



European Students' Forum



EXPLORING EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY SINCE 1988

ACCOMMODATION, PROGRAM, TIMING



ACCOMMODATION

There are lots of options to accommodate your participants. Of course everyone wants to find a cheap place in the city centre so that you do not have to waste time on moving from sleeping place to activities' ones or simply for a city tour.

The fact is that it is so difficult to find the wanted cheap place at all, and we are forced to go where we find it regardless of the location on the map.

Here you have a brief analysis of the most common accommodation options for a Summer University.

Hotel/Hostel/Student dorm

This is the dream of every participant and organiser of a Summer University. Who would not want to sleep on real beds instead of the hard parquet of a gym?

In addition to the beds, there are a lot of advantages to lodge in a hostel: you will always have clean rooms, sheets and towels available and you do not even have to worry about making breakfast each morning. Not bad, right? :)

However, hostels come at a cost per person which often goes far beyond the budget of a SU, but if you are a lover of comfort or you failed to sign an agreement for another type of accommodation, you can certainly make good fundraising and choose this option. Your participants will be immeasurably grateful, especially when they will fill the evaluation form. Guaranteed;)

Price: it varies from country to country and from city to city. It could be like €5-14/person/night in big rooms in hostel or student dorm and often you have to add a small extra breakfast fee that should not exceed €2-5/person/night. Same goes with hotels, but prices are higher and may reach €20-40/person/night in 3-4 bed-rooms.

How to get it: prefer going in person to visit the place, meet the hostel/hotel manager and arrange a special deal, explaining them that you are part of a NGO, you have limited budget, etc.

Remember that no one is interested in your problems as well as in your interests, so you should start talking about the benefits the hotel/hostel will get with your stay there (promotion on your page, you organise special evening event for any of the hotel guests, etc).

Gym

A gym is definitely a great option for your SU. Usually the value for money is great and you have in the same place the space for you to sleep and to do any (sport) activity under the program.

This type of accommodation, of course, requires participants to bring with them sleeping bag and mattress, but this can be annoying for those who want to travel with low-cost flights or with a small luggage. A wonderful proposal from the organisers would be to sell to participants air mattresses at a friendly-price, that may be agreed with a local dealer based on the quantity needed.

This sleeping bag/mattress problem is actually a very small one in comparison to the benefits that the gym can give you. You can have parties 24/24H without danger of disturbing other guests, use all the facilities and sports equipment without wasting time in long commutes to other places and live the AEGEE-Spirit dancing, singing and socializing exploiting the numerous narrow places, passages and changing rooms ;)

Price: If you present AEGEE with the special charm of the European level NGO you should not have such big problems getting the gym for free from church institutions, universities, schools or sport groups/academies.

Sometimes it happens that the above-mentioned charm does not work and you are requested to pay a fee. More than €500 is a theft.

How to get it: Most schools are closed during summer as so are its gyms. You can try to contact a representative of your local high school to see if they are interested in any kind of cooperation. Always remember to sign an agreement with the owner right after the deal, so that you have an assurance there will be no step-back by the gym property. Sometimes it happens that even with a signed agreement the property finds out problems in giving you the gym. A possible resolution varies from case to case.

Tent

There is nothing more adventurous than sleeping under the blue sky in a tent in the mountains or at the seaside. Based on the dimension of the tents, this option is particularly good for team buildings and cultural activities.

You should also value this option if you want to do open-air activities or yours is a Sustainable SU.

Remember to take into strict consideration the weather forecasts. Especially in some regions, weather varies so quickly and you can pass from sunny and warm day to freezing and storming

night. The adventurous night in the tent can quickly lead into runny nose, sore throat and other non-funny sicknesses for you and your participants who will not be able to enjoy next planned activities as they would like to.

Price: you need a number of tents based on the people you have to host. Tents prices varies so much basing on the model, dimension, material, etc. The great thing is that you have to pay a very small fee for camping and it should be no more than €2-6/person/night including toilets and shower service.

How to get it: like with the hostel option, meet the place's owner in person to get a good quote for your stay. Are a friend with a farmer? Why not camping on a countryside field? It could be a good idea, but do not forget to provide toilets and showers for your guests.

Minimum requirements

This section's title sound so close to the ICT field and maybe it has something in common. How can you run a software on a PC which has not the basic requirements you need? Of course, it is not possible. Same goes with your Summer University. Here's what you need:

- Signed agreement with the property's owner, unless that person is you
- toilets and showers
- Hot water
- Liquid soap
- Lot of toilet paper
- Cleaning materials
- First Aid Bag
- Generous international breakfast

PROGRAM

Drafting the programme of your SU since the very beginning of the organisation process is definitely the best way to create a great SU! Filling 10-14 days with exciting and fun activities seems a hard task, but following these guidelines will definitely help you. As an example you can check the final program booklet of the SU of AEGEE-Groningen [here](#).

First day: the first day should be fully dedicated to the arrivals of participants. Bear in mind that participants will probably arrive at different times during the whole day (and most likely also during the night) so it's not a good idea to plan any trip or thematic activity, because most of participants would probably miss it. But still, don't forget to plan something for the first participants who arrive: they won't know each other, so it's very important to start creating the group spirit with ice-breaking games. The "official" program could start in the late afternoon, with an "opening ceremony" presenting the organisers team and the programme of the SU, and of course more games to get to know each other. Don't forget also that the dinner of the first day must be provided.

Last day: the last day should be fully dedicated to the departures of participants. Breakfast must be provided, but then it's up to you to decide if you want to organise something with the participants who will leave later, like watching pictures and video, or sharing comments about the SU all together.

First days: the very first days of the SU should give participants an overview of the place(s) they are visiting: it's a good idea to plan a city tour and some cultural workshops (like a basic language workshop with useful everyday sentences) during the second/third day of your SU. Moreover, these days might also be a good moment to plan the compulsory AEGEE presentation, since this will give to newbie participants an overview of how the whole association works.

Activities: since there are thousands of different activities that can take place in a SU, the only advice that could be useful for each one is to try to balance the program as much as possible. First of all, the thematic part should be equally distributed among the whole SU, according to the minimum tuition hours per week requested by SUCT (14 for (S)SC, 18 for SC+, 14 for TSU). Be creative and try to develop the thematic part as much as you can through workshops, tuitions, trips, cultural visits and whatever comes to your mind! Try to balance every kind of activity equally during the whole SU: try not to spend a whole week inside doing theoretical workshops and a whole week outside doing sports! Moreover, keep in mind that some activities might "affect" participants' condition making them not really ready for attending a totally different activity right after: if you schedule a meeting with the mayor of your city at 5 pm, it wouldn't be a good idea to spend the first part of the day at the beach, since participants would probably be wet and sweaty! Remember also to schedule time for the compulsory sessions: it could be a good idea to distribute them among the SU, starting with AEGEE intro on the first days and the

other two sessions further on during the SU. Please keep in mind that the compulsory sessions does not count as tuition hours.

Free time: participants will need some free time during your SU, but you should try to distribute it equally among the SU: a whole day of free time will undoubtedly bore participants. A free morning or afternoon once or twice during the SU will allow them to explore the cities by themselves, buy souvenirs and do whatever they want. It's better to give them free time after providing them with the city tour, so they could already have an idea of where to go. Don't forget to give them suggestions of what to do/which places to visit. Usually free time for participants is the best moment to have a briefing moment with the whole organisers team.

Shower time: it might seem obvious, but participants (and organisers!) will want their daily shower! Keep in mind to give them some time both in the morning (the wake up call should be at least one hour before the start of the program) and in the evening, before dinner or between dinner and social program, so they can get ready for the party!

Sleeping time: this might seem obvious as well, but participants (and this time organisers even more!) also need to sleep sometimes! We know that you want to make your participants' experience as much activities as possible, but a tired participant usually turns himself into a grumpy and complaining participant, even if the activity is the most interesting ever! Try to plan a late wake-up call every now and then, especially during the second week of SU when usually participants are more tired, and after hard night (see suggestion for the social programme below!)

Social programme: a party that can't be missing in a SU is definitely the European Night! Since participants will have to bring their food and drinks from home, planning it in the first days of SU might be a smart choice, because it would allow them to bring fresh food. Moreover, if you're organising a TSU, they would be definitely happy to get rid of their bottles at the first stop instead of having to carry them all round. Nice and also thematic way of doing EN is to put more focus on a cultural aspect - do not allow participants to eat and drink everything in the first minute, but let everybody present what they brought, where do they come from and even perform some traditional dances or songs. As a local organiser, you also should present the country they are in - except of drinks and food, try to arrange local folklore group or other team to show participants a bit of your traditions. By the way, the most important thing is keeping in mind that after a EN participant will need to sleep, so try to plan it the night before a "soft" day with a late wake up call. On the last night of SU you should plan a "closing ceremony": a very typical suggestion is the white t-shirt party, where all participants wear a white t-shirt and write farewell messages on each other.

Participants usually like "thematic parties" including dresscode (traffic light party, oldies party, dress like a star party, navy party, strange party, etc.), but do not put too many of them, keep in mind that some participants might travel only with cabin luggage.

Another option is to have 1-2 nights completely without party, to let everybody rest. You can watch movies together, prepare massage workshop, cook together, play games in a gym and schedule earlier sleep. Some party animals will oppose, but in the end they will be happy.