

## European Citizenship - An Introduction

The European Union came into being in its simplest form in 1951 when six countries (France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) signed the Treaty of Paris to initiate the European Coal and Steel Community. In 1957 the Treaty of Rome was signed by the same, above named members and the European Economic Community came into being. Today the European Union has 28 member states, it covers over 4 million km and has 503 million inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

Each and every one of these inhabitants has, as a member of the EU, undeniable rights. They have the right to freedom of movement within the EU, to live, work and trade where they see fit. They also have the right to participate in the political life of the EU especially in the European elections which take place every five years. These rights are vital to European integration and it is only when European citizens are fully informed of them, that they can be active in the future development of the Union. This is especially important now owing to ongoing changes in social and cultural diversity as well as to the rise of Euro-sceptical groups such as UKIP (GB), AfD (Germany) and the Five Star Movement of Italy to name but a few.

As Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth in the European Union says, "In order to increase engagement and participation, people must be equipped with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes. Civic competences can enable individuals to participate fully in civic life but they must be based on sound knowledge of social values and political concepts and structures, as well as a commitment to active democratic participation in society."<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore of utmost importance to encourage the youth of today to play an educated role in the development of Europe and to be active citizens. For this reason European Citizenship is taught as part of the national curricula in most of the European states.

A certain lack of knowledge regarding the European Union is to be found in all age groups and irrespective of national origin. Many citizens do not currently support the aims of the Union, leading to some countries, most notably Great Britain, to actively dispute policies made by the institutions of Europe and indeed their own role as a member of the EU.

This teaching unit deals with some of the questions which most frequently arise in relation to the development of the EU. Some of these questions are:

- What rights do I have as a European citizen?
- Do I consider myself to be European?
- How does Europe affect my life?
- What are the positive and negative aspects of my country belonging to Europe?
- Should the EU continue to grow?
- Do all membership states enjoy the same rights?

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<sup>1</sup> [http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/living/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/living/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> [http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/139EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/139EN.pdf)

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## Quiz - European Citizenship

1. **How many countries are currently in the European Union?**
  - a) 28
  - b) 29
  - c) 12
  - d) 23
2. **How many official and working languages are recognized in the European Union?**
  - a) 29
  - b) 24
  - c) 30
  - d) 25
3. **Who is the current president of the European Parliament?**
  - a) Jean-Claude Juncker
  - b) Martin Schulz
  - c) Angela Merkel
  - d) David Cameron
4. **When was the original EU organization 'The European Steel and Coal Community' founded?**
  - a) 1952
  - b) 1945
  - c) 1949
  - d) 1989
5. **How many stars are on the official European Union flag?**
  - a) 12
  - b) 15
  - c) 28
  - d) 34
6. **When did Romania and Bulgaria join the European Union?**
  - a) 1994
  - b) 2003
  - c) 2007
  - d) 2010
7. **How many countries currently use the Euro as their official currency?**
  - a) 18
  - b) 28
  - c) 19
  - d) 22
8. **Where does the European Commission hold its Committee meetings?**
  - a) Frankfurt am Main
  - b) Brussels
  - c) Amsterdam
  - d) Geneva
9. **When do you need to register as a jobseeker in another EU country?**
  - a) Within 1 month
  - b) Within 4 months
  - c) Within 6 months
  - d) Within 12 months

## Quiz - European Citizenship

**10. How often are elections made to the European Parliament?**

- a) Every 5 years
- b) Every 2 years
- c) Every 4 years
- d) Every 6 years

## Quiz - European Citizenship

- How many countries are currently in the European Union?  
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- How many official and working languages are recognized in the European Union?  
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- Who is the current president of the European Parliament?  
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- When was the original EU organization 'The European Steel and Coal Community' founded?  
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- Where does the European Commission hold its Committee meetings?  
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- When do you need to register as a jobseeker in another EU country?  
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a) Within 1 month  
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## Quiz - Name the Member States of the European Union

1. Print out a map of the European Union showing, but not naming, the member countries and their capital cities. (eg. <http://lizardpoint.com/geography/europe-quiz.php>)
2. Distribute the map to students and see how many EU member states they can name.
3. The answers can be reviewed as part of a class discussion.

## Key - Map of Member States of Europe

1. A map showing the European member states and their capital cities can be found here:  
[http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/europe\\_map.htm](http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/europe_map.htm)

## Working with a text - Vocabulary Tasks

### Tasks

1. Students receive the text 'Background to European institutions'.

(Link: Page 5/6 - [www.activecitizensfe.org.uk/uploads/2/2/9/1/22910514/eu\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.activecitizensfe.org.uk/uploads/2/2/9/1/22910514/eu_booklet.pdf))

2. Skim the following text marking key words. What is the text about?

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3. Read the text in more detail.

4. Look at the context of these words and phrases in the text and use the guessing techniques you know to work out their meaning. Write down your ideas, and then check your answers with a dictionary.

a) code of rights

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b) fledgling

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c) abolished

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d) applied

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e) reinforcing its core values.

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## **Graffiti Writing - What does it mean to be an EU Citizen?**

### **Instructions**

You will find a sheet of chart paper and coloured markers on each table. A question or statement has been written on each sheet of paper. The task of your group is for each of you to write your opinion in the form of graffiti (words, phrases, statements, pictures) on your topic.

- Work silently; do not discuss your ideas with other members of the group.
- Each of you must make a contribution.
- Please pass your sheet of chart paper on to the next group when your teacher asks you to.
- Add new graffiti to your new topic.

When all groups have commented on each topic, your teacher will ask you to read the comments, to discuss them and summarize / categorize them to then be able to present the results in the form of a short presentation to the rest of the class.

## Topics for Graffiti Writing (Teacher's List)

1. What key rights do I have as a European Union citizen?
2. Do I consider myself to be European?
3. How does the Europe Union affect my life?
4. What are the positive aspects of my country's membership of the European Union?
5. What are the negative aspects of my country's membership of the European Union?
6. Should the European Union continue to expand?
7. Do all membership states enjoy the same rights?

### Instructions for the Teacher

Divide the class into 7 groups. Each group has a piece of chart paper, pens etc. and 3 to 5 minutes to write individual opinions on the designated topic. The students are then instructed to pass their chart paper on to the next group, before beginning to complete the 'new' poster with additional comments.

Once the posters have been returned to the original group, the group then begins to summarize / categorize the information in order to present it to the class.

Do not discard the graffiti posters after the lesson. At a later date students can be asked to add newly acquired knowledge to the posters which could then be presented in the form of a market place.

## **Possible Aspects: What does it mean to be an EU Citizen?**

### **What key rights do I have as a European Union citizen?**

- The right to travel within the European Union
- The right to live within the European Union
- The right to vote in European Parliament elections
- The right to be a candidate in European Parliament elections

### **Do I consider myself to be European?**

- Language plays a key role in personal / national / European identity
- Culture impacts on a personal / national / European view of the world
- Contact with other European Union countries changes our perception
- Loyalty to a particular city, region or country may challenge the notion of being European

### **How does the European Union affect my life?**

- Education: the opportunity to study in another European Union member state
- Work: the right to work in other European Union countries
- Travel: the freedom to travel within the European Union
- Transport: the integrated rail, road and air transport systems in the European Union

### **What are the positive aspects of my country's membership of the European Union?**

- Access to a free-trade area
- Larger pool of potential employees
- Free movement of people, goods and capital
- Closer cultural links to other European countries
- Better transport links (rail, road, air)
- Economic support (eg. EU subsidies)

## **Possible Aspects: What does it mean to be an EU Citizen?**

### **What are the negative aspects of my country's membership of the European Union?**

- Exposure to increased competition inside the EU market
- Financial contributions to the European Union's budget required of member states
- Challenges associated with integrating new arrivals from other EU countries
- Decision making power of national governments ceded to EU institutions

### **Should the European Union continue to expand?**

- Increasing the number of member states could help promote peace in Europe
- Adding new member countries to the common market may expand trade opportunities
- Economic, social, political integration of new member states will become increasingly complex
- Inequality within different regions of the European Union may result in civil unrest

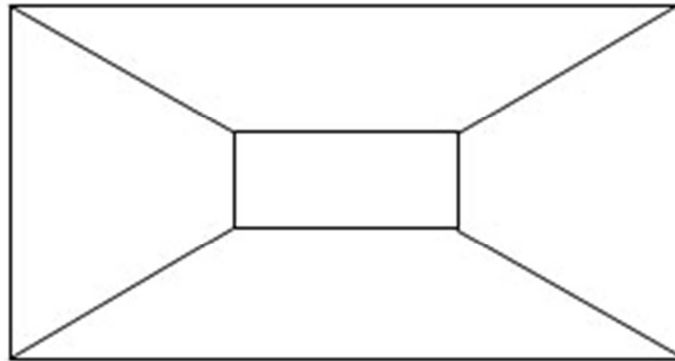
### **Do all membership states enjoy the same rights?**

- The fundamental rights of the EU are guaranteed for all EU citizens (see above)
- European Union citizenship should apply equally to all EU citizens
- Citizenship of EU member countries is not replaced by European Union citizenship
- The Treaty of Lisbon guarantees the respect of core European Union values including the rule of law, human dignity, equality and democracy
- Economic conditions in EU member states do, however, affect the standard of living
- Some states have imposed administrative requirements affecting free of movement in the EU

## Placemat Activity

You will find a sheet of A3 paper and coloured markers on each table.

Please divide your sheet into sections as follows



Write the following question in the rectangle in the centre of the poster.

‘The advantages of the European Union?’

Write one of the following topics in each of the remaining fields.

- For me at work
- For me at home
- When travelling abroad
- For my country

The task of your group is for each of you to write your opinion on the topic in your field.

When your teacher instructs you to do so, turn your paper so that you can add comments to your new field.

When each member of the group has written comments in each field, discuss these comments and decide as a group on the five most significant responses and write them in the centre of the map.

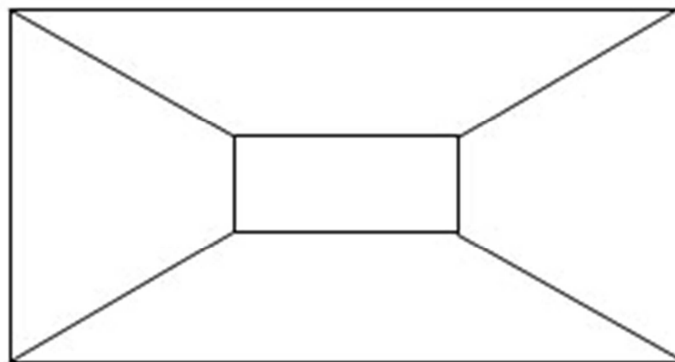
You will then be asked to present your findings to the rest of the class.

## **Placemat Activity - Instructions for the Teacher**

Divide the class into small groups of four people.

Each group should have a sheet of A3 paper and a marker.

Each group should divide his sheet of paper into sections as follows. The number of fields can be adapted depending on the size of the group.



Students write the topic to be discussed in the central field (leaving room to write final comments!).

An aspect related to the main topic should be written in each field.

The individual students then write their responses within their allotted field in one of the outside sections.

When each group member has recorded his or her opinion in each of the fields, the group decides collectively on the five most significant responses and records them in the central field of the placemat.

Results are presented / discussed in the class as a whole.

## **Internet Research**

The students are required to ascertain what it means to be a European Citizen.

Each group of students researches an aspect from the sheet "What does it mean to be a European Citizen? (Possible aspects)"

### **The following links might be helpful:**

Video: 'How does the EU affect you?'

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5-1nf0Lp1g>

Various video clips concerning Europe and the European Parliament

<http://www.europarl.tv.europa.eu/en/home.aspx>

Newspaper articles e.g.

Reasons why Great Britain should stay in the EU.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/the-inout-question-why-britain-should-stay-in-the-eu-9213131.html>

Reasons why Great Britain should leave the EU

<http://www.betteroffout.net/the-case/10-reasons-wed-be-better-off-out/>

Any other links relating to the major British newspapers e.g.

- The Guardian
- The Independent
- The Telegraph
- The Sun

## **Working with texts (newspaper articles / Think-Pair-Share)**

Students compare articles from two different newspapers on the topic of the right to freedom of movement. They find arguments in support of and against migration from Bulgaria and Rumania to Great Britain. Which political angle is presented in each newspaper clipping?

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/immigration/10493503/385000-Romanians-and-Bulgarians-will-come-to-Britain-report-warns.html>

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jan/03/romanian-bulglarian-uk-immigration-hysteria-far-right>



## **A Debate - Freedom of movement in the European Union needs reform!'**

1. Debating techniques (A variety of sources regarding the teaching of debating are available online. A good site is, for example: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Krieger-Debate.html>)
2. Topic: 'Freedom of movement in the European Union needs reform!'
3. A BBC article is used as the basis for the discussion
4. Students summarize the key points from the article in small groups
5. Teacher organizes the students into (affirmative/negative) groups
6. Students prepare arguments / counter-arguments supporting their side
7. A formal debate is held (see point 1 above)

## **A Skype interview with an EU country**

1. Teacher establishes contact with an EU country (eg. eTwinning, partner schools)
2. A student interview is organized (eg. using Skype)
3. Students brainstorm possible questions / points of interest
4. Students prepare questions in small groups
5. Teacher reviews questions and provides advice for changes where necessary
6. Possible starting points for discussion may include:
  - i. Intercultural questions:
    1. How do the Bulgarians/Germans see themselves / each other (stereotypes)?
    2. How do you see the development or loss of culture in Bulgaria / Germany?
    3. How 'European' do you feel in your home country?
  - ii. Dreams for the future:
    1. Where do you see yourself in 15 years' time? (eg. work/study)
    2. Professional dreams
    3. Consequences of working abroad for:
      - a. Germans/Bulgarians
      - b. individuals/countries
  - iii. Any other relevant questions that the students may wish to ask.

## Conclusions / Feedback

The following aspects could be considered:

- What do we gain from the EU?
- Reasons why Great Britain / any country should stay in the EU.

Results obtained from the lesson plan activities (graffiti posters, placemat activity, Think-Pair-Share activity, the debate, Skype interviews) should be taken into account.

Results could be presented in the form of a market place / newspaper wall.