

### Contents

- Preamble ..... 2
- 1. Object ..... 2
- 2. Coordination ..... 2
- 3. Motions ..... 3
- 4. Teams ..... 3
- 5. Organization ..... 3
- 6. Debate ..... 4
- 7. Adjudication ..... 5
- 8. Code of conduct ..... 6
  - Template 1 – Assessment template for judges ..... 7
  - Template 2 - Chairman and timekeeper template ..... 9

This rulebook presents the procedures that will govern the ECNAIS Debate European Event. The event will take place in March 2026.

Because some schools are creating their debate events, this rulebook offers some notes and suggestions that may be helpful for other events.

For any doubts or suggestions  
[debate@ecnaeis.org](mailto:debate@ecnaeis.org)

For more information  
<https://www.ecnaeis.org/>

### Notes & suggestions for other events

## Preamble

Debate is critical for decisions concerning the common good and our shared future. However, despite present-day information and communication possibilities, meaningful debate must be enhanced, learned, and practiced.

The project “*ECNAIS Debate Event: Promoting Democracy and civic engagement*” was born for these reasons. It assumed the mission “*To promote debate as an educational tool for the development of students` empathy, critical and creative thinking, to empower them as active citizens, thus contributing to democracy and tolerance.*”

In the scope of the project and inspired by its mission, the present regulation was written.

## 1. Object

This regulation governs the ECNAIS Debate European Event.

The event is a debate tournament between teams of upper-secondary students from different European countries.


This regulation may be used as a baseline for other debate events.


## 2. Coordination


ECNAIS will appoint an Event Coordination Team with three to five persons.


This Coordination Team is responsible for:


- (a) Developing the program (opening session, debate rounds, and closing session)
- (b) Assigning and training Chairpersons, Timekeepers, and Judges
- (c) Preparing debates materials and information
- (d) Choosing the process to select the motions, following the process, and approving the final selection
- (e) Assuring the random distribution of the motions, teams, and their positions
- (f) Deciding on any doubts, issues, or questions.

 Write a simple regulation coherent with specific contextual needs and goals.

 Identifying the needs and objectives may help the school community to value debate and engage in the project.

 Choose a name for the event.

 School tournaments may be governed by their own rules.

 Identify a coordination team with different educators or teachers.

### 3. Motions

Motions are the ideas, topics, propositions, or suggestions to be debated by the teams.

The motions are approved by the Coordination Team.

The Coordination Team will ensure the random distribution of the motions.

All the motions will be published one month before the event.

In the first rounds, teams know the motions they will debate but not their position (proposition or opposition), which will be decided by a coin toss at the beginning of the debate.

In the final, teams will know the motion and the position (proposition or opposition) one hour before the debate.

### 4. Teams

Teams are registered by ECNAIS member associations.

Team members must have at least one previous participation in structured debates.

Teams include three upper secondary students and a teacher.

All students will participate as speakers (first, second, and third or rebuttal speakers).

If a student, for justified reasons, cannot participate in the debate at the last minute, one of the team members may assume the colleague's role.

The Coordination Team must approve this and other exceptional decisions.


The Coordination Team will invite an extra team that will debate without the possibility of going to the final, in case (a) there is an odd number of teams registered; or (b) a registered team drops out of the event.


### 5. Organization


The event includes at least three rounds of debate with all teams, followed by a final round with the two teams with the highest scores.


The debates in each round will take place simultaneously.


Each debate is conducted by a table that includes a Chairperson and a Timekeeper.


 Identify the process to create and select the motions.


 Students, teachers, and parents' suggestions may be helpful.


 Do we want to have a theme for our debates?


 The previous knowledge of the motion and position may help students to be more prepared.

 Decide which students, how they apply, and the number of students per team.

 Teams with four students integrate more students and allow substitution.

 Students may apply voluntarily in teams; in some schools, all secondary students participate in debate activities.

 Discuss the best event structure to maximize teams' opportunities to debate.

 While some events use ladder competitions, others use scoring systems.

When necessary, teachers may be asked to participate as chairperson or timekeeper in debates where their team is not debating.

At the end of each debate, judges will assess both teams (using specific criteria and scores) and give feedback to the teams. The Coordination Team receives all judges' scores and updates the teams' general scores.

The two teams with the highest score debate in the final round. The team that wins the final is the winner of the event.

The closing session includes a ceremony to publish results and deliver awards, specific recognitions, and participation certificates.

## 6. Debate

The debate includes a proposition team that defends the motion and an opposition team that opposes the motion.

### 6.1 Preparation

The teams know in advance of the event the motions that will be debated.

Five minutes before each debate, the teams must present themselves to the Chairperson of the assigned debate room.

Before each debate, the Chairperson tosses a coin in the presence of the teams. The team winning the toss is the proponent of the motion.

### 6.2 The Debate

The Chairperson opens the debate by presenting the teams and the motion.

During the debate, the teams can not have or use electronic devices and can not communicate with third parties.


The proposition team makes the first intervention.


The constructive speeches, delivered by the first two speakers of each team, have a time limit of five minutes.


The summary or rebuttal speeches, delivered by the third speaker of each team, have a time limit of three minutes.


Between each intervention, there is a 1-minute break.


Interventions follow the structure, using the time limits presented in the table below:


 Which structure reinforces feedback to enhance improvement?

 It is a challenge to be Chairperson or Timekeeper, but some students find that they are very good at it.

 Besides the first places and the participation certificates, which other categories of recognition could enrich the event?

 Taking into account your goals, discuss what can be the best debate format.

 There are many formats for school debate with variations on the number of teams, students per team, number of speeches, and speech length.

 When teams know and can prepare their specific motion in advance, it may be interesting to start the debate by tossing a coin to decide each team's position.

1st Speakers	Proposition	5`	Motion definition Setting issues for debate
	Opposition	5`	To present the team's case
2nd Speakers	Proposition	5`	Handle definition if needed Answer other team's arguments
	Opposition	5`	Continue to build the team's case
Summary speakers	Proposition	3`	Synthesize the team's case To refute the other team's arguments
	Opposition	3`	Close with the final idea

The Timekeeper tracks speakers' time using a desk bell to indicate the beginning and end of the speeches. A double ring of the desk bell will signal the beginning of the speech, a second ring will signal the beginning of the last minute, and a third and double ring will signal the end of the time, reinforced by another double ring after 10 seconds. The end of the 1-minute break will be marked with one ring.

Summary or rebuttal speakers cannot present new arguments.

At the end of the debate, adjudicators have 4 minutes to decide on each team's score, fill in the score sheet and put the sheet in a closed envelope. Then, they have 3` to give brief feedback to both teams.

The Chairperson closes the debate.

After each round, teams' scores are delivered to the Coordination Team, which updates the scoring board. In the final round, teams' scores are communicated at the end of the debate.

## 7. Adjudication


Adjudication is the process of assessing teams' participation in the debate.


In this event, teams are assessed by two judges using specific criteria and a score (0-20).


Preferably, judges are selected among ECNAIS' member associations or invited master/PhD's students.


The Coordination Team organizes a prep meeting at the beginning of the event for the adjudication team to enrich its readiness, equality, and fairness.

Each judge is responsible for rating both teams' performance using three criteria: (i) *Attitude* regarding the debate, including team engagement and contribution; (ii) *Content* or the compelling strength of each team's case, arguments, and refutation; (iii) *Delivery*, meaning the ability to present their arguments persuasively and expressively.

 It is possible to adjust the time limits of the interventions.

 In some events, the adjudication team often presents a joint decision and discloses it at the end of the debate. This way, it is more evident for the teams and the audience who won the debate.

 It is important to decide: Who will be the judges? What do we want (criteria) to value in the debates?

 Judges can be older students, other teachers, parents, or community members. The organization must ensure impartiality and training.

The table below presents the three criteria, their value, and the main indicators.

Attitude	0-8	Ability to listen and respond Team members support Respect for the other team Valuing the structure and rules of debate
Content	0-8	Argumentation relevance and strength Rebuttal pertinence and quality Overall compelling and consistent case
Delivery	0-4	Body language Vocal style Rhetoric techniques


Note: See the adjudication tool for the ECNAIS debate at the end


Judges' punctuation is individual. However, the team's punctuation is achieved in each debate by adding all judges' punctuation in a final score.

## 8. Code of conduct

During the event, all participants and other people present should:

- a) Value debate as an opportunity to develop empathy, critical and creative thinking
- b) Understand the critical importance of debating for the common good and shared future
- c) Acknowledge both teams' roles in deepening each motion
- d) Exercise active listening
- e) Show respect for each other at all times and in all roles
- f) Comply with existing regulations
- g) Avoid remarks or casual jokes that can be easily misinterpreted
- h) Contribute to a positive debate environment where everyone's voice and ideas are heard

 To discuss the criteria related to specific needs or goals.

 To discuss which attitudes can help make debate activity more rewarding.

## Template 1 – Assessment template for judges

Judge \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Room \_\_\_\_\_

Motion \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ability to listen and respond</li> <li>✓ Team members support</li> <li>✓ Respect for the other team</li> <li>✓ Valuing the structure and rules of debate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Argumentation relevance and strength</li> <li>✓ Rebuttal pertinence and quality</li> <li>✓ Overall compelling and consistent case</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Body language</li> <li>✓ Vocal style</li> <li>✓ Rhetorical techniques</li> </ul>

Proposition		
<b>1st Speaker</b>	Name:	
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Notes:		

Opposition		
<b>1st Speaker</b>	Name:	
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Notes:		

<b>2nd Speaker</b>	Name:	
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Attitude (0-4)
Notes:		

<b>2nd Speaker</b>	Name:	
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Notes:		

<b>3rd Speaker</b>	Name:	
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Notes:		

<b>3rd Speaker</b>	Name:	
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Notes:		

Final score		
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Total:		
Notes:		

Final score		
Attitude (0-8)	Content (0-8)	Delivery (0-4)
Notes:		

**Note 1:** Argumentation structure: (a) Statement/ label (main idea); (b) Explanation (why it is true and why it is relevant); (c) illustration (examples that can prove the argument's soundness).

**Note 2:** Refutation clearness - (1) They say that..., (2) But they are wrong... (3) Because..., (4) Therefore ...

**Note 3:** The score for each speaker aims to help judge's feedback. Final scoring should not be the mathematical sum or mean of the individual scores.

**A T T I T U D E**
**C O N T E N T**
**D E L I V E R Y**

<p>Excellent ability to listen/respond: they repeat opposing arguments precisely and respond convincingly to their opponents.</p> <p>Strong support between team members.</p> <p>All speakers are very respectful to opponents.</p> <p>Promotion of debate structure and rules.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>8</b></p>	<p>All arguments are relevant and supported with explanations and examples.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Rebuttals clearly strengthen the case of the debater(s).</p> <p>The overall case is very compelling and consistent: debaters structure and lead the debate with their line of argumentation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>8</b></p>	<p>Body language is excellent; debaters stand firmly and use fitting hand gestures to support the message. They are the argument.</p> <p>The variation in vocal style (volume, pace, and intonation) elevates the message and makes it very convincing</p> <p>The use of many rhetorical techniques makes the message especially convincing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b></p>
<p>Good ability to listen/respond: they repeat opposing arguments correctly and respond well to these.</p> <p>Team members support each other.</p> <p>All speakers are respectful to opponents.</p> <p>Team values debate structure and rules.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>6</b></p>	<p>Most arguments are relevant and supported by either an explanation or an example.</p> <p>Debaters rebut most opposing arguments; the rebuttals are compelling.</p> <p>The overall case is compelling and consistent: debaters structure debate, and there is one clear line in argumentation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>6</b></p>	<p>Body language is good; debaters stand firmly; some hand gestures support the message.</p> <p>The variation in vocal style (volume, pace, and intonation) supports the message and makes it convincing</p> <p>Various rhetorical techniques support the message and make it more convincing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>3</b></p>
<p>Some ability to listen/respond: opposing arguments not always repeated correctly and, thus, not always well responded to.</p> <p>Team members try to support each other.</p> <p>All speakers are somewhat respectful to opponents.</p> <p>Respects the debate structure and rules.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b></p>	<p>Argumentation seems relevant but lacks strength: arguments are not always supported with explanations or examples</p> <p>Debaters rebut some opposing arguments, and the quality of the rebuttals is average.</p> <p>Case of average quality: argumentation consistent but not always compelling (or vice versa). Structure is not always visible.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>4</b></p>	<p>Body language is neutral; debaters try to stand firmly and use small hand gestures.</p> <p>Variation in vocal style (volume, pace, and intonation) is present; it doesn't distract from the message but does not support it.</p> <p>Debaters try to use rhetorical techniques to support the message and make it convincing</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b></p>
<p>Lack of ability to listen/respond: opposing arguments are not repeated and are only responded to in the form of loose statements.</p> <p>Team members barely support each other.</p> <p>Speakers ignore or are rude to opponents.</p> <p>Some contempt regarding the debate structure and rules.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b></p>	<p>Argumentation is irrelevant and/or very weak: what is being said are statements rather than arguments</p> <p>Debaters do not rebut opposing arguments.</p> <p>Overall case is not compelling nor consistent: the debate lacks structure and is hard to follow</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>2</b></p>	<p>Body language is absent or distracts from the message; debaters move a lot or stand frozen</p> <p>Variation in vocal style (volume, pace, and intonation) barely present or distracts from the message.</p> <p>Scarce use of rhetorical techniques that do not always support the message or make it convincing.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>1</b></p>
<p>Debater(s) did not participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevance, ability to listen/respond, and relation to team/opponents cannot be addressed.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>0</b></p>	<p>Debater(s) did not participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argumentation is non-existent</li> <li>• There are no rebuttals or reactions</li> <li>• No argumentative case</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>0</b></p>	<p>Debater(s) did not participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nor body language, vocal style, or rhetorical techniques can be adjudicated</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>0</b></p>

**Observations: (1)** It is possible to give points between two categories (e.g., 7 or a 3.5). **(2)** An argument includes the statement (Assertion), explanation (Reasoning), and illustration (Evidence).

## Template 2 - Chairman and timekeeper template

Jurado \_\_\_\_\_ Data \_\_\_\_\_ Sala \_\_\_\_\_

### Teams and motion

Proposition	Motion	Opposition
1 -		1 -
2 -		2 -
3 -		3 -

### Speakers and time

Speaker	Position	Time	Ac.	Hour	Observations	Ideas
<b>Arriving and organization</b>		2'	2'			
<b>Presentation</b>		5'	7'			
<b>1st speakers</b>	Proposition	5'	12'			
	Opposition	5'	17'			
<b>2nd speakers</b>	Proposition	5'	22'			
	Opposition	5'	27'			
<b>Reply speakers</b>	Proposition	3'	32'			
	Opposition	3'	37'			
<b>Time for scoring</b>		3'	40'			
<b>Judges feedback (3' each)</b>		6'	43'			

### Ideas to launch the debate

Arrival	Presentation	During	Closing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the room</li> <li>• Receive audience &amp; teams (proposition on the chairman's right and opposition on the left)</li> <li>• Receive the judges</li> <li>• Toss the coin (winner assumes proposition)</li> <li>• Help teams to settle in and relax</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce himself</li> <li>• To welcome and present the teams (applause to each)</li> <li>• To welcome and present the judges (name and occupation) and remind the adjudication criteria: Attitude, content, and delivery</li> <li>• Brief presentation of the rules: 3 speakers proposition and opposition; 5 minutes for each team's first two constructive speakers and 3 minutes for the last reply speaker. A double ring marks the beginning of the time, one ring warns of the last minute, and a double ring marks the end of available time.</li> <li>• The end of 1 min break of one is marked with one ring.</li> <li>• Possibility to use the timer on the table to control time.</li> <li>• To introduce the motion and its interest without providing arguments – e.g., actuality, interest, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure tracking time</li> <li>• Warn beginning (2 rings)</li> <li>• Warn last minute (1 ring)</li> <li>• Warn ending (2 rings)</li> <li>• Mark the end of the 1 min. break (1 ring)</li> <li>• To call the next speaker.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applause for both teams (no applause during the debate)</li> <li>• To thank and congratulate teams</li> <li>• Give judges 3 min to score.</li> <li>• Pass the word to judges for feedback – remember they have 2 min each</li> <li>• Close the debate by thanking everyone.</li> </ul> <p><u>Note:</u> Having time, open for comments from the audience.</p>