

OUTREACH

The EUCE engages in a broad range of outreach activities designed to teach about the European Union and to communicate its policies. These activities are geared in particular towards high schools and the media. We operate in close cooperation with the EU consular community in Miami, European-American chambers of commerce and cultural societies.



Euro Challenge

The European Union Center of Excellence facilitates the participation of Miami-Dade schools in *Euro Challenge 2009*. The competition has been created by the Delegation of the European Commission to the United States and was launched with the help of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in 2006. It is designed to give students an understanding of the European economy and the euro, the currency shared by many of the 27 countries of the European Union (EU). Previously targeted to high schools in New York and in the Northeast, *Euro Challenge 2009* for the second time this year has been opened to students in Miami. Ten Miami-Dade high schools participated in the competition.

Participating High Schools

- Barbara Goleman Senior High School
- Coral Reef Senior High School
- G.Holmes Braddock High School
- John A. Ferguson Senior High School
- International Studies Charter High School
- Mater Academy Charter High School
- Miami Central Senior High School
- Miami Palmetto Senior High School
- South Miami Senior High School
- Southwest Miami High School



- In the competition, student teams of 3-5 students made 15 minutes presentations answering specific questions about the European economy as a whole and the single currency, the euro. They were also asked to pick one member country of the euro area, to examine an economic program at the country level, and to identify policies for responding to that problem.

Teams had the possibility to choose **one** of the following economic-related challenges:

- Slow growth
- High unemployment
- Inflation
- Adapting to technological change (raising productivity)
- Globalization (including immigration)
- Aging (including health care)
- Living with a single monetary policy
- Sustaining the social system (welfare state)
- Coping with a housing market slowdown
- High government deficits and debt

This year, a total of 70 high school teams from nine states (Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania) participated in the Euro Challenge competition and competed for cash awards. Regional competitions led to the final rounds at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

The winning teams, Montclair High School in Montclair, NJ (1st place), North Allegheny Intermediate High School in Pittsburgh, PA (2nd place), High School for Math, Science & Engineering in New York, NY (3rd place), International Academy Central High School in Bloomfield Hills, MI (4th place), and George W. Hewlett High School in Hewlett, NY (5th place) received nearly \$20,000 in cash awards. In addition to providing scholarships, the Moodys Foundation also sponsored a one-day trip to Washington DC for the top two teams to visit the Delegation of the European Commission, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve, and the International Monetary Fund.

► **Official Euro Challenge Website** - <http://www.euro-challenge.org/>

► **For more information contact:**




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Regional Competition in Miami – Wednesday, April 1, 2009

The regional competition for Miami-Dade Schools was held at FIU on **Wednesday, April 1st, 2009.**

[Barbara Goleman Senior High School](#), [Coral Reef Senior High School](#) and [Miami Palmetto Senior High School](#) have been selected

These three Florida high schools have been given an expenses paid trip to compete in the national competition in New York City on April 29.

Barbara Goleman Senior High School <i>(Nancy Abay, Teacher)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Richard Colina- Austin Garcia- Ryan O'Neill- Helen Roldan	
Coral Reef Senior High School <i>(Rafael Birriel, Teacher)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ana Almagro- Isabel Lipartito- Joanna Longueira- Joshua Simms- Lily Zhang	
Miami Palmetto Senior High School <i>(Beth Bagwell, Teacher)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Daniel Barcia- Shannon Bush- Kelly Hsu- Rebecca Kobert- Carley Schleien	

**Recognition Award for the 3 Florida High Schools Winners
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta – Miami Branch
Friday, April 24th, 2009**



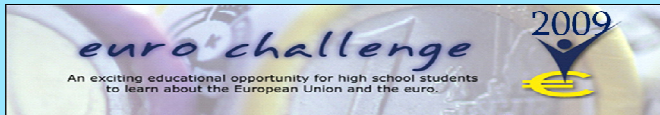
Barbara Goleman Senior High School Team
with Hon. Philippe Vinogradoff,
Consul General of France in Miami



Coral Reef Senior High School Team
with German Ambassador Volker Anding



Miami Palmetto Senior High School Team
with John Yearwood, World Editor, The Miami Herald



TESTIMONY - June 2009



Beth Bagwell
Teacher, Social Studies Department
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

There are a multitude of reasons why the Euro Challenge Team Competition is a marvelous experience for students. It provides 9th and 10th graders with research experience in economic issues long before they are given economics as coursework in high school.

These motivated students must delve into economic issues and the

operation of the European Union to create a presentation on the team's chosen challenge. The process of developing the presentation and preparing for potential questions in the competition was a most educational and satisfying experience for students and teachers. My students learned research skills, analysis and critical thinking skills, presentation skills and teamwork throughout the process. Our team spent about one month examining numerous challenges in different European countries that individual students found interesting. I originally started with about fifteen interested students after school once a week where they researched and presented their research. We eventually narrowed our topic to Spain and unemployment for this year's presentation. It was students researching and then presenting their research that made up our meetings. Students came up with research questions and set out answering those questions. The team made it to the semi finals in New York City. The New York experience was terrific. Students had a wonderful time in the competition and meeting students from around the country. Our students had excellent preparation and support from the Euro Challenge Program and from the European Union Center at Florida International University and the University of Miami. The Euro Challenge Website also provided tremendous support.

I encourage teachers to get involved in the Euro Challenge. This is my second year and I have found that it not only provides an enriching and exciting experience for the students participating but that it greatly adds to my four classes of AP European history. The interest of the Euro Challenge Competition Team added so much our discussions in class on current issues in Europe. The Competition Team practiced by giving their presentation and answering student questions in each of my classes. Then I set up a Euro Challenge formatted presentation/ project on current issues in Europe (1990- present) which was the last assignment of the year. It was an excellent closing of the year project and the quality of the presentations was excellent, with the Euro Challenge presentation as the model. So, my point, participation in the Euro Challenge not only adds to the education and interest of the Competition Team, but to the overall class knowledge and interest in current European topics. What students learned in preparing for this competition will remain with them forever!!

Beth Bagwell (Teacher, Social Studies Department, Miami Palmetto Senior High School) - June 28, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



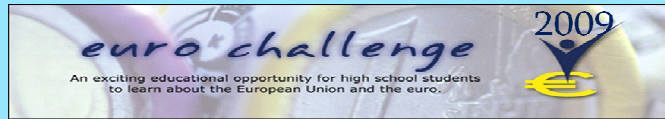
Shannon Bush
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

Before participating in the Euro Challenge, I truly believed economics to be a "dismal science." However, the Euro Challenge has opened my eyes to the excitement and intricacy of the economic world and its effect on our lives. Participation in the Euro Challenge forced me to learn the basics of economics two years before most students begin studying them, as a class senior year. My newfound knowledge of economics not only added to our presentation tremendously, but also enabled me to Understand the current economic situation, and to better comprehend the information supplied in newspapers and news broadcasts. I also now realize the interconnectedness of the relationship between the Euro Zone and the United States, and the importance of continuing to work together.

I was never a great public speaker, and I always had trouble giving presentations in school, mostly because I was unable to improvise or deviate from my pre-written script. As a member of the Euro Challenge team, I had to practice reciting our fifteen minute presentation from memory, as well as present the project numerous times with the team, in front of my peers. More importantly, I have learned from the Euro Challenge how to use the knowledge I have gathered in order to answer questions from classmates and judges. I am now a much more confident speaker and have no trouble presenting for an audience.

One of the most important aspects of the Euro Challenge is teamwork. Without strong teamwork, a Euro Challenge presentation cannot succeed. Through numerous after-school and weekend practice sessions, our team bonded in a very unique way. I have made life-long friends with whom I will always share memories of the biggest presentation any of us have ever made.

Shannon Bush (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 24, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Daniel Barcia
Miami Palmetto Senior High School

Euro Challenge is one of the most educational and exciting programs a student can participate in while attending high school. It not only provides a student with a basis for individual learning but also encourages teamwork and a general group effort to better understand current European issues. Euro Challenge also spurs a healthy competitive spirit among schools nationwide while simultaneously encouraging participants to meet other students with similar interests in current affairs and develop new relationships.

The road to New York City required endless hours of research and collaboration. Several months prior to our first competition at Florida International University (FIU), our official team, composed of five group members, was assembled. With the help of our hardworking teacher, Ms. Bagwell, our team moved swiftly to address our European issue in the most efficient and detailed matter. Each member was assigned a specific topic to research in relation to our central issue, Spanish unemployment. Then, each member presented the information to the rest of the group at our weekly meetings after school. Our final draft was completed after many months of researching and editing. This phase of the process was the most educationally rewarding portion of the competition because it enabled me to learn specifically about Spanish current affairs as well as Europe as a whole. Moreover, the weekly meetings provided a wonderful learning environment, in which questions could be exchanged in order to understand the information in greater depth.

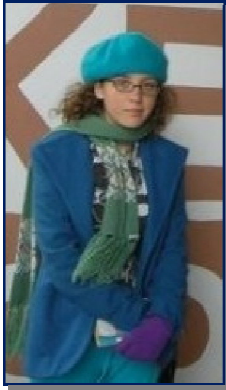
After many hours spent practicing and improving our prized script, it was finally time for our first competition. Despite the anxiety, our group was able to perform our script as planned and advance to the next round, New York City. Although we were not a top-scoring team in New York City, it nevertheless was a productive and rewarding experience. The competition at the New York Federal Reserve enabled me to learn about other European current affairs while meeting students from across the nation. Most interesting, we were able to meet important figures such as John Bruton, former Irish Prime Minister, all the while exploring the great city of New York.

Overall, the Euro Challenge program taught me a wide variety of skills that will be useful later on in life. For instance, I learned how to work better as a member of a group; proposing personal perspectives while learning from others at the same time. Moreover, Euro-challenge made me aware of worldwide issues on level of great detail. In addition, I was able to learn vast amounts of information about European culture and politics. Before Euro Challenge, I had a general understanding of the European Central Bank's role in the European economy. Now, I understand it at the more sophisticated level of fiscal and monetary policy. Euro-challenge has definitely been an incredibly rewarding experience, and I highly recommend it to all high school students with an interest in current affairs.

Daniel Barcia (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 29, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Chelsea Cosner

Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

Before starting Euro Challenge, I knew very little about how the economy in America, Europe, or anywhere really, worked and about had little interest in it. After spending some time working on the team however, I learned how fascinating economics could be, and began really dedicating my time to researching the Euro Zone's issues. Not only did I discover new interests I never would have expected I had from Euro challenge, but it made me feel more involved and knowledgeable of the global economic woes and going ons, let me reach a further understanding of our own economy's difficulties catalyzed by the approval of subprime mortgages through learning about how the U.S. economy differed from the E.U. economy. I can now read articles on the newest economic issues facing the international sphere and actually know what they mean, and figure out some possible repercussions or fixes. Euro challenge has also helped me learn more about the recent history of Europe, which was vitally important for my AP European History class. No doubt, it will also be a great help to have been involved in Euro Challenge when I take Economics senior year.

Euro Challenge had another benefit, which was working with such a great team. I believe all tighter, with the constant editing and reediting of scripts, the conflicting opinions, and the subsequent compromises that had to be made, we all had our ego's deflated and learned to work as a very efficient unit in this group. I'm very glad I had an opportunity to work with these very bright and mature, dedicated classmates, even though I was not on the actual 5-person presentation team. Participating in Euro challenge was a very rewarding experience, and I encourage students to get involved in it, even if they don't know much about economics.

Chelsea Cosner (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 21, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Arielle Davis
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

In the beginning, I was skeptical about sitting in on a Euro Challenge meeting. The economy wasn't my strong spot, and things like C-SPAN made me sleepy. For some reason, the day of the meet, I went on a whim, and instantly caught interest. Challenges to the EU are things we don't cover so broadly in school, yet we hear about it in the media. After the first few meetings, it felt like a having a seventh period (I did last year, which was like a block scheduled two hour class for enjoyment). Doing homework and research was much different than mindless worksheets I receive in school sometimes. I could tailor the subject to interest me, and the topic was so broad, there was plenty to dive into. After weaving through each subject and country, we decided on unemployment in Spain. An excellent choice, because Time magazine constantly includes Spain in its copy, and the challenge was chronic.

Unemployment in Spain branches out because it affects so much in a chain reaction. In addition, Spain was undergoing a recession. Auto sales are down, and even Seat, Spain's auto company, halted plans for new concepts. Tourism is also down, and most of the travelers are "sun tourists," only visiting the beach. The problem with this is that the beaches are free, and the only companies to prosper are the beachside resorts or small stores. In addition, consumer spending is on a sharp decline. People seem to believe that the prices will consistently go down, and when they don't, the stores see a decrease in profit.

On the bright side, Spain excels in wind power, a growing source of alternative energy. Also, Spain's bullet trains, (AVE) are rapidly expanding.

Lucky me, that fate would bring me to Euro Challenge. I can explain to my future children the state of the economy and the effects of recession. Thank you for the field trip to the Federal Reserve, the meal was a nice break from brown bag lunches. I wouldn't trade that bonding time with Beth for anything.

Arielle Davis (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 27, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Michael Levey
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

When I first heard about the Euro challenge competition I was extremely overwhelmed with the confusion of the European Union and economics in general. However, as I began to research the current and past events of the European Union, I realized that I had found a great interest in international economics and its affects on the U.S. With increased interest in the subject, I no longer felt the challenge of understanding the concepts of the dismal science. From that point on, I felt no pressure in the competition. I was simply eager to learn.

My experience with Euro challenge has helped shape me as a person and has prepared me for the real world. I have become more interested in the political, economic, and social problems of not only Europe, but of issues facing the whole world. But most of all, I have learned how to work together with a group of fellow students to strive for success in order to achieve a common goal. Additionally, it has sparked in interest in me regarding my future career choice. The hard work, dedication, and determination have surely paid off.

Michael Levey (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 21, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Kelly Hsu

Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

When I was first approached by our sponsor to join our school's Euro Challenge team, I found myself apprehensive. What did I know about the European economy? And was it really a subject that I wanted to delve into? As I began my research, I found myself exposed to the complex system of the European Union, comprised of 27 interrelated member states, each with their own economies and their own issues.

Even though I began this experience with virtually no background knowledge about the EU, I feel that I have gained an insight to the current financial situation. This knowledge will prove valuable in the years to come. I've become more wary of not only the American economy, but of global affairs, and I hope to pursue a career in economics in the future.

Our team began preparing for our presentation months beforehand with weekly meetings. We discussed economic developments occurring in Spain, watching its unemployment situation worsen, and avidly searching for answers to rectify their situation. Writing the script, memorizing the script, and making last-minute edits were stressful, but by April 1st, we traveled to FIU, nervous but excited—this was our chance to prove that we had gained an understanding of the EU, and a chance for our months of preparation to pay off. When we received a call notifying us we had qualified and were flying to New York, we were obviously excited. The call was proof that we had gained knowledge and made progress. It encouraged us to further research about the European economy, specifically Spain, in anticipation for our trip to New York City.

The Moody Foundation did an amazing job in organizing the trip to New York and the Federal Reserve for us, letting us focus on our task at hand—further preparing ourselves for our presentation. Our time in front of the judges flew by, and we felt that we illustrated what we had learned in the past few months. Although we did not advance to the final round, each member of our team had worked our hardest, and felt no regret. We watched the final schools compete, and saw how others our age (or younger) were able to master such complex economic terms and explain themselves so articulately. I'd like to encourage students to join in this program, for it not only provides students to learn about economics, the experience itself was unforgettable. I'd like to thank all those at Euro-challenge for making it possible.

Sincerely, Kelly Hsu (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 21, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Rebecca Kobert
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

The Euro Challenge provided a wonderful opportunity to learn about the current economic crisis and about the economy, politics, and culture of a particular European nation as well as the Euro area as a whole. I went in to the competition with little to no knowledge of the economy or modern European affairs.

However, I left feeling that I had learned so much, and it kept me wanting to continue to learn; I still read the articles in the newspaper regarding economic matters and European events. It was really surprising that in such a short period of time I could learn so much about a subject that I went in to with very little prior knowledge.

I also learned a great deal about teamwork, putting in a lot of effort, and public speaking. Although I've done group projects throughout my academic life, Euro Challenge required extensive amounts of out-of-school work in a group of five or more. As a team we learned to cooperate with each other and we were able to be efficient in our many group sessions, whether it be researching, writing the script, or practicing our lines. The effort that was required for this competition was more than any of us expected, but none of us were even hesitant about putting in the work needed to produce the desired results. It definitely taught a lot about motivation and hard work. Finally, as we all know, my public speaking skills were wanting, to be kind. It's still a work in progress, but I definitely improved upon speaking in audibly and a bit slower in a public setting, under pressure.

Rebecca Kobert (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 18, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Carley Schleien
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

My experience with the Euro Challenge Competition was truly unique. When I first learned about the competition through my teacher, I was excited and eager to challenge myself. I had never taken an Economics class, and I wanted to learn about the economic crisis that the media was portraying.

After preliminary research, I was anxious to do further research with my team and create our presentation. The competition was very challenging, but it taught my teammates and I about responsibility and reliability, research techniques, team cooperation, and of course, economics, especially in Spain.

The day of the semifinal competition in Miami was nerve-racking. We were nervous, but our goal showed on our faces: we wanted to advance to the competition in New York. After we presented, we went back to school where we had trouble concentrating in anticipation of hearing which teams had made it to New York. After a few hours, my teacher called us and told us to pack our bags; we had made it to New York. The team and I were beyond ecstatic. We dove further into research, eager to make it to the final round in New York.

Our experience in New York was enlightening. We met many other students who were interested in economics like us. The competition ran very smoothly, and even though we did not participate in the final round, we learned an abundance of knowledge from the other teams' presentations. When we left New York, we were both relieved and nostalgic, but enthusiastic to help next year's team at our school learn about the Euro Challenge.

The Euro Challenge enabled me to accomplish things I had never dreamed of. I learned how to teach myself a topic I had never learned about, and to create a presentation with a group of other students. We compiled hours of research into a 15 minute script. We met with economics professors and students, economists, ambassadors, and consulates. Each step along the way left a different impact on our lives. I have left the Euro-Challenge Competition with an incredible experience.

Carley Schleien (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 27, 2009



TESTIMONY - May 2009



Will Smith
Miami Palmetto Senior High School, FL

By participating in the 2009 Euro Challenge program at my high school, I have learned much about the economic situation in the European Union. My school's topic this year was unemployment in Spain. By being a part of my school's research team, I was able to learn about the unemployment rate, business cycles, interest rates, and other economic ideas. I was able to learn things about economics that I wouldn't have even dreamed of knowing before I began the Euro Challenge program.

Thanks to Euro Challenge, I now have a basic economic understanding of the European Union as well as the world as a whole.

Will Smith (Miami Palmetto Senior High School) – May 18, 2009