

## **Report ‚Arbeiterkind Goes Europe ‘**

Past Event: Study Trip from 16 – 19 May

The FES EU-Office in cooperation with the local Arbeiterkind.de Brussels group and with support of the Mercator Foundation organized a study trip to Brussels for students from families without academic background in mid-May.

The students travelled to Brussels with a diverse range of expectations. While some were already considering a career within the EU institutions or in an international organisation, others mainly wanted to get to know and understand the EU better. However, one idea united the participants in advance: the impression that Brussels would be an elite location and hardly accessible for students without an academic family background.

The aim of the trip therefore was to give the students an insight into the reality of work and life in Brussels, to establish contacts and break down barriers to a career in the international Brussels environment. The impressions were provided to the students during various appointments with EU institutions and organisations, as well as networking opportunities with members of the local Arbeiterkind.de group. In addition, the students had time to get to know the city by themselves.

In the conversations with the speakers, most of them also from non-academic families, many of the imagined hurdles to working in Brussels could be dismantled. The students were surprised by the approachability and authenticity of their conversation partners, and the backgrounds and biographies they got to know were more diverse than expected. A 'common passion' for living and working in Brussels and a conviction about the EU project were particularly emphasised.

The conclusion of the participants was therefore very positive. Many of them can imagine a career in Brussels and have been able to deepen their enthusiasm for the EU. The programme also reassured them in being more confident about their skills and career aims. After their return to Germany, the students will now act as European ambassadors in their local Arbeiterkind.de groups to pass on their experiences to other interested students.