

## I. Purpose

The purpose of a BridgeEurope chapters, is to build a Bridge community – one in which students spanning the entire ideological spectrum can engage as a group working together to understand – to bridge – the various perspectives behind the important political and social issues of our time. The ultimate goal of a BridgeEurope chapter is not only to constructively engage with viewpoints you disagree with but also to empathize with those that hold these ideas. If we want a new generation of leaders that reject polarization and division, we must demonstrate constructive and empathetic discourse on our university campuses. The Bridge movement contributes to strengthening intra-European and transatlantic bonds by building a community and network of students within Europe and across the Atlantic Ocean.

## II. Principles

- 1. Diversity of Ideas:** We welcome and encourage a diversity of ideas. Effective conversation requires many points of view – including those that fall within and outside of the contemporary political spectrum.
- 2. Listening Communities:** Listening communities are devoted to a simple idea: we listen to what you have to say, and in turn you will listen to others. By listening to understand, instead of to respond, discussions transform the repeating of talking points into learning opportunities.
- 3. Responsible Discourse:** We all know that conversations on important issues can be messy and hard. To ensure that the conversation moves forward, we are committed to courageous honesty, truth, and mutual respect.
- 4. Transatlanticism:** We are committed to fostering the transatlantic relationship, no matter which government is currently in power, as our historical and cultural ties with our American friends demand a mutual approach to promoting individual liberties and liberal democracy around the globe.

## III. Events

- 1. Open Discussion:** Audience constructively engages in an open, moderated discussion on predetermined topic. Discussions, rather than debates, ensure an empathetic conversation.
- 2. In & Out Conversations:** “Inner” students who have researched a topic come ready to defend their position, while the “outer” audience asks questions, participates in the conversation, and challenges the inner-circle’s viewpoint.
- 3. Political Speed Dating:** Participants engage in 1-on-1 discussions with many partners for short periods of time, answering a wide breadth of political and apolitical questions.
- 4. Faculty-led Discussion:** Faculty experts lead a discussion on a topic about which the majority of individuals are typically under-informed. This is followed by a Q&A or discussion.
- 5. Transatlantic Exchange:** Videoconferences, survey and opinion poll exchanges, virtual discussion forums, and mutually-run conferences provide a forum for transatlantic exchange.

## IV. Discussion Norms

The purpose of discussion norms is to effectively explore ideas and opinions.

1. Listen to listen, rather than listen to respond.
2. Try not to interrupt or have side conversations.
3. Critique the perspective, not the person.
4. Recognize that participants represent only their ideas and are not expected to speak.