approved in the Committees, selecting ten which will form part of the final recommendation to the Assembly of the Republic.

## **5. Milestones in the Programme’s evolution**

The Sessions of the Young People’s Parliament have been held every year at the Assembly of the Republic since 1995.

1995 The first session for young people involving schools from the 1st cycle in Lisbon and Porto resulted from the initiative of former MP Julieta Sampaio. It was then called ‘Children and Young People’s Parliament’.

1996 From this year on, a session for schools from the 2nd and 3rd elementary school cycles has been held each year. Coordination was ensured, until June 2002, by its author, as part of the President of the Assembly of the Republic’s Cabinet.

1998 Signature of a cooperation protocol with the Ministry of Education laying down “a permanent system of cooperation for the implementation and development of ‘The School and the Assembly’ project”, recognising that “the opening of the Assembly of the Republic to the outside world shall include strengthened bonds with schools and the recognition that democracy calls for the increased civic and political participation of young people”.



- 2000 Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic no. 59/2000 of 8 July 2000 established an annual session also for secondary school students, called the 'Assembly at School', in order to differentiate it from those for schools of the 2nd and 3rd elementary school cycles, entitled 'The School and the Assembly'. This resolution gave the Parliamentary Committees on Education and Youth the competence to monitor this project and set out its guidelines.
- 2001 From this year on, two annual sessions were held, one for schools of the 2nd and 3rd elementary school cycles and one for secondary education schools.
- 2002 As of July, the management of the programme became the responsibility of a Project Team of the Assembly of the Republic, coordinated by Maria José Silva Santos until the end of July 2009.
- 2004 The structure of the sessions was amended with the aim of furthering an approximation to the methodology of parliamentary debate. As such, one moment of the session at the Assembly of the Republic is devoted to Committee meetings and another to the Plenary Sitting.
- 2006 Resolution of the Assembly of the Republic no. 42/2006 of 2 June 2006 adopted a new programme, which was renamed Young People's Parliament, as a result of the merger of two similar initiatives aimed at secondary education: The 'Assembly at School', promoted by the Parliament since 2000, and the 'Hemicycle – Citizenship Game', held by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth (IPDJ). The Young People's Parliament Programme would also include an edition aimed at elementary education.
- Still in 2006, the structure of the elementary and secondary education edition was changed. Three stages were designed: School Sessions, District or Regional Sessions, and National Sessions. District or Regional Sessions have gained particular attention with the systematic participation of Members of the Assembly of the Republic.
- 2007 From this year on, each National Session takes place over two days. The first day is devoted to Committee meetings, and the second day to the Plenary Session.
- A protocol was signed with the Office of the European Parliament in Portugal and the IPDJ, enshrining the link between the Euroscola competition and the Young People's Parliament Programme/Secondary Education.
- 2009 From 28 July on, the Young People's Parliament Team (Project Team of the Assembly of the Republic) was coordinated by Maria José Afonso.



2014 As of 1 September, following a restructuring of the Young People's Parliament Team, coordination was ensured by Marlene Viegas Freire.

2015 On 8 January, a cooperation protocol was signed between the Assembly of the Republic and partner entities in the Young People's Parliament Programme: the Ministry of Education and Science, via the Directorate-General for Educational Establishments, the Legislative Assemblies of the Autonomous Regions of the Azores and Madeira, the Directorate-General for Consular Affairs and Portuguese Communities, the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, the Regional Directorates for Education and Youth in the Autonomous Regions of the Azores, and the Regional Directorates for Education and Youth and Sport in the Autonomous Region of Madeira. This document defines the terms of cooperation and consolidates the competences of each partner.

2016 Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the first edition of the Young People's Parliament Programme.

This year also marked the largest number of registered schools since this initiative was launched (in 1995), with 937 elementary and secondary education schools participating in the Programme.

2018 On 4 May a new cycle began for the Programme with the integration of the Young People's Parliament Team in the Communication Office of the Assembly of the Republic, creating new challenges and dynamics.

## **6. Participation in the Programme**

Any public, private or cooperative school from the 2nd elementary school cycle up may register to participate in the Young People's Parliament. Schools may be from the Mainland, the Autonomous Regions and overseas constituencies in Europe and outside Europe.

The act of registration is decided by each school board, in collaboration with the pedagogical council, being formalised by sending the online registration form by the date mentioned in the Programme calendar.



## **7. Information throughout the academic year**

All information on the Young People's Parliament Programme is disseminated on its website. Participating schools must pay particular attention to the information that must be sent to the Assembly of the Republic at each stage of the Programme.

For more information:

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