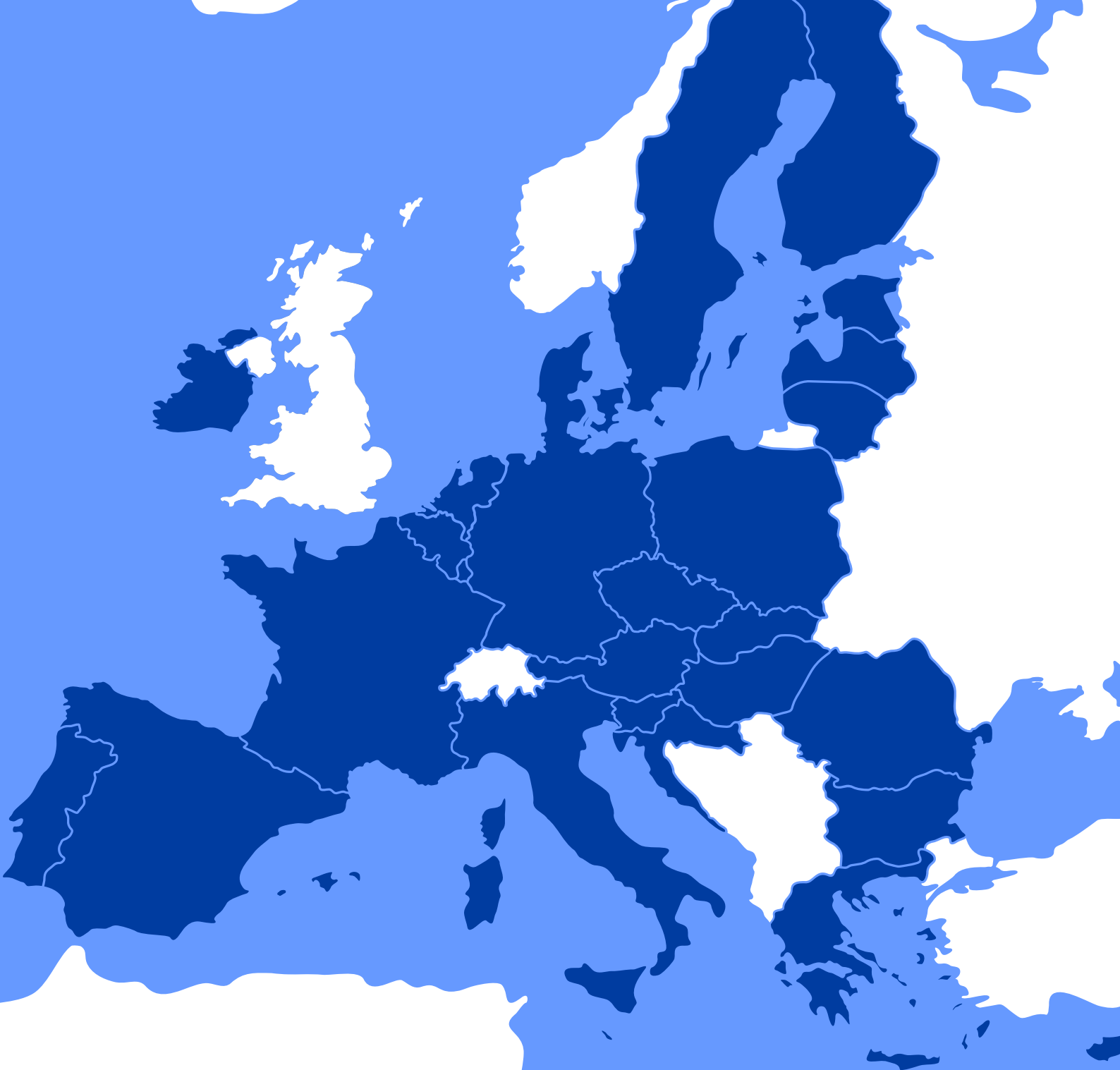




THE EU COUNCIL EXPLAINED LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

Lesson for practical learners in secondary education
(± 12 – 19 years old)

Step-by-step manual for educational professionals



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

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A LESSON ESPECIALLY FOR PRACTICAL LEARNERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

This manual is part of a civic education package about the Council of the European Union and the European Council. There are lessons in four categories, to make sure there are suitable lessons for various educational levels in the EU.

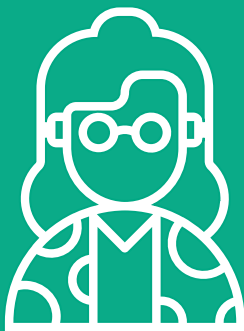
The manual you are currently reading is for a lesson that has been specially developed for young Europeans between about 12 and 19 years old. The lesson is suitable for students in secondary education who prefer to learn by doing rather than from books and lectures.

If this lesson is not suitable for your group or you also teach other groups in different educational levels, please see the other lessons in the civic education package that are especially for:

- Theoretical learners in secondary education (± 12–19 y/o)
- Practical learners in tertiary education (± 17–25 y/o)
- Theoretical learners in tertiary education (± 17–25 y/o)

If you would like to spend more time teaching practical learners in secondary education about the EU you can find more materials [you can find more materials here](#). **Please note:** Always begin with this lesson, as it introduces the EU in an accessible way for the target group.

This civic education package is available in **all official EU languages**. You can use the lesson in a language other than your own for Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), thus combining citizenship education with teaching a foreign language.



This lesson serves the educational needs of students like Andrea.

Andrea (15) would like to work in the fashion or beauty industry when she's finished school, but she's not sure yet.

In her ideal lesson she is not required to listen for longer than 10 minutes and she can do an activity in a group with peers.

She would like to learn why and how we work together in the EU, and on what subjects. She needs clear examples to understand what it has to do with her life. Andrea is curious about other European countries and what her country has in common with them.

KEY MESSAGE AND LEARNING PERSPECTIVES

The civic education package by the Council of the European Union/European Council aims to explain the ‘why, what and how’ of the EU and its institutions. The focus is on EU affairs close to the interests of students, and on letting them reflect on and discuss how these affect their lives.

Many young EU citizens see European integration as an accomplished fact. The package gives them insights into why the 27 members of the European Union choose to work together. This might seem like a simple question, but it is something they should experience for themselves to truly understand why certain issues can’t be dealt with on a national level – and why it is important to find solutions that work for all Europeans. Here, at the Council of the EU and the European Council, the EU countries negotiate until they find a solution that works for everyone. This is about cooperation, with solidarity at its core.

Therefore, the key messages of the civic education package on the Council of the European Union/European Council are:

- European politics is about you (what and how)
- The 27 EU countries are working together for the common good (why)

LEARNING PERSPECTIVES FOR PRACTICAL LEARNERS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

- After this lesson students will be able to better understand why the 27 EU countries (known as the member states) work together in the EU and give examples of policy areas/topics the EU plays an active part in.
- During this lesson students will work together to achieve tasks and be able to share their thoughts and knowledge. Students will experience the benefits of working together.
- After this lesson students will be able to distinguish between key EU institutions.
- After this lesson students will know some basic facts about the EU.

LESSON STRUCTURE, DURATION AND PREPARATION

This lesson is designed to be taught during your regular school schedule. It can ideally be completed in 40–50 minutes, but it can be adapted to the time available. Below you can find a suggested timetable for the lesson, outlining the activities and the materials to be used. A step-by-step description follows below.

5M	BUILDING TOGETHER ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)	EUROPEANS VIDEO (5 MINUTES)	DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)	QUIZ (10 MINUTES)	5M
50 MINUTES					

If you are short of time during the lesson, it's preferable to skip the quiz and complete the other activities properly.

PREPARATIONS

This lesson is ready for educational professionals to use by following the step-by-step instructions below. However, proper preparation is necessary. Depending on your knowledge about the subject and experience as an educator it could take you 15–60 minutes to prepare.

» *How can you prepare?*

Make sure you know how many students will participate and how much time you have. If the lesson as described in the manual doesn't fit the number of students or available lesson time, you can adapt it. If you need to change the structure of the lesson, we recommend keeping it as close as possible to the original, for which you can use the slides provided.

For the **Building together activity**:

- Calculate how many tables in total can be made with the number of students you have in the classroom by dividing the number of students by four.

If you plan to work with pairs, every pair will get two cards. If students will work individually (when there are fewer than 12 students in the group) they each get one card (you may need to give some students two cards).

- Download the task description and cards. Print the number of task descriptions (one per pair) and cards you need.
- Make sure you have two cards to give to each pair. The two cards that a pair has should not be the same. Try to mix them up so not all pairs are automatically able to join forces.

For the **video** and **discussion**:

- Choose a video that your group can relate to.
- Look into the topic of the video and find out if any similar projects exist in your [region](#).

For the quiz:

- Make sure you know the correct answers to the questions and read about any answers you didn't know yourself.
- Decide if you want to give points for correct answers.

» Materials and links

The supporting materials are available on the [Council website](#).

- [Task descriptions](#)
- [Cards](#)
- [PowerPoint slides](#)

» Background information for teachers

You can find detailed background information about the Council of the European Union, the European Council and the European Union in general on the following websites:

- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu>
- <https://europa.eu>

Or take a look at the publication '[Europe in 12 lessons](#)' – the European Union explained.

STEP BY STEP

With the following steps you can implement the lesson in your classroom. Please make sure you prepare properly first, as described above.

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION (MAX. 5 MINUTES)

- If it is a group you regularly teach, briefly welcome them and tell them the topic of the lesson today, without getting into too much detail.
- If it is a group you will only work with once, make sure they feel welcome and briefly introduce yourself (name, organisation and why you are here with them today). Tell them the topic of the lesson today, without getting into too much detail.

Please note: depending on how much time you have, decide if you want to do a quick round of introductions; this is always useful to break the ice and work more closely together.

1. Ask the group to pair up. (Not necessary if the group is smaller than 12 students).
2. Make sure it's clear how you want the students to interact with each other in the classroom. This lesson is designed to make students interact and it's meant to get a little chaotic at some points, but they also have to listen to your instructions and calm down if necessary. Share some ground rules if this helps you. For example: raise your hand, wait for your turn, do not speak at the same time, etc.

STEP 2: BUILDING TOGETHER ACTIVITY (MAX. 15 MINUTES)

ACTIVITY – Building together

In this activity each pair of students will get two cards with materials they can use to build a table. They need a total of four cards to build a table.

The different cards are:

- A tabletop
- Table legs
- Screws
- Screwdriver

They will also get a task description telling them they need to be the first to build a strong table.

When everyone has had their cards and task description, they will be given five minutes to complete the task by working together and/or exchanging cards with other groups. This may get a bit chaotic (and that's allowed). Afterwards peace will be restored in the classroom and the number of complete tables (four cards) will be counted.

The aim of the activity is for the students to learn that they can work together with (an) other pair(s). You can be the first to build a table with a group of four students. This may have worked for some groups, but maybe they would have had more tables if they had started by working together with the whole group to see what cards they all had, and what matches could be made.

- Groups smaller than twelve students will not work in pairs for this exercise, but on their own. Each student will get one card. If the total number of students is not multiple of four, some students will get two cards.
- While preparing for the activity, print the **cards and task descriptions** and calculate the total number of tables it will be possible to make.

» **Getting started (max. 3 minutes)**

1. Make sure everyone has someone to work with and hand out the task description and two cards to each pair. Some pairs will need to get one or three cards to make sure the numbers are correct.

Please note: Prepare as described above in the section 'preparation'.

2. Give everyone a minute or two to read the task description and decide on a strategy with their partner.
3. Tell the students they have five minutes to complete their task by cooperating with each other. There are no rules as to how they should reach their goal, other than keeping it safe, cooperative and respectful.
4. Consider the possibility of setting a timer from the start of the activity.

» **Five minutes to complete the task (5 minutes)**

1. Students will or will not act at this point. Some might instantly work together with others, some might try to team up or exchange cards with someone else to complete their table. Make sure you motivate students to complete their task and keep an eye on the time while the students are busy.
2. Tell the students when they only have one minute left to complete their task.
3. When the time is up, ask the students to sit down and relax.

» **Counting completed tables (max. 2 minutes)**

1. Tell the students how many tables (complete sets of four cards) there could be now.
2. Ask them who has completed their task and how. **Please note:** the task is completed if the students have the four cards required to build a table and it is allowed to have multiple pairs of students share their four cards. A table without one of the cards (for instance, screws) is not a completed task.
3. **Option A:** If the students figured it out together and all the tables are complete, they have worked together perfectly. This will be the starting point for the reflection that follows.

Option B: If the students don't have all the tables completed, they could have done better by working together (or in a different way). This will be the starting point for the reflection that follows.

» **Reflection (max. 3 minutes)**

1. Ask all students to take their seats before you start the class discussion/reflection.
2. **Option A:** Can the students reflect on what they have done to create this successful outcome together? Invite a couple of students to share their thoughts.
Option B: Why hasn't everyone completed their task? What would students do differently if they were given this task again? Invite a couple of students to share their thoughts.
3. Tell students that the meaning of this exercise was to learn to work together. By negotiating, everyone can be part of a winning team!
4. Ask students about the benefits of working together they have experienced at work, at school or in other activities in their lives. This can help them make the connection with the topic (27 EU member states working together).

» **Connection to the topic (max. 3 minutes)**

1. Now make the transition to the topic of the lesson: 27 countries working together in the European Union. Ask the students to imagine the EU as a big and complex table that all these countries have contributed to build, and talk about issues that affect all of them. By working together, the EU-27 can find solutions to cross-border problems and challenges. You can provide some examples (climate change, digitalization, the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.).
2. If you want to, you can use the **slides provided** to explain the metaphor and make this connection more visible for students.

**STEP 3: #EUROPEANS VIDEO AND DISCUSSION
(MAX. 15 MINUTES)**

ACTIVITY – #Europeans video and discussion

The students will watch one of the #Europeans videos and discuss what the content of the video (and the involvement of the EU) has to do with their lives and/or country.

You as a practitioner (teacher, professional educator) will choose one of the #Europeans videos that your group can relate to. In the step-by-step approach below a few suggestions are made. Ideally, the video should be from another EU country. All the videos are available in the national language of the story, with subtitles in English.

Please note: For some groups using English subtitles may be difficult. In this case, check if the video from your own country is about a topic the group can relate to.

- You can find the [#Europeans videos](#)¹ here. Suggested videos your target group might easily relate to or find appealing: Watch this backflip (Latvia), All for one and one for all (Greece), How Rugby made me proud (Ireland), Cheers to cross-border love! (Denmark/Bulgaria), One boat, one planet (The Netherlands), Back to the countryside (France), The power of community action (Italy).
- Make sure you have a stable internet connection during the lesson. If not, you can download the video before the lesson starts.

» **Watching the video (max. 5 minutes)**

1. Before you press play, make sure all students are paying attention to the screen. The previous activity was very interactive and watching a video requires a different level of energy and concentration from students.
2. Briefly introduce the video: explain to students that EU policies have an impact on many different levels and that they will now see an example. You can also give them some pointers on the topic of the video.

Please note: To help students focus on the video, think of a question they have to answer after watching the video and put it to them before watching.

3. When the video finishes immediately ask students for their responses. This way you can make sure they stay focused on the subject.

» **Discussion (max. 10 minutes)**

The aim of this conversation with the group is to link the example in the video to their lives

1. Start by asking a student to summarise the topic of the video.
2. Ask the group to share their thoughts. Are there examples like these in their own country? Is this a topic they find important?
3. Do they understand how the work of the EU is related to this? In what way has the EU made a difference in this situation?
4. Even though this story is about a different country, can they explain why it is connected to them? Maybe they know another example of EU policy that affects their lives directly?
5. When time's up, wrap it up by explaining that the 27 EU countries together adopt common rules and legislation that affect all EU citizens. The 27 member states have shared values they act upon. Even though countries may have different opinions on how to solve problems, they want to solve them together. Most of the time they work on issues that cross borders and that we all have to deal with. The Council of the European Union is the institution where all EU countries are represented and work together to make decisions, together with the European Parliament. At the European Council the leaders of all EU countries define the EU's overall political direction and priorities together.

Please note: You can use the [slides provided](#) for this last part.

¹ <https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/20191027-europeans>

STEP 4: QUIZ (10 MINUTES)

ACTIVITY – Quiz

The students will compete in an interactive quiz. They will split up into teams of three, randomly selected to make sure they work together with others they haven't chosen themselves. After each question the teams will get 10 seconds to decide what the correct answer is. The questions are multiple choice and the teams give their answers by walking to a corner or side of the classroom. This way they will keep moving during the activity.

- It's up to you as a practitioner if you want to have a winning team at the end of the quiz. If this is the case, each team earns a point for a correct answer and the team with the most points wins the quiz.
- Use the **slides provided** to show the questions and possible answers.
- There are 10 questions in the quiz. It's better to take your time for five or six questions, so students can think about their answers and you can explain why a certain answer is correct, than to rush through all 10 questions.

» Make teams and explain how the quiz works (max. 2 minutes)

1. Tell students that they will work together in teams of approximately three to do a quiz. You can adapt the size of the teams depending on the total number of students.
2. Divide the number of students by three. If the result is 5, for example, give every student a number from 1 to 5. All students with the same number are in a team together.
3. Explain how the quiz works. In a moment you will show the first question and some possible answers. You will also tell them where in the classroom to stand to give their answer.

Please note: It's a simple concept that doesn't need too much explanation. Let students find out how it works as they play the quiz.

4. Make sure they know how they can win if you decide to award points.

» Quiz questions (depending on how much time you have left, min. 5 minutes)

1. Read out each question and the possible answers from the slides provided. Tell and point out to students where to stand for each answer. (For instance: If you think it's answer A, stand in the corner near the window).
2. Use the timer in the slides to give them 10 seconds to answer the question.
3. Give them the correct answer when every group has decided where to stand.
4. Give a short explanation of the correct answer before you continue to the next question. If many students get the answer wrong, take some more time to check if they have understood your explanation.
5. If you are awarding points, say which teams are given a point for their correct answer.
6. Continue as described above until you run out of time. Select a winner at the end if you are awarding points.

Please note: Make sure you leave enough time to do step 5.

» **Quiz questions**

1. All citizens of an EU country are automatically citizens of the EU.

True/False

2. How many countries are member states of the EU?

25, 26, 27 or 28

3. How many official languages does the EU have?

20, 21, 22 or 24

4. The members of which EU institution are directly elected by EU citizens?

European Parliament or European Commission

5. Which is the only EU institution that can propose new legislation?

European Parliament / European Commission / Council of the EU

6. Who takes part in meetings of the Council of the European Union?

Heads of state/government or one minister from each EU country

7. Can the 27 EU leaders make decisions together about new laws for all EU citizens?

Yes or no

8. Which country joined the EU last?

Croatia or Malta

9. Bigger countries have more power in the EU.

True or false

10. Is the Euro the currency in all 27 EU countries?

Yes or no

STEP 5: END OF THE LESSON (MIN. 5 MINUTES)

1. Make sure all students have returned to their seats after participating in the quiz.
2. Ask some of the students what they will take away from this lesson. Can anyone tell you something they have learnt? What do they know now that they didn't know before?
3. Check if the message about working together has come across, by asking some of the students why the 27 member states work together.
4. Thank the students for participating today. Answer any questions that students have.

DO YOU WANT TO SPEND MORE TIME TEACHING ABOUT THE EU COUNCIL?

Hopefully you and the students enjoyed the lesson. If you wish to know more or spend more time teaching about the Council of the European Union, please take a look at the ready-to-use [lesson about the Council Presidency](#) or the Council [website](#), where you can find a lot of information, publications and videos to use.

Did you know you can also book a [group visit to the Council buildings](#)? If you can't come to Brussels, you can always do a [virtual tour](#) with your students.

If you want to teach more about the European Union in general, you can find materials in the [EU learning corner](#).

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at <http://europa.eu>.

EU Publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from EU Bookshop at <http://bookshop.europa.eu>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see <http://europa.eu/contact>).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>.

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

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    /eucouncil

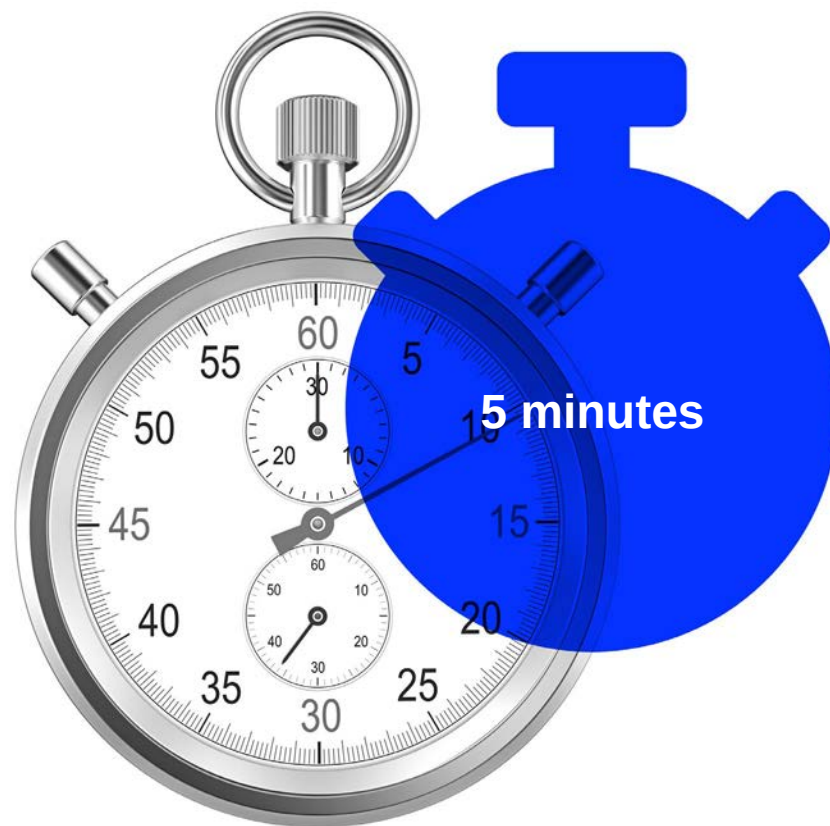
Working together in the European Union

Civic education package



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

Building strong tables



>>> Start 5 minute countdown

How many strong tables are finished?



It's only possible when you work together!



27 EU countries
work together
around the table



Finding solutions for cross-border problems

27

member
states

446

million
citizens

24

official
languages



#EUROPEANS

The EU institutions



Right of initiative



Adopt EU legislation together





Question 1

All citizens of an EU country are automatically citizens of the EU.

True or false?

Question 1

All citizens of an EU country are automatically citizens of the EU.

True or false?

True



Question 2

How many countries are member states of the EU?

25, 26, 27 or 28?

Question 2

How many countries are member states of the EU?

25, 26, 27 or 28?

27



Question 3

How many official languages does the EU have?

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Question 3

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24

Question 4

The members of which EU institution are directly elected by EU citizens?

European Parliament or European Commission?



Question 4

The members of which EU institution are directly elected by EU citizens?

European Parliament or European Commission?

European Parliament



Question 5

Which is the only EU institution that can propose new legislation?

European Parliament / European Commission / Council of the EU?



Question 5

Which is the only EU institution that can propose new legislation?

European Parliament / European Commission / Council of the EU?

European Commission



Question 6

Who takes part in meetings of the Council of the European Union?

Heads of state/government or one minister from each EU country?



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Who takes part in meetings of the Council of the European Union?

Heads of state/government or one minister from each EU country?

One minister from each EU country



Question 7

Can the 27 EU leaders make decisions together about new laws for all EU citizens?

Yes or no?

Question 7

Can the 27 EU leaders make decisions together about new laws for all EU citizens?

Yes or no?

No



Question 8

Which country joined the EU last?

Croatia or Malta?

Question 8

Which country joined the EU last?

Croatia or Malta?

Croatia

Question 9

Bigger countries have more power in the EU.

True or false?

Question 9

Bigger countries have more power in the EU.

True or false?

False

Question 10

Is the Euro the currency in all
27 EU countries?

Yes or no?

Question 10

Is the Euro the currency in all
27 EU countries?

Yes or no?

No



Thank you for participating!



What have you learned today?

Cards for the activity 'Building Together'

Please print the cards and cut them out (the total number needed will depend on the number of students).



Table legs

To build a strong table you need four cards:

- A table top
- Table legs
- Screws
- A screwdriver

A table top

To build a strong table you need four cards:

- A table top
- Table legs
- Screws
- A screwdriver

Screwdriver

To build a strong table you need four cards:

- A table top
- Table legs
- Screws
- A screwdriver

Screws

To build a strong table you need four cards:

- A table top
- Table legs
- Screws
- A screwdriver