



## **EUROPE IN FOCUS**

### **European civic education for high school**

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*EU & YOU - JEAN MONNET EU LEARNING INITIATIVE project number 101084891*



Co-funded by  
the European Union

## FOREWORD

This dossier aims to meet the need for creating a basic curriculum for the teaching of European civic education in high schools. For many years, teachers have been encouraged to integrate elements of the history and institutions of the EU into their curricula, even without specific training in this area.

In these pages, we have gathered the educational experience of teachers and students from the Liceo Statale Angela Veronese in the first year of implementing the project during the academic year 2022/2023. This inaugural year saw a close collaboration with Prof. Vincent Della Sala, Director of the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at the University of Trento, to whom our heartfelt thanks go. The two seminars held by Prof. Della Sala at our high school in the first part of the academic year allowed teachers to deepen their knowledge of certain historical, cultural, and institutional aspects of the EU and to look at current EU policies. These meetings inspired the development of European civic education teaching units for the third and fourth-year classes of our high school. The concluding moment of the project was the realization of two simulations of a Council of the EU at the San Vigilio Foundation in Ossana (TN), in which two groups of twenty selected students from the third and fourth years participated.

The spirit that guided our work was to promote an objective knowledge of the EU, highlighting some historical-cultural and institutional aspects, without neglecting any criticisms and contradictions. We believe that addressing the institutional complexity of our time requires a broad, curious perspective, free from preconceived closures. In this respect, working with adolescent learners offers a stimulating and authentic opportunity for dialogue since young people often tend to avoid rigid ideological approaches to problems, showing a preference for concrete and pragmatic solutions.

Among the key questions that guided our research were: What is the EU, and what is its origin? What are the main stages in the history of European integration? What are its borders, characteristics, institutions, and key figures? What is the purpose of the EU, and what challenges does it face? Why is it crucial for a high school student to know about it? What does it mean today to be European citizens?

During the first year of implementing the project, we found that, for a secondary school student, European integration is a tangible reality that directly impacts their daily life. Within the European Union, young people are offered many opportunities; they can easily travel for study, vacation, or work, enjoy guaranteed health coverage, use the euro as currency, benefit from free-roaming internet, and participate in the Erasmus program to study abroad.

However, it is crucial to emphasize that this seemingly obvious framework could be taken for granted by new generations if not understood in the historical context and the *raison d'être* of European integration. Consequently, we deemed it essential to initiate the educational process starting from the geography of the EU and the historical context in which the idea of a united Europe took shape.

It is worth noting that studying the evolution of the European Union offers a unique opportunity to explore history from the second half of the 20th century, allowing the discussion of topics in contemporary history often overlooked in school programs due to a lack of time. Furthermore, this approach opens the door to the discovery of historically significant figures who are unknown to many. The history of the EU is, in fact, the story of men and women who strongly believed in the idea of a united Europe and dedicated their lives to its construction.

From an educational perspective, studying contemporary history through the protagonists who shaped it proved to be extremely motivating and exciting for the students. In this regard, the visit to

Houjarray, France, by a third-year class from our high school in March 2023, offered us the opportunity to discover the human and political story of Jean Monnet, a figure whose name is widely present in the toponymy of our cities (there is also a square named after him in Montebelluna), but who remains relatively unknown. The students learned that it was thanks to his insight and diligent diplomatic work that France and Germany began the economic cooperation that would gradually lead to the creation of what we now call the European Union.

In outlining our didactic proposal, we sought to promote active learning that allows students to construct meaning firsthand, building on the knowledge they already possess. In the proposed activities, students not only receive information and knowledge through the usual methods of listening and reading but learn through personal experiences, applying what they have learned from texts and teachers and reflecting on it. We gave ample space to simulation games and project work, promoting group work and openness to other ideas and perspectives. By interacting with others and taking on the roles of representatives of institutions, they experience how a complex decision-making process unfolds in practice. They learn that the art of negotiation not only requires competence in the subject matter and management of relational dynamics but also the ability to adapt to complex and ever-changing scenarios. Negotiating means effectively managing conflicts, understanding others' perspectives, and formulating compromise strategies that are advantageous for all parties involved.

A final consideration concerns the materials used. Most of the resources referenced in the dossier are available on the European Union portal, accessible for online consultation and downloadable for free for informational purposes. In particular, the websites of the Council and the Commission, along with the Learning Corner, provide excellent starting points for teachers, allowing them to delve into topics suitable for different audiences. The EU publications website also offers a shipping service for interested citizens.

Our work cannot be considered complete or exhaustive, nor can it be measured against editorial projects of much broader scope and depth. The purpose of our curriculum is, if anything, to stimulate the interest of students in delving into themes and topics independently, seeking to construct meanings that go beyond the common perception of excessive complexity often associated with the EU. We want students not only to acquire knowledge but to feel fully European citizens, inspired by a sense of belonging to a political project as ambitious as it is improvable.

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## UNIT 1

### MAPS OF EUROPE

Through the analysis, comparison, and reflection on maps of the EU, the Eurozone, the Schengen Agreement, and the EFTA, students develop a basic understanding of the various levels of integration and cooperation among European states. The main goal of this first unit is to introduce students to what the European Union is and dispel the myth of the so-called '*euromess*,' providing conceptual tools and knowledge to objectively and informatively analyse the political, social, and economic complexities of Europe. Furthermore, the teaching unit aims to foster a more nuanced and informed perspective, encouraging critical thinking and understanding of the challenges and opportunities that characterize the European Union and its member states.

### OBJECTIVES (Knowledge and Skills)

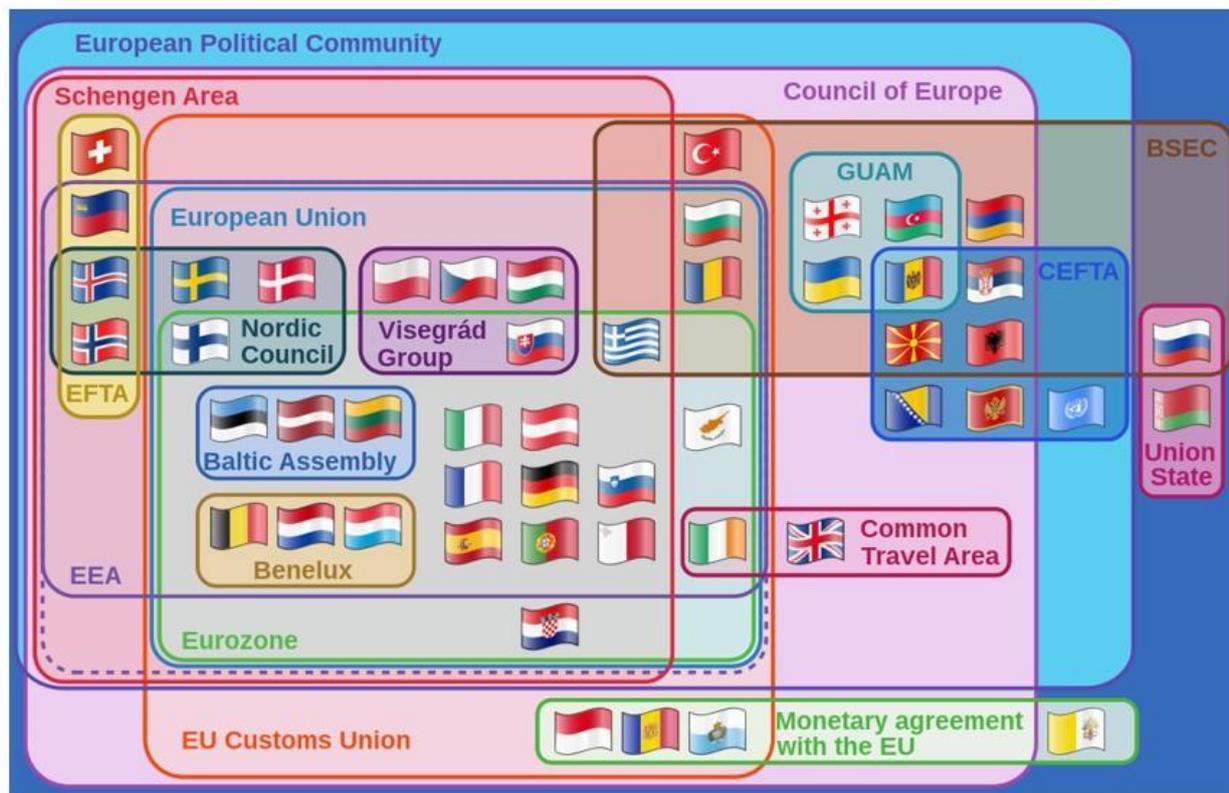
At the end of the teaching unit, students will be able to:

- I. Gain a basic knowledge of the European Union, its geography, and the main characteristics of the current 27 member states;
- II. Understand the main forms of integration and cooperation in Europe (with particular reference to the EU, the Eurozone, the Schengen Agreement, and the EFTA);
- III. Understand and reflect on the definition of the European Union and its institutional uniqueness;
- IV. Distinguish between cooperation and integration among states;
- V. Understand the complex nature of state relations;
- VI. Develop critical thinking.

### WARM-UP - DISPELLING THE MYTH OF "EUROMESS"

The first activity aims to introduce the theme of international organizations, stimulate students' reflection on the complexity of interconnections and overlaps between them, and promote the exploration of possible causes. Some examples of these causes include the varying economic situations of each country, the different economic interests at stake, the uniqueness of the historical path taken by each country, as well as the need to cooperate to address global challenges such as climate change and migration.

The lesson begins by presenting the following diagram from Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Supranational\\_European\\_Bodies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:Supranational_European_Bodies)), in which the main existing European multinational organizations are highlighted. In a short brainstorming session, the teacher will read the names and acronyms of the different bodies, clarify their meaning, and ask students to comment on the image, potentially exploring some hyperlinked connections (the diagram is clickable).



Most likely, students will highlight the intricate "interlocking game" that characterizes the relationships between different organizations. In this regard, it might be interesting (and add a touch of irony and levity) to introduce the famous quote by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in 1998, "To understand Europe, you have to be a genius – or French" (<https://www.economist.com/special-report/1999/10/21/my-continent-right-or-wrong>). On several occasions, Albright has also used the term 'Euromess' to refer to the complex relationships between states (*Homelands*, T. Garton Ash, page 39, The Bodley Head London 2023).

The teacher will welcome the students' comments and invite them to provide their rationale, possibly emphasizing that the quote seems to play with irony on the idea that understanding Europe requires either an exceptionally brilliant mind or a special affinity with French culture. The comment, perhaps even somewhat provocatively, prompts reflection on the complexity of Europe while suggesting its cultural richness.

## PROCEDURE

### PHASE 1 – GEOGRAPHY OF THE EU

The students are divided into groups and receive a blank map of Europe. Using their knowledge and personal experience, each group identifies European countries and their capitals on the map, attempting to trace the borders of the EU. The teacher then shows the current map ([https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn\\_002.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn_002.pdf)), and in the meantime, the students correct any errors.

The teacher initiates a brief discussion with the students, stimulating them with some questions. Here are some sample questions: What considerations can we make about the geographical extent of the

EU? How many countries are there in Europe? How many countries are in the EU, and has this number changed over time? What do you know about the various EU member states? Have you visited any of them? What do you know about Brexit?

## QUIZ

Working in groups, students gather information about the 27 EU member states from the publication "EU Facts and Figures" ([https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/european-union-facts-and-figures\\_en](https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/learning-materials/european-union-facts-and-figures_en)) and the webpage containing country profiles ([https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en)). Due to the considerable amount of information to memorize, the reading and consultation work can start in class and continue at home. Once back in class, the teacher engages the groups in a quiz game based on what they've studied.

The following link offers an interesting quiz in which students can choose their level of competence, beginner or expert.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20200624STO81902/quiz-test-your-eu-knowledge>

# Quiz: test your EU knowledge

EU affairs - 20-07-2020 - 13:54



## PHASE 2 – WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN UNION?

The teacher shows the updated map of the EU, available at the link ([https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn\\_002.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn_002.pdf)), and asks students, divided into small groups, to formulate a definition of the European Union by answering two questions: What is the EU? Do you know its symbols? Students are given a few minutes to discuss among themselves and gather their ideas. The various proposals are then discussed in plenary. In this initial phase, the teacher only welcomes the students' proposals and transcribes them on the whiteboard.



The lesson continues with the teacher's presentation. Specifically, drawing from the EU publications *Europe in 12 lessons* by Pascal Fontaine (available online at <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-in-12-lessons/en/#chap00-title>) and *EU & me* available online at <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-and-me/en/>.

The teacher explains to the students the distinctive aspects of the European Union, emphasizing its uniqueness in the global scenario and comparing it with other forms of association among states (e.g., the UN or NATO). The teacher should emphasize the following aspects:

**- THE AIMS THE EU HAD FROM THE VERY BEGINNING;**

***Aims***

*The aims of the European Union within its borders are:*

- *promote peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens*
- *offer freedom, security and justice without internal borders, while also taking appropriate measures at its external borders to regulate asylum and immigration and prevent and combat crime*
- *establish an internal market*
- *achieve sustainable development based on balanced economic growth and price stability and a highly competitive market economy with full employment and social progress*
- *protect and improve the quality of the environment*
- *promote scientific and technological progress*
- *combat social exclusion and discrimination*
- *promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, and protection of the rights of the child*
- *enhance economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU countries*
- *respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity*
- *establish an economic and monetary union whose currency is the euro*

*The aims of the EU within the wider world are:*

- uphold and promote its values and interests
- contribute to peace and security and the sustainable development of the Earth
- contribute to solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights
- strict observance of international law

The EU's aims are laid out in article 3 of the [Lisbon Treaty](#).

Taken from [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/principles-and-values/aims-and-values_en)

- **THE SYMBOLS OF THE EU**, see the link [https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/symbols_en)

### - THE CONCEPT OF INTEGRATION VERSUS COOPERATION;

*Integration and international cooperation are related concepts but involve different approaches to the relationship between countries.*

**Integration:** *Integration refers to the process by which different states or regions come together to form a broader and interconnected structure. The European Union is an example of integration, where various European countries have chosen to collaborate more closely, sharing aspects such as economic policies, laws, and, in some cases, a common currency (the euro). Integration involves greater interdependence and the creation of common institutions governing the integrated area.*

**International Cooperation:** *On the other hand, international cooperation involves collaboration between sovereign states without necessarily involving an absorption of their sovereignty. States cooperate on specific issues, such as trade, the environment, security, or global health, but maintain their national identity and autonomy. Cooperation agreements can be bilateral (between two countries) or multilateral (involving more than two countries). The UN is an example of international cooperation.*

*In summary, integration involves a deeper merger and a sharing of sovereignty, while international cooperation relates to collaboration on specific issues without necessarily involving a broader political or economic unity.*

### - EU'S EXCLUSIVE COMPETENCES, CONCURRENT COMPETENCES, AND SUPPORTING COMPETENCES;

*The European Union (EU) only has the competences (powers) conferred upon it by the treaties (principle of attribution). According to this principle, the EU can only act within the limits of the competences granted to it by the EU member states in the treaties to achieve the objectives of the treaties. Competences not attributed to the EU in the treaties remain the prerogative of the member states.*

*The Treaty of Lisbon clarifies the division of competences between the EU and its member states. These competences are divided into three main categories:*

1. **-Exclusive competences of the EU;**
2. **-Concurrent competences; and**
3. **-Supporting competences.**

### *Three main types of competences*

#### ***Exclusive Competences of the EU [Article 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)]:***

*1. These are the areas where only the EU can legislate and adopt legally binding acts. EU member states can only do so autonomously if the EU grants them the authority to make such acts enforceable. The EU has exclusive competence in the following areas:*

- *Customs union*
- *Definition of competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market*
- *Monetary policy for eurozone countries*
- *Conservation of biological resources of the sea within the common fisheries policy*
- *Common commercial policy*

*2. Concurrent Competences (Article 4 of the TFEU): The EU and its member states can legislate and adopt legally binding acts. Member states exercise their competence where the EU does not or has decided not to exercise it. Concurrent competence between the EU and its member states applies to the following areas:*

- *Internal market*
- *Social policies (but only for aspects specifically defined in the treaty)*
- *Economic, social, and territorial cohesion (regional policies)*
- *Agriculture and fisheries (except for the conservation of biological resources of the sea)*
- *Environment*
- *Consumer protection*
- *Transport*
- *Trans-European networks*
- *Energy*
- *Area of freedom, security, and justice*
- *Common security problems in public health (limited to aspects defined in the TFEU)*
- *Research, technological development, and space*
- *Development cooperation and humanitarian aid.*

*3. Support Competences (Article 6 of the TFEU): The EU can only support, coordinate, or complement the actions of its member states. Legally binding acts of the EU must not require the harmonization of laws or regulations of member states. Support competences relate to the following strategic sectors:*

- *Protection and improvement of human health*
- *Industry*
- *Culture*
- *Tourism*
- *Education, vocational training, youth, and sport*
- *Civil protection*
- *Administrative cooperation.*

#### ***Special Competences:***

*The EU can take measures to ensure that member states coordinate their economic, social, and employment policies at the EU level.*

*The common foreign and security policy of the EU has specific institutional aspects, such as the limited involvement of the European Parliament and the European Commission in the decision-making process and the exclusion of any legislative activity. This policy is defined and implemented by the European Council (composed of heads of state or government of the member states) and the Council of the European Union (composed of representatives from each member state at the ministerial level). The President of the European Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy represent the Union in matters of common foreign and security policy.*

### **Summary of:**

*Article 2 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union — Categories and Sectors of Competence of the Union*

*Taken from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/division-of-competences-within-the-european-union.html>*

## **- THE PRINCIPLE OF ATTRIBUTION, SUBSIDIARITY, AND PROPORTIONALITY;**

### ***Principle of Attribution***

*According to this fundamental principle of European Union law, established in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union, the Union acts exclusively within the limits of the competences attributed to it by the Member States in the treaties. These competences are defined in Articles 2 to 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. Competences not attributed to the Union in the treaties remain the prerogative of the Member States.*

*While the principle of attribution regulates the limits of the Union's competences, the exercise of these competences is based on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union.*

***Proportionality:*** *The content and scope of Union action cannot exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the treaties.*

***Subsidiarity:*** *In areas within its non-exclusive competences, the Union can only act if, and to the extent that, the objective of a proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States but can be better achieved at the Union level.*

*Adapted from:*

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:conferral#:~:text=In%20virt%C3%B9%20di%20tale%20principio,da%20gli%20Stati%20membri%20nei%20trattati>

## **- HOW TO JOIN THE EU AND HOW TO LEAVE IT;**

*The Treaty on European Union establishes that any European country can apply for membership if it respects the democratic values of the EU and is committed to promoting them. The first step is for*

the country to meet the key criteria for membership, which were primarily defined at the 1993 Copenhagen European Council and are thus referred to as the "**Copenhagen criteria**." Countries wishing to join must have:

- Stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.
- A functioning market economy and the ability to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU.
- The capacity to take on and implement effectively the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic, and monetary union.

The EU must also be capable of absorbing new members. In the case of Western Balkan countries, additional conditions for accession have been set out in the so-called "stabilization and association process," primarily concerning regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations.

Taken from

[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/conditions-membership\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/conditions-membership_en)

### **Withdrawal from the European Union**

Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union provides for a mechanism for the voluntary and unilateral withdrawal of a country from the European Union (EU).

A member state of the EU that wishes to withdraw must notify its intention to the European Council. The European Council is then obliged to provide guidelines for the conclusion of an agreement that establishes the terms of withdrawal for that country.

This agreement is concluded on behalf of the EU by the Council, which decides by a qualified majority, subject to approval by the European Parliament.

The EU treaties cease to apply to the concerned country from the date of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement or two years after the notification of withdrawal. The European Council may decide to extend this period.

Any country that has left the EU can request to rejoin. However, it would still be subject to the accession procedure.

Taken from

[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ENIT/TXT/?from=IT&uri=LEGISSUM%3Awithdrawal\\_clause](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ENIT/TXT/?from=IT&uri=LEGISSUM%3Awithdrawal_clause)

### **- HOW TO JOIN THE EUROZONE**

See the link <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/joining-the-euro-area/convergence-criteria/>

**- THE FOUR FREEDOMS (it is worthwhile to provide students with practical examples of what each freedom means):**

***Free Movement of People:***

*Example: Imagine being able to travel without needing a visa or passing through overly strict checks when visiting another European country. This freedom allows Europeans to move freely, study, or work in any EU Member State.*

***Free Movement of Services:***

*Example: Think of a music streaming app or a video call service that you can use seamlessly anywhere in the European Union. This freedom facilitates the provision and use of services without barriers across different EU countries.*

***Free Movement of Goods:***

*Example: Imagine an Italian pasta manufacturer being able to sell its products in Spain without paying customs duties and restrictions, and vice versa. This freedom encourages competitiveness and allows goods to flow freely between member states, promoting trade and offering consumers a wider variety of products.*

***Free Movement of Capital:***

*Example: Let's consider a German startup in need of funding to grow, and it decides to receive investments from a French bank. This freedom enables investments and capital to move without restrictions between EU countries, facilitating cross-border investments.*

**The alternate approach for the presentation phase can be carried out in a more interactive and engaging way for the students.** You can divide the class into eight working groups and assign each group a topic to present to the class. Using this inductive method, the completion of the teaching unit will take more time, but the result will be more effective learning as it actively involves students in the process of discovery and knowledge acquisition. Taking into account the characteristics of the student group, the teacher will evaluate the opportunity to use this active learning method in the other presentation phases as well.

**POSTER**

Considering the information presented, students can review the initial definition, making any necessary corrections. In a plenary session, each group shares its proposal, and the best definition will be included on a poster to be displayed in the classroom, along with a graphic representation of the symbols of the EU.

### PHASE 3 – SCHENGEN, EUROZONE, EFTA

In the third phase, we will continue to use maps as a starting point. Specifically, now students will have the opportunity to explore further forms of cooperation/integration between European countries, starting with the maps of Schengen, the Eurozone, and the EFTA.

#### SCHENGEN

The teacher shows the students the map of the countries adhering to the Schengen Agreement (map contained in the publication "Schengen - Your Gateway to Free Movement in Europe" <file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/schengen-QC0923008ENN.pdf> ),

The teacher asks them to compare it with the map of the EU and listens to their considerations. Then, they inquire what the students know about the Schengen Agreement and whether they remember the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on freedom of movement between countries. The teacher allows time for a brief discussion.

Using the information contained in the publication mentioned above, the teacher explains the reasons that led to the signing of the Schengen Agreement and its implications for movement within the EU. The teacher emphasizes the concept of the four freedoms and how they are interconnected.

#### EUROZONE

Regarding the Eurozone, the teacher inquires if the students know since when Italy has been using the Euro, what currency was used before, what they know about the Euro in general, and whether they think having a common currency has benefits or drawbacks, and if so, what those are.

Subsequently, the teacher writes on the board the date **January 1, 2002**, the day from which it was possible to withdraw euro banknotes from ATMs in 12 European countries, including Italy. The history and purposes of the euro are then illustrated, referring to the webpage [https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/euro\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/euro_en) and the map of the Eurozone found on Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eurozone>.

The teacher can further delve into the topic by explaining the reasons that led to the monetary union of the Eurozone and its evolution over time, drawing additional information from the European Commission's publication "A Brief Guide to the Euro" <file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/a%20short%20guide%20to%20the%20euro-KC0922428ENN.pdf> and Chapter 7 of "Europe in 12 Lessons" <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-in-12-lessons/en/#chap07-title>, also available online.

#### GROUP QUIZ

Regarding the group quiz, each group is given a copy of the publication available at [file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/euro%20game%20for%20school%20children-gp\\_daily\\_WEB\\_QC0319195ENN\\_002.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Utente/Downloads/euro%20game%20for%20school%20children-gp_daily_WEB_QC0319195ENN_002.pdf)

The groups will have a few minutes to consult the brochure and then answer the quiz questions using the following link: <https://www.toporopa.eu/en/eurozone.html>

## EFTA

The final part of the teaching unit is dedicated to a brief focus on the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which brings together four European countries (Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein) in a free trade agreement. It is also noted that, excluding Switzerland, EFTA has free trade agreements with the EU through the European Economic Area (EEA). Mentioning this organization, which is largely unknown to most high school students, serves the purpose of helping students understand the complexity of relationships between European states, considering their historical and economic backgrounds. It also aims to illustrate the different nature of cooperative organizations compared to integration.

The teacher will initiate the discussion as usual by showing a map of EFTA and prompting the students with questions like: Why do you think these countries have never joined the EU? What motivated them to form this association? What are EFTA's objectives?

The content of the explanation and relevant maps can be sourced from Wikipedia or other educational resources.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Free\\_Trade\\_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Free_Trade_Association)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Economic\\_Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Economic_Area)

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European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, *EU & me*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/700937> (see the section "How does the EU work")

This publication is also available online at <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-and-me/en/>

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European Commission, Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs, *A short guide to the euro*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2765/111126>

**Please note that you can either download the above publications for free or order your paperback copy on the website of the Publications Office of the European Union <https://op.europa.eu/en/home>.**

## **TEACHING UNIT 2**

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EU**

In this educational unit, students acquire a general understanding of the recent history of Europe by tracing the key milestones in the history of the European Union, from its origins to the present day. Special emphasis is given to the initial stages of the integration process, starting with the local history relevant to the geographic area where the students reside.

Two significant images open and close the unit: the first one refers to the city of Treviso, destroyed in 1944, and the second is the map of the current European Union.

### **OBJECTIVES (Knowledge and Skills)**

At the end of the educational unit, students will be able to:

- I. Have a basic understanding of the history of European integration;
- II. Understand the origins and reasons for the creation of the EU;
- III. Identify key milestones in the history of the EU;
- IV. Foster interest in European history and culture;
- V. Promote European citizenship.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **WARM-UP - TREVISO YEAR ZERO**

The educational unit begins with an image of war and devastation that is geographically close to the students' reality: Piazza dei Signori in Treviso, destroyed by the Allied bombing on April 7, 1944. The teacher presents the image taken from Wikipedia to the students.



<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/it/f/fd/Palazzo300Bombardamento.jpg>

The teacher asks the students to identify the location and the historical period in which the photograph was taken and, in general, encourages the students to comment on the image. Using historical photographs sourced from Wikipedia, they may also show images of other European cities that were destroyed (including Dresden, Coventry, etc.), thereby highlighting the catastrophic situation that characterized the entire European continent in the aftermath of World War II. The teacher will emphasize how the strong desire for peace and the determination to prevent further conflicts formed the foundation upon which European integration was born.

## PROCEDURE

For the presentation phase of the history of European integration, the teacher will use materials from the web page dedicated to the **European Parliament Ambassador School project**, to which our school joined in the 2021/2022 school year, earning recognition as an Ambassador School of the European Parliament.

The teacher will go over the **key milestones** of the integration process by illustrating the timeline related to the history of the EU, which can be found at the following link: <https://youth.europarl.europa.eu/files/live/sites/youth/files/assets/documents/ambassador%20school/active%20lessons/pdf/3%20-%20EU%20history%20and%20facts/en-presentation-eu-history.pdf>.

In particular, the teacher will make sure to highlight the following aspects:

- When and why the EU was founded.
- 1951: The European Coal and Steel Community (CECA).
- 1957: The Treaty of Rome, marking the birth of the European Economic Community (EEC).
- 1967: The Treaty of Brussels.
- 1979: The first elections for the European Parliament.
- 1992: The Maastricht Treaty – the EU and the architecture of the three pillars.
- 2007: The Lisbon Treaty – the EU as we know it today.

Using the timeline "**From 6 to 27 Member States**" available at the link <https://youth.europarl.europa.eu/files/live/sites/youth/files/assets/documents/ambassador%20school/active%20lessons/pdf/3%20-%20EU%20history%20and%20facts/en-timeline-countries-eu-history.pdf>, the teacher can provide a visual representation of how the EU has evolved in terms of its membership.

There have been **seven subsequent enlargements of the European Union**. The teacher will take care to explain the reasons that led each new member state to seek to join the EU, emphasizing the entry criteria into the EU that were mentioned in the previous unit. The teacher will also clarify the historical circumstances in which these enlargements took place. Additionally, special attention should be given to the unique case of the United Kingdom, explaining the reasons that led to Brexit and the current state of EU-UK relations.

**1951:** France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium, Netherlands

**1973:** Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom

**1981:** Greece

**1986:** Portugal, Spain

**1995:** Finland, Sweden, Austria

**2004:** Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus

2007: Bulgaria, Romania  
 2013: Croatia  
 2020: Brexit

Other information can be found in chapters 2 (Twelve Historic Steps) and 3 (Enlarging the EU and getting on with the neighbours) from the EU publication *Europe in 12 lessons* by Pascal Fontaine available online at the link <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-in-12-lessons/en/#chap00-title>.



[https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn\\_002.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn_002.pdf)

## FOLLOW-UP

To delve deeper into the topic of the conflict, the teacher can use the lessons made available on the website of the House of the European History, page *Activities for your classroom*. In particular, the lesson *Hawks and Doves – Conflict* proposes a series of lessons on the theme of war, exploring the various conflicts which have affected the European continent starting from WWI. All the documents are available in the 24 EU languages.

<https://historia-europa.ep.eu/en/educators-teachers/classroom-activities/hawks-and-doves-conflict>

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YAOHKeGvSCMyS5Ae64vt0n9DhMs2QHAP>

To test the knowledge and skills acquired by the students, the teacher can use the **group quizzes** taken from the Learning corner of the EU Portal.

[https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/play-games/quiz\\_it#/dashboard](https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/play-games/quiz_it#/dashboard)

## **TEACHING UNIT 3**

### **THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS ACROSS CITIES**

Undoubtedly, explaining the functioning of the European Union to adolescent students is the most challenging aspect of the entire teaching module. This is because it involves an inherently complex and, at times, less engaging subject matter. Furthermore, it should be considered that not all high school students have a solid understanding of the Italian institutional apparatus, which could serve as a reference point. Navigating through acronyms, bodies, competencies, and denominations proves to be challenging even for experts, let alone for sixteen-year-olds.

However, acquiring fundamental knowledge regarding the European institutional structure is essential, as decisions made at the community level have a tangible impact on each of our daily lives. Moreover, gaining clarity about roles and institutions helps develop an objective view of the European Union, thereby combating misinformation and propagandistic manipulations.

The guiding idea for structuring the lesson is starting our exploration from the four European cities that host the EU institutions.

### **OBJECTIVES (Knowledge and Skills)**

By the end of the teaching unit, students will be able to:

- I. Understand the structure and functioning of the main EU institutions (particularly the European Council, European Commission, European Parliament, and Council of the European Union);
- II. Recognize roles and responsibilities within the institutions;
- III. Acquire a general understanding of the legislative and decision-making process of the EU.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **WARM-UP: THE CAPITALS OF THE EU**

The teacher starts the lesson with a brief brainstorming session, displaying the map of the EU ([https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn\\_002.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44222/qc0219162enn_002.pdf)), and asks students which EU institutions they have heard about (on social media, TV, radio, from friends or family). Students are encouraged to name the cities where these EU institutions are located and place them on the map. The teacher collects responses on the board, highlighting the four cities where the seven EU institutions are situated: Brussels, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and Luxembourg.

#### **THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS IN BRIEF**

Divided into small groups, students receive the infographic sheet below, listing the seven EU institutions. For each institution, they must find the headquarters, the members it comprises, its

responsibilities, its presiding officer, and clarify the meaning of its representing logo. The teacher directs students to consult the following sites for the required information:

[https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/types-institutions-and-bodies\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/types-institutions-and-bodies_en)

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20130905STO18726/key-facts-about-the-eu-institutions-infographic>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional\\_seats\\_of\\_the\\_European\\_Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_seats_of_the_European_Union)

It will also be helpful to recommend the summary pages for each institution on the EU portal. The link for the European Parliament is provided below as an example: [https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-parliament\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/search-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-parliament_en)



Seat:  
Composition:  
Presidency:  
Function:  
Meaning of logo:



Seat:  
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Seat:  
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Seat:  
Composition:  
Presidency:  
Function:  
Meaning of logo:

Court of Auditors



Seat:  
Composition:  
Presidency:  
Function:  
Meaning of logo:

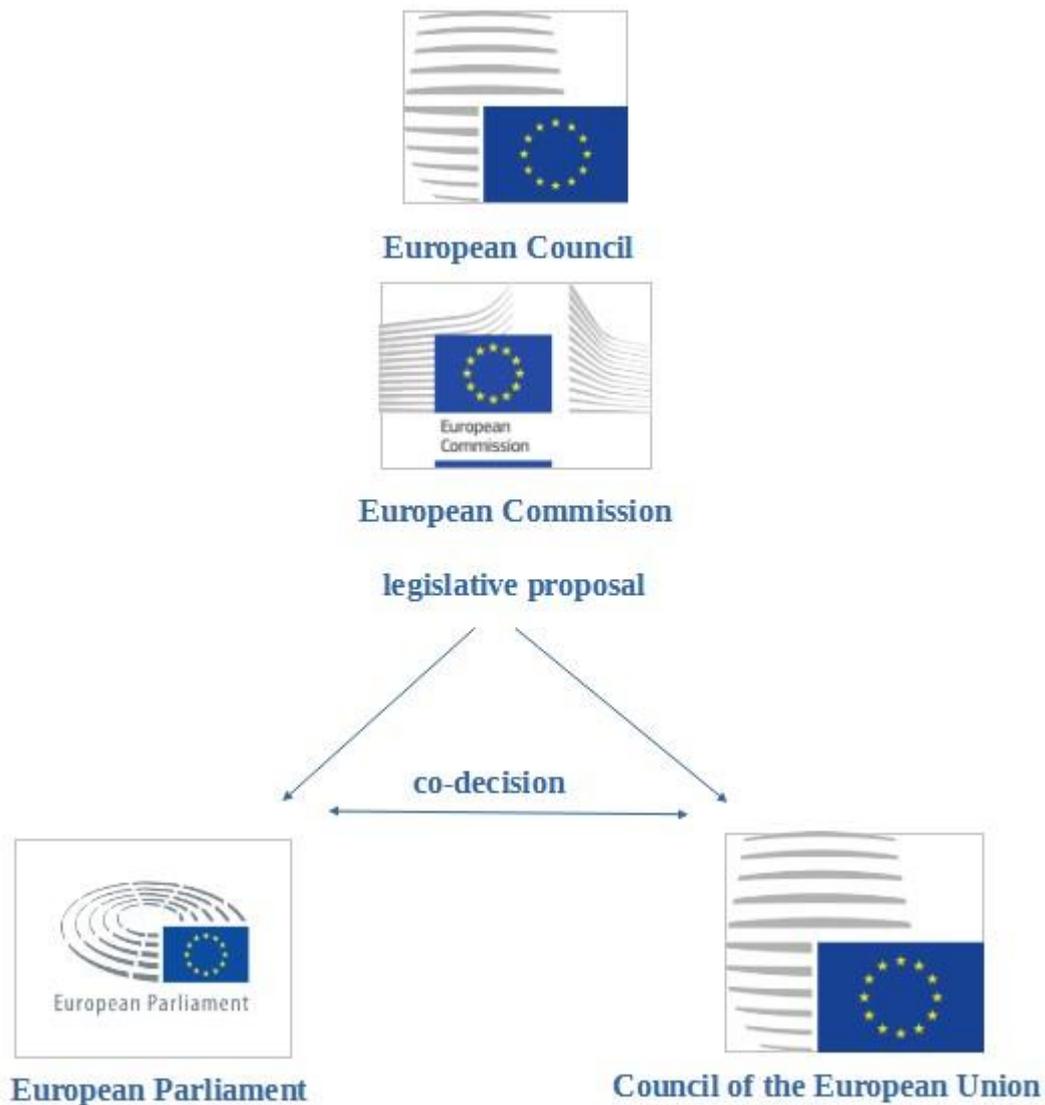


Seat:  
Composition:  
Presidency:  
Function:  
Meaning of logo:

COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

During the plenary session, students will present their responses, and the teacher will take care to provide clarifications and further explanations. It is likely that certain aspects may cause confusion among students. Regarding the **seats**, the teacher will explain the historical, geographical, and political reasons that led to the choice of Brussels as the "capital city" of the EU and the presence of secondary locations for some institutions.

Concerning the **functions**, it will be useful to project and discuss the following infographic sheet, highlighting the relationships between the four main EU institutions involved in the decision-making and legislative process.



In order for the students to understand the function and interaction among the institutions, the teacher can use the **metaphor of a team working together**:

*Imagine the European Union as a big team working together to make important decisions. In this team, there are four key players: the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union.*

***The European Council** is like the team captain and coaches. It consists of the leaders of each EU country and the President of the European Commission. They gather to discuss big plans and goals for the whole team, giving general guidance and direction.*

***The European Commission** is like the team's planners and idea generators. They come up with new strategies and propose new rules (laws) for the team to follow. Each country appoints a representative to be part of this planning team.*

*Then, there's **the European Parliament**—the voice of the people on the team. It's made up of members who are directly elected by citizens from each country. They discuss and vote on the proposed rules, making sure they're fair and represent what the people want.*

*Finally, we have **the Council of the European Union**—the decision-makers. It's like the team of ministers from each country, and they work with the Parliament to finalize the rules. Depending on the topic, different ministers step in to make sure the rules make sense for everyone.*

*So, it's a bit like a game plan: the leaders set the direction, the planners come up with ideas, the people have a say, and the decision-makers make the final call. Together, they make sure the team (the EU) plays well and follows the rules that benefit everyone.*

An aspect that often causes confusion is the different function and composition of the European Council and the Council of the EU. It is therefore appropriate to emphasize the distinction between the two institutions, despite the shared symbol (the Europa Building in Brussels, where both are headquartered).

*The European Council and the Council of the European Union represent two distinct bodies within the context of the European Union. The European Council is composed of the heads of state or government of the EU member states and the President of the European Commission. This body is responsible for defining the general guidelines and strategic objectives of the European Union. On the other hand, the Council of the European Union is made up of ministers from various sectors from the member countries. This council works in collaboration with the European Parliament to formulate and adopt laws and regulations. In summary, while the European Council provides a strategic vision, the Council of the European Union is involved in the more detailed decision-making and legislative process in collaboration with other European institutions.*

To further clarify the difference between the two bodies and their functioning, it is recommended to use the educational materials developed by the Council, available on its respective website. In particular, concrete references to the places where institutions come to life and to the people who play a role within them help young people better understand the nature of the two institutions. The following are the links:

The multimedia presentation regarding the role of the Council:  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council-and-council-of-the-eu/#navigation>

The video developed to explain how the European legislative process works:  
<https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/embed/217133>

Finally, to complete the picture, it would be useful to mention the **Council of Europe** (which is not a EU institution but could be considered, in certain aspects, the predecessor of the EU), and if necessary, consult its website, <https://www.coe.int/it/web/portal>, to gain a more precise understanding.

## FACES AND PLACES OF THE EU

To make the discussion more tangible and highlight how institutions are actually made up of individuals holding public roles for the benefit of the community, we propose a final, lighter and more entertaining activity. By projecting the sheet below, the teacher invites students to try to recognize the faces and match their names to their respective roles in the institutions.

### THE FACES OF THE EU INSTITUTIONS

Roberta Metsola



A

Ursula Von der Leyen



C

Christine Lagarde



E



B

Paolo Gentiloni



D

Josep Borrell



F

Charles Michel

- 1) President of the European Central Bank
- 2) President of the European Parliament
- 3) President of the European Commission
- 4) High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vicepresident of the European Commission
- 5) President of the European Council
- 6) European Commissioner for Economy

The second proposed sheet contains images of some particularly symbolic places in the EU, which the students have likely already seen in the media or on TV. Using the internet, the students will need to try to identify the locations of various institutions and appropriately place their most illustrious representatives, whose names and roles they now know.

### THE PLACES OF THE EU



Berlaymont Building



Europa Building



Europa Hall



European Parliament in Brussels



European Parliament in Strasbourg



European Parliament Strasbourg Hemicycle

Strasbourg

<https://www.europeana.eu/it/exhibitions/70th-anniversary-of-the-schuman-declaration/strasbours-place-at-the-heart-of-europe>

### QUIZ

To assess the acquired knowledge, a final quiz is proposed, which can be undertaken individually or as a team competition: <https://webportal.consilium.europa.eu/vicequiz/>

## EU INSTITUTIONS POSTER

Working in groups, students will utilize the paper materials received throughout the entire teaching unit to create a summary poster of EU institutions to be displayed in class. They will construct a summary collage of the EU institutions. The best work, chosen through a vote, will be displayed in the classroom.

## MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS

The reference teaching materials for the instructor are the two following publications:

European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, Fontaine, P., *Europe in 12 lessons*, Publications Office, 2018, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/206900>

This publication is also available online at <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-in-12-lessons/en/#chap00-title>

European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, *EU & me*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2775/700937> (see the section "How does the EU work")

This publication is also available online at <https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/eu-and-me/en/>

**Please note that you can either download the above publications for free or order your paperback copy on the website of the Publications Office of the European Union <https://op.europa.eu/en/home>.**

The following web pages from the EU portal are also recommended:

European Council: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/contact/virtual-tour/>

<https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/events/open-day-2018/118048-european-council-the-making-of-20180515>

Video downloaded from the official webpage of the Council of the EU:

<https://cdne-newsroom-prd.azureedge.net/media/10270/135056-en.srt>

European Parliament: <https://digital-journey.europarl.europa.eu/#/en>

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>

European Commission: [https://youtu.be/nWpgO1EPO\\_Y?si=IMo3nM8cYP1drHWu](https://youtu.be/nWpgO1EPO_Y?si=IMo3nM8cYP1drHWu)

[https://commission.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/index_en)

## **PROJECT WORK**

As a concluding phase of the educational path, the methodology of project work has been chosen. Working in teams with their peers, students have the opportunity to actively use the knowledge and skills acquired in previous units, applying them to real situations and tackling concrete challenges. Moreover, during the activity, they will enhance their communication and presentation skills.

### **OBJECTIVES (soft skills)**

At the end of their project work the students will have enhanced the following skills:

- I. teamwork;
- II. problem solving;
- III. research and present content effectively in front of their peers;
- IV. acquire new knowledge and skills independently and continuously.

## **PROJECT WORK 1**

### **THE EU OF THE FUTURE**

The final phase of the educational module actively involves the students in a group research project focused on current issues in the EU.

During the initial plenary session, the teacher reviews the seven subsequent enlargements of the European Union and goes over the criteria for EU membership as formalized in the 1993 European Council meeting in Copenhagen with the students. In order to achieve this, the page on the Council's website should be illustrated to the students <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/>, where the political, economic, and administrative and institutional capacity criteria are explained. The stages of the accession process and the role played by the Council will also be explained. The reading of the whole page is recommended.

Subsequently, the teacher will ask the students to peruse the EU portal with the objective of finding out which countries are currently candidates for joining the EU (Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, North Macedonia, Albania, Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia-Herzegovina) and which countries have applied for membership (Georgia).

Each group will choose one of the countries listed above and carry out research on its present socio-economic situation, as well as on its status as a candidate to join the EU. In particular, students will be asked to highlight any specific critical issues and the progress made by the country. The students will be asked to try and assess how close or how far the country is from joining the EU. The final product will be a multimedia presentation which will be presented in a plenary session to their fellow students.

In order to gather information on the situation of the different countries, the teacher will provide the students with a list of websites (see below, official sites of the Council and of the European Commission, as well as Wikipedia) which they can use to start conducting their research. Of course, the students will be asked to draw information from other sources - in this they will be supported by their teacher who will evaluate their credibility - their own knowledge and their own personal experiences. The research and reading work can start in class and be completed at home.

- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/> (link on the left of the page to the different candidates)

- **Bosnia Herzegovina** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/bosnia-herzegovina/>

[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/bosnia-and-herzegovina\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/bosnia-and-herzegovina_en);

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accession\\_of\\_Bosnia\\_and\\_Herzegovina\\_to\\_the\\_European\\_Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Accession_of_Bosnia_and_Herzegovina_to_the_European_Union)

- **Albania** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/albania/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/albania\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/albania_en)

- **Turkey** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/turkey/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/turkiye\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/turkiye_en)

- **Serbia** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/serbia/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/serbia\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/serbia_en)

- **Montenegro** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/montenegro/>;

[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/montenegro\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/montenegro_en)

- **North Macedonia** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/republic-north-macedonia/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/north-macedonia\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/enlargement-policy/north-macedonia_en)

- **Moldova** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/moldova/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/moldova\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/moldova_en)

- **Georgia** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/georgia/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/georgia_en)

- **Ukraine** <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/ukraine/>;  
[https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine_en)

A special case is certainly represented by Ukraine, which submitted its application for membership just days after the Russian invasion on February 2022. The ongoing conflict, at the heart of Europe, makes the situation particularly complex to analyse and may trigger divisions and heated discussions regarding the possibility of expediting the EU accession process (the so-called 'fast-tracking'). It will be the teacher's responsibility to closely monitor the group's work and, if necessary, act as a moderator to handle different opinions. In any case, it's important that the students are made aware of the importance of assessing the credibility of the sources they use.

Lastly, it is advisable to pay special attention to the formation of groups and to give students the freedom to choose the country they want to explore. The goal should be to highlight the cultural richness that characterizes many classes in Italian schools, even in high schools. This choice will not only appreciate the cultural diversity present but also contribute to the development of greater intercultural awareness throughout the entire class group.

## PROJECT WORK 2

### A SCHOOL TRIP TO THE HEART OF EUROPE

In this activity the students will have to plan the end of their end-of-school year trip, putting into practice the qualified majority voting system used during the Council's proceedings.

The possible destinations for the school trip are the EU Capitals Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Frankfurt (one or more cities can be included in the itinerary). Working in small groups, the students will need to create a travel itinerary which includes visits to the EU institutions, in addition to the most meaningful tourist attractions. In order to do this, they should consult the EU websites and check if the institutions are open to the public, what specific proposals are available for schools (and choose the most interesting ones), the scheduling and organizational details. Moreover, students will be able to gather practical information by consulting the web page dedicated to trips to the EU:

<https://op.europa.eu/webpub/com/travelling-in-europe/en/index.html>

Each group will present their project to their fellow students. A vote will follow which will choose the best proposal through a qualified majority voting system; for this purpose, every student will represent an EU country (it may not always be possible to represent all 27 EU member states). To expedite the voting process, the students can use the app created specifically by the EU.



## **TEACHING UNIT 4**

### **JEAN MONNET**

The name of Jean Monnet is frequently found in the toponymy of many European cities, both large and small. Even in Montebelluna, where our high school is located, there is a square dedicated to him. However, if we ask our students (and not just them) what they know about Jean Monnet, the response we often get is very uncertain.

Our high school had the opportunity to discover who Jean Monnet was during the last school year (2022/2023) when a group of 27 3<sup>rd</sup> year students visited the Jean Monnet House, located in Houjarray, Bazoches-sur-Guyonne, in the Parisian region. Thanks to the visit to the house-museum and the workshops they participated in, the students had the chance to get to know up close the life and works of one of the architects of a united Europe. The House of Houjarray was not just a family home. Houjarray is one of those places where history was literally made because it was here that Monnet, together with his collaborators, wrote what would go down in history as the Schuman Declaration, the starting point of the European project.

The teaching unit we propose draws inspiration from this visit and is conceived as a discovery journey starting from a selection of images and materials. The presentation of images and materials can occur in two ways: 1) the teacher provides the material to the students, who, working in groups, will conduct research and then compare the results in a plenary session, guided by the teacher who will integrate the presentations; 2) the teacher provides both the material and the explanation. At the end of the teaching unit, the students will need to organize what they have learned into a presentation for their peers based on the images provided.

#### **OBJECTIVES (knowledge and skills)**

At the end of the teaching unit, the students will be able to:

- I. know and understand the key events in the life of Jean Monnet and appreciate their historical value and significance;
- II. understand the reasons behind the establishment of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community);
- III. acquire the knowledge about certain aspects of the post WWII period.

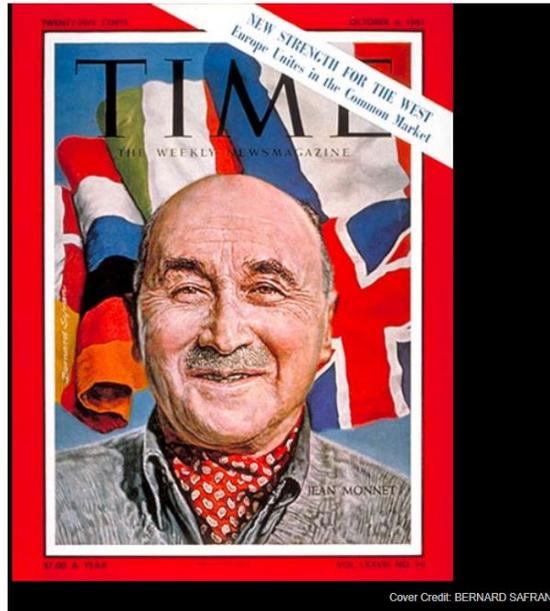
#### **(Soft-skills)**

At the end of the teaching unit, students will be able to:

- I. read and understand a historical text;
- II. find solutions to posed problems;
- III. present content effectively in front of the class;
- IV. collaborate in groups;
- V. acquire new knowledge and skills independently and continuously.

### **PHASE 1**

The starting point is represented by the cover of TIME magazine from October 6, 1961, and the Jean Monnet House. In this phase, the teacher guides the students in the discovery of the most significant moments in the biography of Jean Monnet, reconstructing the historical background of the post WWII era.



<https://content.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19611006,00.html>

Why is it so important to study the life of Jean Monnet?

Because it was thanks to him that the history of European integration started to take shape in the post WWII period. Among the founding fathers, he was the one who gave a tremendous boost to the European project by combining vision and practicality. If we want to look for a foundation myth of the EU, the life of Jean Monnet represents perhaps the most exciting seminal moment. Monnet was a French politician and economic adviser; he was the primary inspiration behind the Schuman Declaration of May 9, 1950, which would lead to the creation of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community), a first step towards what would then become the European Union.

The creation of a united Europe was anything but a linear and straightforward process. It was thanks to Monnet's insight and great determination that the design for peace could take concrete shape. This is the reason why we can count him among those **prime movers** who changed the course of history with their ideas. Although still relatively unknown to the general public, his significance in the history of the 20th century was such that TIME magazine listed him among the 100 most influential figures of the past century.



The House of Houjarray was the residence where Jean Monnet lived with his family from 1945 (when they came back from the USA) until his death in 1979, and the place where the first idea of a united Europe took shape. In this old farmhouse, Jean Monnet indefatigably organized meetings with the most important political and economic figures of the time. Heads of state, ministers and officials would gather here, including the US President Dwight Eisenhower and the French Minister Robert Schuman. In the rooms of this house, on May 6, 1950, the final draft of the Schuman Declaration was written (there were nine subsequent versions), which would be read by the French Foreign Minister three days later.

After his death, and according to his family's wishes, the house was purchased by the European Parliament, which turned it into a house-museum, with a permanent exhibition about his life, as well as into a cultural and youth gathering centre where conferences and seminars are held. The farmhouse is surrounded by the greenery of the Yvelines woods where Jean Monnet loved to walk in the early morning. Among other features, the park houses the "Garden of European Citizens", a green park representing the cultural diversity of Europe through a variety of plant species.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

The teacher suggests the reading of the biography of Jean Monnet.

*Born in 1888, Jean Monnet spent his life working to bring Europeans together and is nowadays seen as a central figure in the history of European integration. He started off in his family's cognac trading company but soon became involved in organizations for cooperation between Allied powers during World War I. He was then appointed as deputy secretary-general of the League of Nations, before pursuing a career as an international banker. With war in Europe once again by 1940, Monnet proposed the creation of a Franco-British Union that would completely merge the two countries as a way to defeat the Nazis. Although this project didn't succeed Monnet continued to fight for democracy, becoming head of the Victory Programme in Washington, D.C.*

*Following 1945 Monnet was responsible for the French General's Office for the Modernisation and Equipment Plan, holding the belief that the country's prosperity and security could function only with*

*the economic rapprochement of the European states. With the Cold War now quickly taking hold in society, he knew that the only way to create genuine solidarity between the European partners was to ensure the creation of **a functional Europe** through deep integration in key sectors. In this way, the foundations of the '**Monnet method**' were laid: taking small steps closer together and transferring sovereignty to supranational bodies. This method required stubborn persuasion, the joint pursuit of shared interests, and a great sense of organization.*

*In 1950 Monnet suggested to Robert Schuman, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the coal and steel industries of the Western European countries should be placed under a common regime and that a High Authority be established to administer these sectors of strategic importance directly and independently. By acting in everyone's interests, the High Authority effectively countered national self-interest. The pooling of coal and steel would make a new Franco-German war unthinkable and materially impossible, avoiding a repeat of the horrors Europe had just experienced. This dream became reality with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951: for Monnet, a first step towards a 'United States of Europe'.*

*As the first President of the ECSC High Authority in Luxembourg Jean Monnet was firmly committed to the European Defence Community, which he hoped would create a European army within a new political framework. However, the failure of this project due to France's feared loss of national sovereignty led him to resign and set up the Action Committee for the United States of Europe in 1955 to continue the fight. Bringing together political and trade union leaders, this Committee acted as a lobby to promote concrete achievements for a united Europe for over 20 years. Monnet inspired the creation of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), and also advocated for the United Kingdom's accession to the European Communities and for the creation of a common European currency. He supported the creation of the European Council of Heads of State or Government in 1974, bringing European leaders closer together for the good of all Europe's citizens. Jean Monnet died in 1979, a few months before the very first European elections he had been calling for.*

Adapted from

<https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/the-jean-monnet-house/jean-monnet-a-founding-father-of-europe>

## PHASE 2

In this phase there is room for a full reading and analysis of the Schuman Declaration, starting with the commentary of the historical picture of its proclamation in the Clock Room at the Quai d'Orsay in Paris on 9th May, 1950.



In presenting this historical image, the teacher points out the presence of Jean Monnet seated to the left of Schuman and emphasizes how since 1985, May the 9th has been celebrated as Europe Day.

The teacher can highlight how the diplomatic groundwork which led to this iconic moment was truly remarkable. The key political figure who managed to transform Monnet's insight into a successful political project was the French Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Schuman.

Convinced of the soundness of Monnet's project, Schuman decided to take political responsibility for it with the utmost discretion to avoid economic pressures, political divisions, and bureaucracy. He kept the French parliament in the dark about the diplomatic preparations, fearing premature debate. Only after securing the support of German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was Schuman ready to announce his plan publicly.

It would also be interesting to share a brief anecdote related to the photograph. Concerned that the interests of various political groups could compromise the reading of the Schuman Declaration, it was kept secret until the last minute. The press was only informed a few hours before the event, and only a small representation of journalists managed to be present. Photographers, radio stations, and television were unable to witness the original event. As a result, Robert Schuman had to repeat the reading of the Declaration to ensure a historical record of that important moment.

**READING OF THE WHOLE TEXT OF THE DECLARATION** (in the original French if the students have reached an adequate knowledge of the language)

*World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.*

*The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than 20 years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved and we had war.*

*Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity. The coming together of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. Any action taken must in the first place concern these two countries.*

*With this aim in view, the French Government proposes that action be taken immediately on one limited but decisive point.*

*It proposes that Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole be placed under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe. The pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims.*

*The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. The setting up of this powerful productive unit, open to all countries willing to take part and bound ultimately to provide all the member countries with the basic elements of industrial production on the same terms, will lay a true foundation for their economic unification.*

*This production will be offered to the world as a whole without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to raising living standards and to promoting peaceful achievements. With increased resources Europe will be able to pursue the achievement of one of its essential tasks, namely, the development of the African continent. In this way, there will be realised simply and speedily that fusion of interest which is indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system; it may be the leaven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions.*

*By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.*

*To promote the realization of the objectives defined, the French Government is ready to open negotiations on the following bases.*

*The task with which this common High Authority will be charged will be that of securing in the shortest possible time the modernization of production and the improvement of its quality; the supply of coal and steel on identical terms to the French and German markets, as well as to the markets of other member countries; the development in common of exports to other countries; the equalization and improvement of the living conditions of workers in these industries.*

*To achieve these objectives, starting from the very different conditions in which the production of member countries is at present situated, it is proposed that certain transitional measures should be instituted, such as the application of a production and investment plan, the establishment of compensating machinery for equating prices, and the creation of a restructuring fund to facilitate the*

*rationalization of production. The movement of coal and steel between member countries will immediately be freed from all customs duty, and will not be affected by differential transport rates. Conditions will gradually be created which will spontaneously provide for the more rational distribution of production at the highest level of productivity.*

*In contrast to international cartels, which tend to impose restrictive practices on distribution and the exploitation of national markets, and to maintain high profits, the organization will ensure the fusion of markets and the expansion of production.*

*The essential principles and undertakings defined above will be the subject of a treaty signed between the States and submitted for the ratification of their parliaments. The negotiations required to settle details of applications will be undertaken with the help of an arbitrator appointed by common agreement. He will be entrusted with the task of seeing that the agreements reached conform with the principles laid down, and, in the event of a deadlock, he will decide what solution is to be adopted.*

*The common High Authority entrusted with the management of the scheme will be composed of independent persons appointed by the governments, giving equal representation. A chairman will be chosen by common agreement between the governments. The Authority's decisions will be enforceable in France, Germany and other member countries. Appropriate measures will be provided for means of appeal against the decisions of the Authority.*

*A representative of the United Nations will be accredited to the Authority, and will be instructed to make a public report to the United Nations twice yearly, giving an account of the working of the new organization, particularly as concerns the safeguarding of its objectives.*

*The institution of the High Authority will in no way prejudge the methods of ownership of enterprises. In the exercise of its functions, the common High Authority will take into account the powers conferred upon the International Ruhr Authority and the obligations of all kinds imposed upon Germany, so long as these remain in force.*

Taken from

[https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59/schuman-declaration-may-1950\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59/schuman-declaration-may-1950_en)

Following the reading, the teacher can propose the following analysis and activities:

**Text Analysis:** The teacher asks students to analyse the meaning of each paragraph. The students can be encouraged to identify key words and discuss the ideas and values that emerge from the text.

**Guided Discussion:** The teacher invites students to express their opinions on the Schuman Declaration, asking if the ideals expressed in the Declaration are still relevant today and why.

**Anticipation:** Finally, the teacher may ask students to try and imagine the reactions of other European countries to the Declaration. Did any country respond to Schuman's call? Was it a success or a failure?"

## **FROM SCHUMAN'S DECLARATION TO ECSC**

Schuman's words generated great surprise but also enthusiasm. Immediately, France, Germany, Italy, and the three Benelux countries initiated negotiations for a treaty. The Benelux countries feared being dominated by a Franco-German core and insisted on a truly independent High Authority.

The most significant difficulties in implementing the economic plan related to dismantling cartels in the heavy industry of the Ruhr and political issues such as the composition of the High Authority and the ECSC. On June 20, 1950, representatives from the six countries began negotiations in Paris. The Benelux countries accepted an independent High Authority in exchange for the establishment of an intergovernmental body, the Special Council of Ministers, and the creation of a Common Assembly and a Court of Justice to settle disputes. The proposal already outlined the idea of supranational institutions that would later be adapted for the creation of the future European Economic Community (EEC).

The treaty establishing the ECSC was signed on March 19, 1951, by the six delegations. Members then had to resolve practical issues related to the locations of the institutions. In the absence of a definitive agreement, Luxembourg hosted the High Authority, the Council, and the Court of Justice of the ECSC, while the Common Assembly had its official seat in Strasbourg. The ECSC treaty came into force on July 25, 1952, just seven years after the end of World War II, and marked the starting point for the present-day European Union.

### PHASE 3

In the final phase of the teaching unit, a unique historical document is presented. The photograph below shows on the left the first iron ingot produced by the ECSC, named EUROP, in 1953. It is the tangible result of the first step towards economic unity. On the right, you can recognize the members of the High Authority of the ECSC and its president, Jean Monnet, at the Belval factory in Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, on April 30, 1953. From left to right, the individuals are identified as: Enzo Giacchero (IT), Dirk Spierenburg (NL), Franz Etzel (DE), Heinz Potthof (DE), Paul Finet (BE), Albert Coppè (BE), Albert Wehrer (LU), Jean Monnet (FR), Léon Daum (FR).



[https://api.multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/documents/20125/19215541/1647129214085\\_EP-110161A\\_001\\_MOBILE.jpg](https://api.multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/documents/20125/19215541/1647129214085_EP-110161A_001_MOBILE.jpg)



Fonte: Fondazione Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, Lasagna

An interesting point for students could be to speculate on the reason behind the choice of the name 'EUROP.' This explanation is once again linked to the need to reconcile different perspectives to arrive at a common solution. The word 'EUROP' is, in fact, a fusion of the word 'Europe' in the six languages of the founding countries of the ECSC.

<https://historia-europa.ep.eu/en/educators-teachers/classroom-activities/hawks-and-doves-conflict>

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<https://visiting.europarl.europa.eu/en/visitor-offer/other-locations/jean-monnet-house>

## **EUROPEANA**

<https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/70th-anniversary-of-the-schuman-declaration>

<https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/the-jean-monnet-house/jean-monnet-a-founding-father-of-europe>

## **SIMULATION OF A COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

This work is based on the experience gained in May 2023 by two groups of 20 students from our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years in Ossana, Trentino (TN), who were hosted by the San Vigilio Foundation. Over the course of two days, the students conducted a simulation of a Council of the European Union, engaging in discussions, negotiations, and voting on a Directive that is part of the Green Deal strategy. This experience was made possible through the support of the Jean Monnet Center of Excellence in Trento and its Director, Professor Vincent Della Sala, who guided us in the planning and execution of the project.

### **OBJECTIVES (Knowledge)**

At the end of the simulation, students will be able to:

- I. Gain knowledge of current EU policies (Green Deal, Fit for 55%);
- II. Acquire a basic understanding of how European institutions function;
- III. Familiarize themselves with the decision-making process within the EU Council.

### **(Soft-skills)**

By the end of the simulation, students will have enhanced the following skills:

- I. teamwork;
- II. problem solving;
- III. Research and effective content presentation in front of an audience of peers;
- IV. Autonomous and continuous learning of new knowledge and skills;
- V. Leadership skills development;
- VI. Negotiation skills development;
- VII. Critical reflection on the experience, analysis of work results, and the ability to formulate suggestions for improvement (debriefing);
- VIII. Increased intercultural awareness.

The game-simulation represents an excellent tool for making the teaching of European issues more engaging and effective, and for developing essential skills in research, negotiation, communication, and conflict resolution. Through simulation, students have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the complex dynamics of European politics, confront current global challenges, and become more aware and active citizens in an increasingly complex world.

## **PHASE 1 GROUNDWORK**

In this initial phase, students research the topic they will be debating and review or delve deeper into the working procedures of the Council and the documents it produces.

To familiarize students with the subject of the simulation, the teacher can have them explore the following web page focused on the European Green Deal, where the strategy is explained clearly and effectively.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/>

Material consultation can occur in groups with subsequent sharing in the plenary session. At the end of the activity, it will be appropriate for the teacher to write the following summary points of the Green Deal strategy on the Interactive board:

## 2050: Carbon neutrality in the EU

**2030: 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels.**

Next, the focus shifts to a review of the function of the Council of the European Union (what does it do? how does it work? who is it composed of? where does it meet?) and the legislative process. To do this, the teacher can conduct a brief brainstorming session in which students share the knowledge they've acquired in the previous teaching units.

The teacher can use the following two materials developed by the Council and obtained from its official website:

1) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council-and-council-of-the-eu/#navigation>

2) <https://newsroom.consilium.europa.eu/embed/217133>

Finally, the following worksheet can be shown to the class, read, and completed collectively:

**European Commission**  
 President Ursula von der Leyen (in office since 2019 to 2024)  
 represents the **interests of the European Union**  
 27 members, one for each member state (called Commissioner), each one deals with a specific policy area  
 (similar to the ministers in a government)  
 has the power of **legislative proposal**.

★ *Who is the Italian Commissioner? What policy area does he look after?*

Parliament and Council receive the legislative proposal from the Commission, they can discuss, amend, approve or reject it. Both co-legislators have to approve of the measure so that it comes into force = co-decision	
<p><b>European Parliament</b>                  President Roberta Metsola (in office until 2024)                  705 elected members every 5 years (Italy has 73 MEPs)                  Represents the <b>interests of the 447 mil European citizens</b>.</p> <p>★ <i>When is the next elections? Can you vote?</i></p>	<p><b>Council of the European Union</b>                  current President is Sweden                  27 members (the makeup changes according to the policy area at hand)                  Represents the <b>interests of the member states</b>.</p> <p>★ <i>What is the European Council? How does it differ to the Council of the European Union?</i></p>

It is also important to briefly review - using as clear language as possible - the types of legislative acts produced by the EU.

**Regulations:** These are laws that are directly applicable in all EU member states. The teacher can provide some examples, such as the 2017 roaming regulation, the 2004 regulation on air passenger rights, or the 2018 GDPR.

**Directives:** Unlike regulations, directives are not immediately applied in the same way in all member states. They are legislative acts that each member state must incorporate into its legal system by a certain date by enacting specific national laws. An example of a current EU directive is the 2011/83 on consumer rights.

**Decisions:** Decisions are also binding legislative acts that can have general application or be specific to certain recipients.

**Recommendations and opinions:** These are non-binding acts that contain an invitation to conform to certain standards or behaviours.

## PHASE 2 SIMULATION

Duration: 1 ½ days

Participants: Approximately 20 to 30 students

Required Spaces: A classroom with a central table, preferably round, and two smaller rooms for breakout sessions.

The proposed simulation replicates the final stage of the EU decision-making process and aims to approve or reject a measure that has already been approved by the Parliament.

The measure to be debated concerns the following aspect of the Fit for 55% package, which is part of the broader Green Deal strategy:

### **The cessation of production in the EU of cars and vans with internal combustion engines (diesel/petrol engines) starting from 2035.**

This measure has already been recently discussed and approved by the Council in the session of March 28, 2023. Therefore, the students are revisiting the discussion of the same subject. In preparation for the Council, students will gather information by reading the measure's timeline on the Council's website and the related press release.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/timeline-european-green-deal-and-fit-for-55/>

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/03/28/fit-for-55-council-adopts-regulation-on-co2-emissions-for-new-cars-and-vans/>

At the conclusion of the activities, during the debriefing, it will be interesting for the students to compare their work with what has already been approved in reality.

## ROLE ASSIGNMENT

Each student is assigned **a role** within the Council. It's important to emphasize to the students that they will need to step into the shoes of a Council member, representing their interests to the best of their abilities. They should be reminded that they should set aside their personal opinions on the matter or their political and ideological convictions and strive to be as objective as possible in their assessments and negotiations. As for the choice of roles, it is advisable to leave it up to the students. The proposal will be reviewed by the teacher, who can make necessary adjustments. The following are the roles to be assumed:

- President of the Council of the European Union (students should research who currently holds the presidency)
- President of the European Commission
- President of the European Parliament
- Ministers of Environment from EU member states (when selecting member states for the Council, it's advisable to include those with significantly differing opinions)
- Press (an accredited journalist attending the Council session, responsible for documenting the Council's proceedings and preparing a press release at the end)

Once the roles have been assigned, each Council member should independently research the country they will represent. The teacher can suggest to students that they start exploring their country's profile using the following link:

[https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/country-profiles_en)

The journalist can attend all scheduled sessions and, during the plenary, may ask questions. They can conduct independent research and their written text should not undergo any review or censorship.

As for the President of the European Council, they will have the additional responsibility of moderating the session, ensuring time is managed effectively, and making sure that all Council members have the opportunity to express their opinions.

Regarding the roles of the President of the Commission and the President of the Parliament, their presence is significant as they represent the other key players in the European legislative process, representing, respectively, the power of legislative initiative and the co-legislator along with the European Council.

Before commencing the proceedings, the teacher should draw the students' attention to the following points:

- 1) To the extent possible (and for the matters at hand), the Council aims to find an acceptable proposal for all member states. In the proposed simulation, the measure will be voted on by qualified majority (meaning at least 15 member states must agree, representing 65% of the total EU population). In reality, however, the Council seeks to achieve unanimous consensus on measures to be adopted.
- 2) The importance of embracing the assigned **ROLE**, becoming the interpreter and representative of the interests of the represented state, and making an effort to set aside personal ideological convictions and strive for objectivity.
- 3) It's important to make students aware that the simulation is a way to acquire **SOFT SKILLS** that could be useful in many aspects of their current and future lives.

Below is the schedule for the Council over the course of the two days of work. It should be noted that moments of social interaction and breaks are integral to the simulation. These informal moments allow representatives from different countries to build personal relationships, promote mutual understanding, and facilitate dialogue. In such a complex setting, sharing social moments fosters a more relaxed atmosphere, enhances collaboration, and contributes to the success of negotiations.

## FIRST DAY

	LUNCH
1,5/2 hours	FIRST PLENARY SESSION ROUND TABLE  The President of the Council of the European Union opens the session with a brief welcome statement and outlines the agenda.  Roundtable discussion in which each Council member has approximately 3 minutes to present their position on the proposal, providing adequate justification.
20 minutes	Summary in Plenary  The President of the Council of the European Union summarizes the positions expressed by the various members.
15 minutes	BREAK
1,5 hours	Negotiations - Breakout Session  Informal bilateral or multilateral meetings between Council members.  In this session, students put their negotiation and leadership skills to the test by initiating contacts, discussing possible amendments to the regulation, forming alliances, etc..
1 hour	Roundtable - Part Two  Each Council member has a few minutes to present their position on the proposal, possibly revised in light of the negotiations.
	DINNER

## SECOND DAY

	BREAKFAST
1,5 hours	THIRD PLENARY SESSION  The President of the Council initiates the proceedings.  CONCLUDING ROUND TABLE  Each Council member has a few minutes to present their position on the proposal with a rationale for their vote.
20 minutes	VOTE ON THE REGULATION PROPOSAL  Qualified majority vote (55% of member states and 65% of EU citizens) using the app developed by the EU.

### **PHASE 3 - DEBRIEFING SESSION**

Guided by their teachers, students discuss what they've learned during the simulation (EU environmental policies and negotiation/public speaking soft skills).

The guiding questions could be as follows:

- I. What have you learned from this experience about EU environmental policies?
- II. Is the outcome of the simulation the same as the Council meeting that took place on March 28, 2023? What considerations can be made?
- III. What have you learned from this experience about conducting negotiations?
- IV. What did you particularly like about this EU Council simulation experience?
- V. How do you assess your contribution to the simulation?
- VI. What would you do differently if you were to repeat this experience?
- VII. Have the objectives of the activity been achieved?

L'unico settimanale che comunica in tempo reale le notizie più rilevanti sull'Europa e il Parlamento.

Martina Bordignon

## Studenti si immedesimano nei ruoli di ministri dell'ambiente

Tra gli stati partecipanti troviamo Germania, Italia, Lussemburgo, Irlanda, Paesi Bassi e Finlandia, oltre a molti altri, insieme ai presidenti della commissione, del parlamento e dell'UE, attualmente la Svezia.

Aiutati inizialmente dal professore Vincent Della Sala, professore dell'Università di Trento, nonché Direttore del centro di eccellenza Jean Monnet, i giovani hanno iniziato esponendo le idee e le problematiche dei propri paesi, per poi dividersi in una Breakout Session e iniziare i negoziati. Il consiglio si divide esattamente a metà, paesi come Malta, Danimarca, Francia e Irlanda si dichiarano favorevoli alla cessazione della produzione di veicoli a combustione entro il



I venti studenti del Liceo Angela Veronese di Montebelluna accompagnati dalla professoressa Turrin e dalla professoressa Henard.



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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