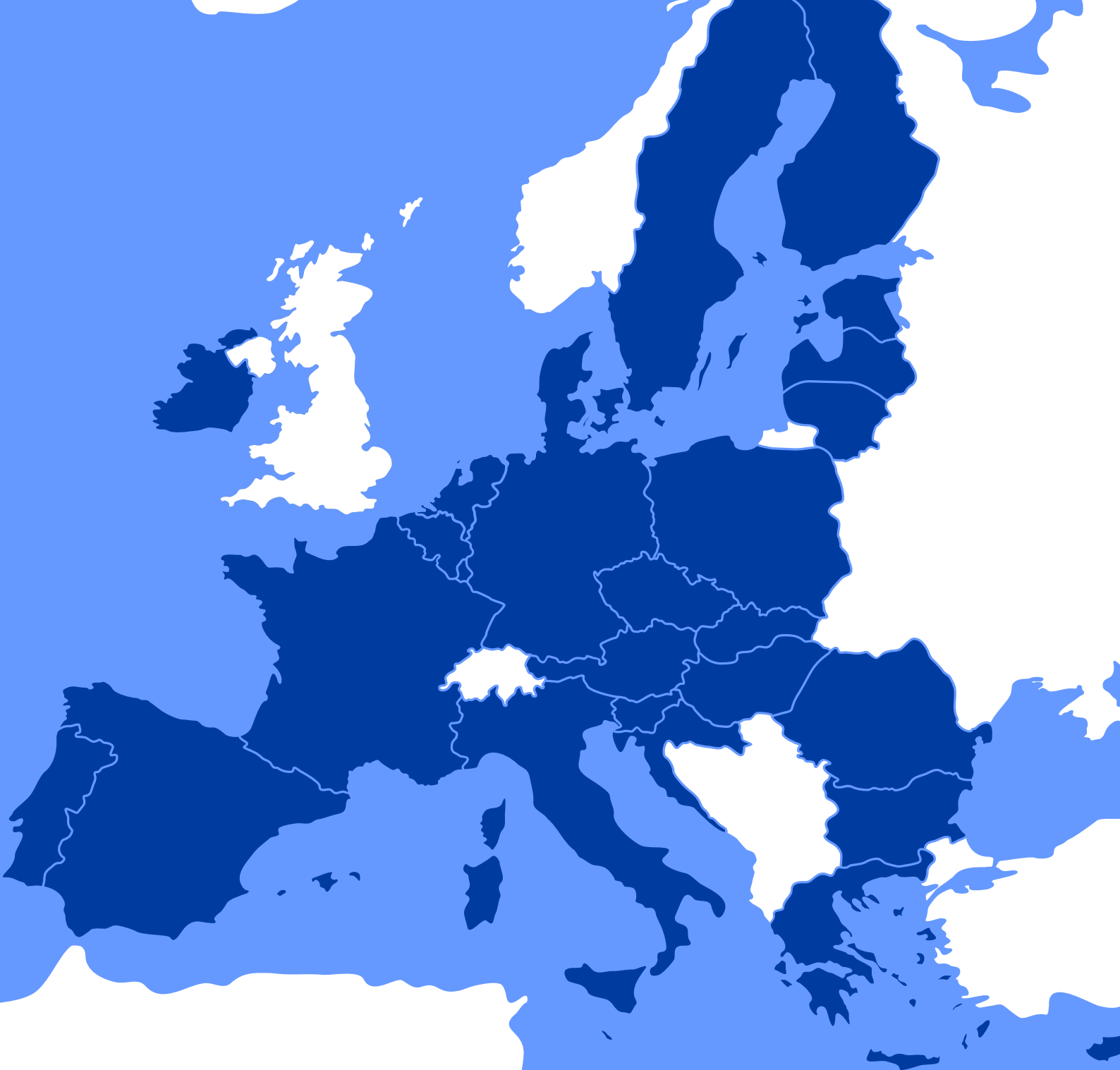




THE EU COUNCIL EXPLAINED LET'S LEARN TOGETHER

Lesson for practical learners in tertiary education
(± 17 – 25 years old)

Step-by-step manual for educational professionals



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LESSON ESPECIALLY FOR PRACTICAL LEARNERS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION	3
KEY MESSAGE AND LEARNING PERSPECTIVES	4
Learning perspectives for practical learners in tertiary education	4
LESSON STRUCTURE, DURATION AND PREPARATION	5
Preparations	5
How can you prepare?	5
Materials and links	6
Background information for teachers	6
STEP BY STEP	7
Step 1: Introduction (max. 5 minutes)	7
Step 2: Building together activity (max. 15 minutes)	7
Getting started (max. 3 minutes)	8
Five minutes to complete the tasks (5 minutes)	8
Counting completed tables (max. 2 minutes)	8
Reflection (max. 3 minutes)	9
Connection to the topic (max. 3 minutes)	9
Step 3: #EUropeans video and discussion (max. 25 minutes)	9
Watching the video (max. 5 minutes)	10
Discussion on the basis of statements (max. 20 minutes)	10
Step 4: End of the lesson (min. 5 minutes)	11
DO YOU WANT TO SPEND MORE TIME TEACHING ABOUT THE EU COUNCIL?	12

A LESSON ESPECIALLY FOR PRACTICAL LEARNERS IN TERTIARY 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 17 and 25 years old. The lesson is suitable for students in tertiary education (for instance vocational education) who learn by doing. Some of them might already be working (part-time).

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

If you would like to spend more time teaching practical learners in tertiary education about the EU 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 Stephan.

Stephan (19) is following vocational education to become a carpenter. He is already working part-time as a construction worker. Civic education is mandatory at his school.

He likes to work with his hands but is able to concentrate in a lecture/group discussion if the subject interests him.

Stephan doesn't know much about (European) politics, but he would like to find out what it has to do with his life. The information he gets needs to make sense in relation to his personal life or profession to sink in.

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 TERTIARY EDUCATION

- During this lesson the students will experience the benefits of working together.
- 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 and 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.
- During the lesson students will share their opinions and discuss certain European issues.
- After this lesson students know some basic facts about the EU.

LESSON STRUCTURE, DURATION AND PREPARATION

5M	BUILDING TOGETHER ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)	EUROPEANS VIDEO (5 MINUTES)	DISCUSSION ON THE BASIS OF STATEMENTS (20 MINUTES)	5M
50 MINUTES				

The lesson 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.

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. Try to mix them up so not all pairs are automatically able to join forces.

For the #EUropeans video with statements and discussion:

- Choose a video that your group can relate to.
- Take a look at the five statements prepared and decide which ones you want to use in your lesson.
- Look into the topic of the video and statements you use. Find out if any similar projects exist in your [country or region](#) and what your government's opinion is about the statements.

» 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 from. 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.
- While preparing from 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 and respectful.
4. Consider the possibility of setting a timer from the start of the activity.

» **Five minutes to complete the tasks (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 students when they only have a 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. 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 benefits of working together they have experienced at work. 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, 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. 25 MINUTES)**

ACTIVITY – #Europeans video and discussion with statements

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. To help them, they will get a few statements (after watching the video) about European integration and current European affairs. This way they can form an opinion and discuss concrete topics.

You as a practitioner (teacher, professor, 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. The video must 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 practical learners in tertiary education might easily relate to or find appealing: Life after mining (Poland), Future of fishing (Cyprus), The Fight for Truth (Lithuania), Watch this backflip (Latvia), How Rugby made me proud (Ireland), 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.
- Use the **slides provided** to introduce the statements during the discussion.
- There are five statements prepared. It's better to take your time for two of three statements, than to rush through all five. This way you can take the time to facilitate a good discussion.

» **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 first responses. This way you can make sure they stay focused on the subject.

» **Discussion on the basis of statements (max. 20 minutes)**

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

To support the discussion, you can use statements on European integration and current European affairs. Students can take a stance on the basis of a statement and a discussion will follow.

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. Tell the students you will now present some statements, which they can take a stance on. Mention that you will ask them to explain afterwards why this is their opinion.

Please note: There are five statements proposed. The first three are about European integration and being an EU citizen in general. The other two are about current affairs in the EU, and will change regularly. Make sure you include at least one of each type of statement in your discussion.

5. Present every statement on the screen using the **slides provided**. If possible, ask students to stand up and walk to one side of the classroom if they agree or walk to the other side if they disagree. After every student has chosen a position, ask some of them to explain their choice. Try to create a discussion between students with different opinions. Make sure everyone feels safe to contribute by moderating the discussion.

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

Statements

1. EU founding members: in which year did they join and what can you tell us about those countries?
2. I feel European.
3. The 27 EU countries need to work together even more.
4. The EU has more influence in the world than any EU country can have by acting alone.
5. The COVID-19 crisis in the EU can be solved more effectively if all EU countries work together.
6. It's up to EU leaders to find a common approach to fighting climate change.

6. When time's up, wrap the discussion 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 it's about issues that cross borders and 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.

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

STEP 4: END OF THE LESSON (MIN. 5 MINUTES)

1. 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?
2. Check if the message about working together has come across, by asking some students why the 27 member states work together.
3. 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.

EDITION NOTICE

This publication has been produced by the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union (GSC) and is intended for information purposes only. It does not involve the responsibility of the European Union institutions nor the member states.

For further information on the European Council and the Council of the European Union, please contact the GSC Public Information service:

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infopublic

Neither the Council of the European Union nor any person acting on behalf of the Council can be held responsible for the use that might be made of the information contained in this publication.

Although we make every effort to ensure that links in this publication are accurate and up to date, the GSC cannot take responsibility for links failing to work properly.

Print ISBN 978-92-824-8310-7 doi:10.2860/774852 QC-01-21-356-EN-C

PDF ISBN 978-92-824-8287-2 doi:10.2860/415658 QC-01-21-356-EN-N

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged. The reuse policy of the Council is implemented by the Council Decision (EU) 2017/1842 of 9 October 2017 on the open data policy of the Council and the reuse of Council documents (OJ L 262, 12.10.2017, p. 1).

© European Union, 2021

Cover: © 123.rf, Silantiy

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.



Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 175
1048 Bruxelles • Brussel
Belgique • België
Tel. +32 (0)2 281 61 11

www.consilium.europa.eu

[f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [in](#) /eucouncil

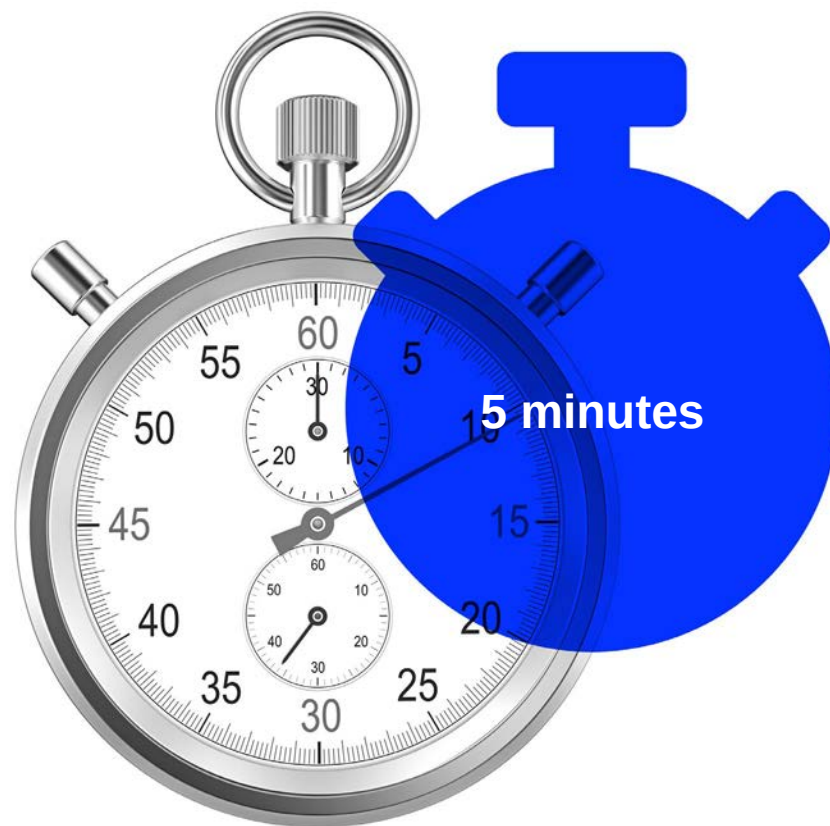
Working together in the European Union

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



The EU institutions



Right of initiative



Adopt EU legislation together



#EUROPEANS

Discussion on the basis of statements

“

I feel European.

“

The 27 EU countries
need to work together
even more.

“

The EU has more influence in the world than any EU country can have by acting alone.

“

It's up to EU leaders
to find a common approach
to fighting climate change.

“

The COVID-19 crisis
in the EU can be solved
more effectively if EU countries
work together.

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