



TESTIMONY - June 2008



Molly Niedbala
Miami Palmetto Senior High School

I feel that the Euro Challenge program has greatly increased both my knowledge of and interest in the European Union. Not only was I able to delve into a topic that enticed my teammates and I, but we were given the opportunity to share our passion for that topic as well – in front of expert judges! The academic experience was truly one that I will cherish always and the insight our project gave me into the affairs of our world

beyond the States is something that I am sure will prove valuable in years to come.

Through my participation in the Euro Challenge program, an educational understanding of the Euro Zone and of the goings-on in the unemployed sectors of the French economy (our more specific area of study) was not the only things I gained. I also learned to work as an integral part of a team. My group members and I were brought together by common interest in both economics and foreign affairs, but all of us originally felt far more comfortable working in independent environments. However, despite our differences, in our close discussion of foreign topics we were able to meld our ideas to create a more well-rounded solution to present in concern to the problem we chose as our topic. Political disparities aside, I feel that our team came out more united than any of us had ever thought possible; since the competition, we have remained in close contact and have forged meaningful friendships.

When we found out that we had made it into the semi-finals of the competition, words could not express the excitement we felt. Not only were we going to New York City for three days, but all of the hours of hard work had paid off; our dedication had been recognized by respected members of the European Union government, some of which we had actually come across in our research! We realized that our efforts had been successful; we actually *did* understand the implications of the Euro on the Euro Zone, we knew tons about the EMU, we had written and learned a truly successful script to convey our knowledge, and on top of all that we had come away wanting to know *more*.

In making it all the way to the Federal Bank of New York, my teammates and I knew that we had already reached our original goal – making it to the Euro Challenge Semifinals. At that point, we were in such high spirits that all sense of competition was lost. Now, that's not to say that we weren't looking to do well; it's just that in knowing we had already come so far, further success would have been merely icing on the cake. We walked into the judging room confident, well-prepared, excited, and eager to prove ourselves, but any nervousness we might have felt had been stripped away by the kindness and hospitality shown to us by the coordinators of the Euro Challenge program. Upon finishing up our presentation, we felt accomplished, successful, and amazed at much we had learned in the months before.

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Unfortunately, our team did not make it to the Finals of the Challenge. Nonetheless, watching the winning teams' presentations was immensely gratifying. We didn't feel like losers in any interpretation of the word; we had done the best we could do, and in observing the winners present we only felt happy for them and as if we were part of something meaningful, something important. Everyone had put in their hardest work, and none of us could have asked for more. We learned a great deal and were introduced to concepts that had previously seemed far out of reach. In the process, we became more innovative, cooperative, and dare I say, cultured.

I hope to be a part of the Euro Challenge experience indirectly in years to come as a mentor for future Challengers because not only did I have a great time taking part in it, but I whole-heartedly believe that it's essential that American youth be more introduced to economics and foreign affairs. It is my impression that the vast majority of my peers are entirely out of the loop when it comes to anything that isn't American; however, changing times call for changing measures of education. This may have been the first year that Miami Palmetto participated in this wonderful program, but I sincerely hope that it becomes a better known school competition for us. I want to thank all of the coordinators of the Euro Challenge event sincerely for all of the effort they have put forth to allow my team to participate in this opportunity of a life-time. We will never forget our experience, and will always value the information we grasped and the fun we had in being a part of the Euro Challenge program!

Sincerely, Molly Niedbala (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – June 12, 2008



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Ralphie Haro
Miami Palmetto Senior High School

When I first heard about the Euro Challenge, I was as puzzled about the competition as I was with the European Union. I knew that Europe used the euro but I had no idea the extensive public policy that was put into place in establishing the current economic and political union that has been created in Europe.

The competition helped me learn various information on the European Union and its function as well as in depth knowledge into the political, economic, and social aspects of Europe of the past 50 years. The experience is one I will never forget and has helped increase my desire to pursue the study of economics in the future, especially in a broader view of international economics.

Thank you. Ralphie Haro - Miami Palmetto Senior High School – June 14, 2008