

Lesson for the over 60s

Step-by-step **manual** for education professionals



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LESSON ESPECIALLY FOR THE OVER 60S.....	3
KEY MESSAGE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES	4
LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR PEOPLE AGED 60+	4
ABOUT THE LESSON.....	5
LESSON STRUCTURE AND DURATION.....	5
PREPARATION	5
MATERIALS AND LINKS	8
BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS.....	8
THE LESSON STEP BY STEP.....	9
INTRODUCTION	9
PART 1 - THE EU AND OUR COUNTRY	9
PART 2 - THEN AND NOW	12
PART 3 - THE INFLUENCE OF OUR COUNTRY IN THE EU.....	14
END OF THE LESSON.....	16

A lesson especially for the over 60s

This manual is part of a civic education package about the Council of the European Union/European Council. There are six categories of lesson to make sure there is a suitable lesson for every educational level in the EU.



The manual you are currently reading contains a lesson plan that has been specially developed for people aged 60+. The lesson is not suitable for individual use, but as a group activity. For instance, during a lifelong learning programme at a community centre or a programme for older people at a university.

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

- Pupils in primary education - ± 9 – 12 y/o
- Practical learners in (upper) secondary school - ± 12 – 19 y/o
- Theoretical learners in (upper) secondary school - ± 12 – 19 y/o
- Practical learners in tertiary education - ± 17 – 25 y/o
- Theoretical learners in tertiary education - ± 17 – 25 y/o

You can find all lesson plans belonging to the civic education package under the following link: <https://consilium.europa.eu/education>, as well as other educational materials if you would like to spend more time teaching about the EU.

Please note: always begin with this lesson first, as it introduces the EU in an accessible way for the target group.

This lesson serves the educational needs of people aged 60+ like Maria.

Maria (67) has worked in hotels and restaurants most of her life and retired a couple of years ago. She was married but never had any children. Since her husband passed away she has been looking for new people to meet and wants to take the time to learn new things.

Her ideal lesson is about something she can relate to. She finds new information and changes of perspective interesting, as long as it is not too much all at once. She needs time to think and to process new knowledge.

Maria would like to learn more about the EU so that she can join in conversations about politics. She wants to know what the EU does for older people and next generations.

Key messages and learning objectives

The civic education package developed by the Council of the European Union/European Council aims to make an impact by explaining the ‘why, what and how’ of the EU and its institutions. The focus is on issues close to the interests of citizens of all ages, and on letting them reflect on and discuss how the EU affects their lives. Older people should have a feeling of belonging when they talk about the EU.

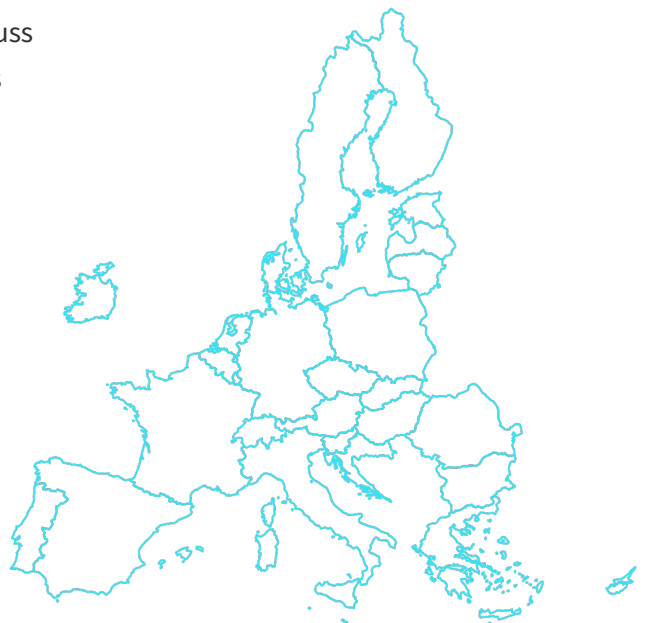
Many EU citizens take the EU and European cooperation for granted. The package gives them insights into why the 27 EU member states choose to work together. This might seem like a simple question, but it is important if you truly want to understand why certain issues can’t be dealt with at national level and why it is important to find solutions that work for all Europeans. That is the aim of the Council’s work. The member states negotiate until they find a solution that works for everyone. Solidarity is key.

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 objectives for people aged 60+

- During this lesson participants will gain a clear view of how their country and the EU are connected.
- During this lesson participants will recall, discuss and compare changes between their own lives and the lives of later generations in the EU.
- After the lesson participants will be able to explain what the EU does for their daily lives.
- After the lesson participants will understand how their own country influences the EU’s agenda.



About the lesson

Lesson structure and duration

The lesson is divided into three parts and can ideally be given in 50 - 60 minutes, depending on how much time you have. Here is a suggested timetable, followed by a step-by-step description of the materials and methods.

5 min.	Part 1: The EU and our country (10 min.)	Part 2: Then and now (20 min.)	Part 3: The influence of our country in the EU (20 min.)	5 min.
60 minutes				

Preparation

This lesson plan is ready for use by education professionals following the steps below. However, proper preparation is necessary. You can tailor the lesson to your group's background and educational needs. Make sure you prepare using the useful links provided, and don't hesitate to include your own knowledge or research.

How can you prepare?

Make sure you know how many participants and how much time you will have. If the lesson as described in the manual doesn't fit the number of participants or available lesson time, try to keep it as close to the original if you change anything in the lesson structure. You can use the slides provided to help keep to the suggested structure during the lesson.

Preparation for part 1: The EU and our country

Slides 1-5 are about the EU in general and they are provided (ready to use). Slides 6, 7 and 8 are there to make the connection with your national/regional/local situation and you will need to prepare them following the guidelines below.

Prepare slide 6: General information

Find and insert the following information as indicated:

- When did your country join the European Union?
(Find the information related to your country at https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/eu-enlargement_en)
- How many MEPs does your country have in the European Parliament?
(Find the information related to your country at <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meps/en/home>)
- Who is the EU Commissioner for your country? What is their policy area?
(Find the information related to your country at https://commissioners.ec.europa.eu/index_en)
- Which two national ministers (who the participants are likely to know) have a lot to do with EU policies? (For instance, the minister for foreign affairs, climate or agriculture).
- The name of your head of state (e.g. President) or government (e.g. Prime Minister) who attends EU summits (delete 'state/' or '/government' as appropriate).

The last two points are based on your current national political situation.

Prepare slide 7: The EU in our region

- Use the website 'What Europe does for me' to find projects in your region: <https://what-europe-does-for-me.europarl.europa.eu/en/region>
- Briefly describe one or two EU-funded projects that your participants will be interested in. You don't have to go into detail here; the aim is to show participants that the EU is always involved in something nearby.

Prepare slide 8: Current affairs

- Check your national news sources and choose a current affairs topic that concerns the EU. For example: EU legislation that has been translated into national policies, or a recent EU summit your head of state or government attended. Make sure you choose a topic that is not politically sensitive. The aim is to inform, not to provoke political debate.
- Insert a screenshot of an article with this news into the placeholder on the slide.

Preparation for part 2: Then and now

1. Make sure you check the slides provided and the topic/statement sheets before the lesson starts so that you have some idea about the statements the participants will be discussing.
2. Divide the participants into small groups. There are six topics/statements. If you have a lot of participants, you may assign the same topic/statement to more than one group. (If you have more than six groups, you can repeat some topics.) If you don't have very many participants, you can choose to use fewer than six topics.
3. Print the number of topic/statement sheets you will need.

Preparation for part 3: Our country's influence in the European Union

1. For this part of the lesson, participants will need electronic devices with internet access. This can be a smartphone, a tablet or a computer.
2. Decide whether you want participants to bring their own devices, or whether you will provide some or all of the devices for them. Prepare the devices depending on what you have opted to do for this part. There should be at least one electronic device per group of participants. If more are available, they can be used/distributed evenly among the groups.
3. Consult the 'The EU in Your Daily Life' website which the participants will be using: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/the-eu-in-your-daily-life/>
4. Consult the slides provided and the website about EU priorities to learn more: https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-priorities_en
5. On slide 15, insert the last time your country held the EU Presidency and the next time that it will.

Materials and links

- PowerPoint slides
- Sheets with topics/statements

The above materials can be found under the following link:

www.consilium.europa.eu/education

- Electronic devices to use for part 3 of the lesson (a smartphone, a tablet or a computer)

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](#)



The lesson step by step

Follow these steps to carry out the lesson with your group. **Please make sure you prepare properly first**, as described above.

Introduction max. 5 minutes

If it is a group you regularly teach, briefly welcome them and tell participants what the topic of the lesson today is, without going 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 what the topic of the lesson today is, without going into too much detail.

Please note: depending on how much time you have, decide whether you want to ask participants to quickly introduce themselves.



Part 1 - The EU and our country 10 minutes

Part 1 of the lesson is mainly about giving participants the information about the EU they need in order to see its connection to their own lives.

Seven slides are provided for this part. The first four are about the EU and its institutions in general, and the last three are specifically about the EU and your country. See the section on preparation above to **make sure you have inserted the correct information in these slides**.

The aim is to inform participants so they are prepared for parts 2 and 3 of the lesson.

Presenting the slides

Make sure you don't overdo it with the information you give on each slide. Below is a description of what it is important for the participants to understand per slide. You have about one minute per slide to present. You can also make this part more interactive by asking the participants what they know about each of the topics (slides) before presenting them with the information. You can use the optional questions below (under each slide) to make the presentation more interactive.

Please note: Make it clear to participants whether you prefer to answer questions during or after your presentation.

Slide 2: Finding solutions to cross-border problems

The European Union is a joint project for economic and political cooperation between 27 member states.

By working together, the member states stand stronger. The EU is a supranational political actor, which means that decision-making on certain topics is done together. Member states are responsible for implementing at national level the decisions that have been taken at EU level.

Slide 3: The origin of the EU and a timeline

The story of the EU has gone from cooperation in trading steel and coal to make sure there would "never again" be war on the continent, to the Union of values we know today.

Optional questions you can ask to make the session more interactive:

- What do you know about the origin of the EU?
- When did European integration start?.

Slide 4: The EU institutions, and what they do

European Council: heads of state or government, who decide on the political direction and priorities of the EU.

European Commission: the independent executive power of the EU. One commissioner per member state. Proposes new EU legislation.

European Parliament: "the voice of the people" in the EU. Democratic control of the legislative process. Shares legislative power with the Council of the European Union.

Council of the European Union: “the voice of the member states” in the EU. One minister from each state on ten different topics. Shares legislative power with the European Parliament.

Optional questions you can ask to make the session more interactive:

- In which institution do the heads of state or government meet?
- Which institution proposes EU legislation?
- Which EU institution is directly elected by citizens?
- Which EU institution represents the governments of the member states?

Slide 5: European legislation

When priorities are set by the European Council, the European Commission puts forward new legislation. Both the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union discuss, amend and vote on the proposed legislation, in several rounds if necessary. If the legislation is adopted, the European Commission is responsible for enforcing it and making sure the member states implement/ratify it national level.

Optional question you can ask to make the session more interactive

- Do you know how EU legislation is adopted?

Slide 6: General information about our country in the EU

Stats and figures as prepared by you.

Optional question you can ask to make the session more interactive

- When did our country join the European Union?

Slide 7: The EU in our region

Projects in the region you would like to highlight. Of course, a lot of topics are dealt with at international and national level. But as participants can see here, the EU is also close by. The EU funds many regional projects.

(Optional question you ask to make the session more interactive)

- Are you aware of any EU-funded projects in our region?

Slide 8: Current affairs in our country concerning the EU

Depending on the news article chosen during preparation.

Questions during/after your presentation

- Make sure you leave some time for additional questions. If you do not know the answer to specific questions, tell participants you will look it up later on and get back to them. You can do this while they work individually in part 3 of the lesson.
- Important note here: some participants might want to start a political discussion about the European Union or a certain topic. This part of the lesson is not the place to do this. If this happens, please tell the participants they will have the chance to talk about EU priorities in part 3 of the lesson.



Part 2 - Then and now 20 minutes

Participants will discuss in small groups. The aim is to recollect memories, share experiences and compare life before (or in the early days of) living in the European Union to the situation now. How is the life of their grandchildren or other young people they know different from when the participants were young themselves? The topics are about changes they have personally seen happening:

- **Peace:** Our grandchildren live in a more peaceful Europe than when we were their age
- **Infrastructure:** Infrastructure has improved since our country joined the EU
- **Economy:** Our economy has grown because of the EU membership
- **Travel/tourism:** Younger generations have seen more of Europe than I have

- **Protection of cultural heritage:** Our cultural heritage is protected by EU funding
- **Working and studying abroad:** I was able to work and/or study in another European country when I was young *or* Young people can work and study in other countries much more easily than we were able to (choose one of the two statements).

Create discussion groups (2 minutes)

1. During preparation, you decided how many groups you would need. You also printed the number of topic/statement sheets you need.
2. Divide participants into small groups and let them sit together. You can choose to divide them into groups yourself, but since you are working with adults they can also create groups themselves.
3. Give each group a topic/statement sheet.

Instructions (1 minute)

Tell participants they have about 10 – 15 minutes to discuss the topic and statement. Make sure they grasp the aim of the exercise: it is not so much about sharing their opinions on the statement, but more about the changes they have noticed between then and now. *How is the life of their grandchildren or other young people they know different from when the participants were young themselves, in relation to these topics?*

Group discussions (10 – 15 minutes)

1. Let the groups talk for 10 – 15 minutes, depending on the quality of the discussions. If the discussions are getting less fruitful after 10 minutes, choose to do the plenary reflection (as described below).
2. During this part of the lesson, stay active yourself. Walk around and make sure you intervene when a discussion goes off topic, goes into a negative spiral, or a participant is the only one talking in the group.

Plenary reflection (optional) or your own reflection (max. 5 minutes)

1. If you have the time, let some people reflect in plenary on the discussion they had in their groups. What were the biggest changes they had noticed between then and now on their topic? Make sure it says constructive and positive. If participants only share negative changes, ask if they or someone else can name a positive change as well.

2. If the discussions were fruitful enough to keep going for 15 minutes, end this part by giving your own quick reflection on big changes you heard between then and now from the different groups.



Part 3 - The influence of our country in the EU

 **20 min.**

Participants have now had a brief theoretical boost to their knowledge of the EU and shared their personal views on the differences between living then and now. In the last part, participants will have the opportunity to briefly explore the ‘The EU in your daily life’ website for themselves to find out how some EU topics directly affect their own lives.

Based on the information they gather, they will be asked to make a personal ranking of what the EU should focus on in the future, out of ten topics.

Participants will then discuss in plenary and discover if there are similarities between the ranking they made and the EU’s priorities for 2024 – 2029. This way participants will find out how EU priorities are set, and how their country is (politically) involved in shaping the EU’s strategic agenda.



Participants need a device for this part of the lesson. Website to use: [The EU in your daily life](#) (there is a QR code to use on the slides).

Instructions (2 minutes)

1. Tell participants they can now get their devices or sit at a computer.
2. The aim of the next activity is for participants to see for themselves that what is important to them or to their country finds its way onto EU's agenda and into its work. The EU does not set its own agenda, it is actually based on what the member states see happening at home and find it important to work together on.
3. Help participants navigate to the 'The EU in your daily life' website. Tell participants they have about ten minutes to explore the website.

Exploring the website (8 minutes)

1. Let participants explore the website on their own. Assist participants who need some guidance.
2. Make it clear that this activity is just to get an impression of what the EU does that affects their daily lives, and that they can take the time to explore what interests them the most.

Please note: If you have extra time, let participants use this time to explore further.

Ranking your own priorities (3 minutes)

1. Ask participants to stop what they are doing and put away their devices. If they want to keep exploring the website, tell them you will share the link afterwards.
2. Show the slide with the eight topics from the website:

Food	Purchases	Internet	Life outdoors
Health	Career	Money	Travels

And two additional topics:

Values	Security
--------	----------

3. Ask participants to choose a top three out of these 10 topics. What topics do they think should be high on the EU's list of priorities?

EU priorities for 2024 – 2029 (7 minutes)

1. Use the slides to explain how the EU agenda is set. Make sure the participants grasp the general idea that the political agenda and strategy

are set by the EU27 leaders in the European Council, which their own head of state or government is a part of.

2. Then show the slide with the EU priorities for 2024 – 2029. Ask your participants if they recognise any of their own top three priorities in there. Let some of them briefly respond.
3. Point out that all 10 topics (and more) are somewhere in the three main priorities:
 - A free and democratic Europe: values, internet, career, health, purchases etc.
 - A strong and secure Europe: security, money, purchases, travels etc.
 - A prosperous and competitive Europe: money, *career, life outdoors, food etc.*
4. Conclude with the message that the European Union is a joint project for economic and political cooperation between 27 member states that share the same values and choose to work together to stand stronger.
5. In addition: It will give your participants an interesting insight to briefly mention the rotating presidency of the European Union. You can show the video on slide 15 (1m49).

Please note: There is also a lesson about the rotating presidency in the civic education package.

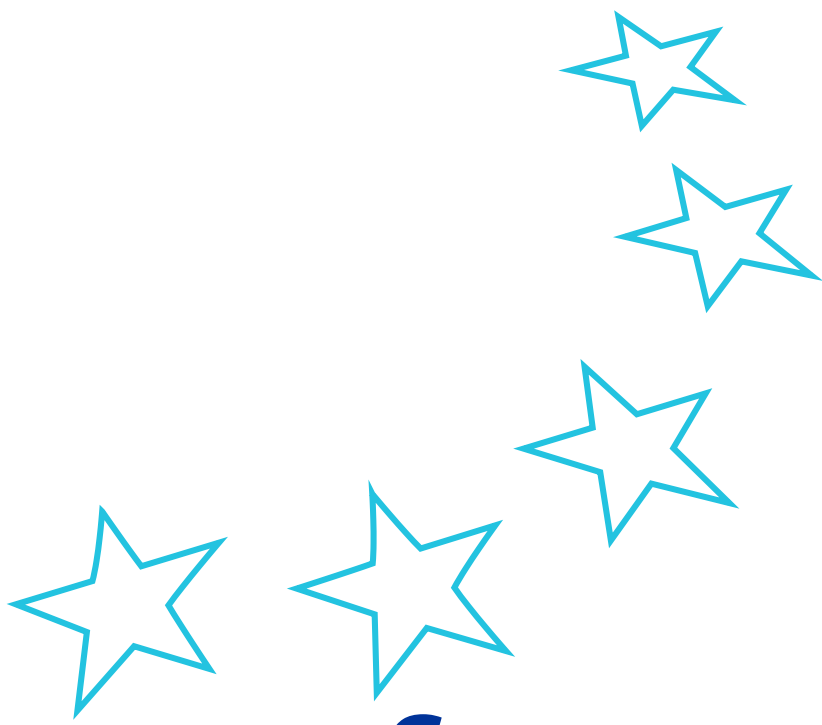
End of the lesson min. 5 minutes

1. Ask some participants what they have done during this lesson. Can anyone tell you something they have learned? What do you know now that you didn't know before?
2. Check whether the message about working together has landed by asking some participants why the 27 member states are working together.
3. Answer some last questions participants might have.



*Our grandchildren live in a
more peaceful Europe than
when we were their age.*

*Our grandchildren live in a
more peaceful Europe than
our families or our countries
did 100 years ago.*



Infrastructure

*Infrastructure has improved
since our country
joined the EU.*



Economy

*Our economy has grown
because of EU membership.*



Travelling, Tourism

*Younger generations have
seen more of Europe
than I have.*



Cultural heritage

*Our cultural heritage is
protected by EU funding.*



Working and studying

*I was able work and/or study
in another European country
when I was young.*



Working and studying

*Young people can work and
study in other countries
much more easily than we
were able to.*