

UNDERSTANDING THE EUROPEAN UNION (INSTITUTIONS, VALUES AND EU DECISION-MAKING FOR EDUCATORS) - 10 DAYS COURSE

Introduction and Description

This is a structured professional development course designed to strengthen educators' conceptual, pedagogical, and practical understanding of the European Union as a political, social, and educational project. In an era marked by democratic challenges, misinformation, and declining civic trust, schools are increasingly expected to foster informed, critical, and engaged European citizens. This course responds directly to that need by providing educators with a solid foundation in EU history, governance structures, decision-making processes, and value frameworks, while explicitly linking this knowledge to everyday school practice.

The programme explores the historical development of European integration, the rationale behind shared governance, and the evolution of EU values such as democracy, human rights, solidarity, and the rule of law. Participants gain a clear understanding of how EU institutions function, how legislation is developed, and how European policies influence national education systems and local school realities. Rather than presenting the EU as an abstract political entity, the course emphasises its tangible impact on citizens' lives, youth opportunities, educational priorities, and democratic participation.

A strong pedagogical focus ensures that participants move beyond factual knowledge toward meaningful classroom application. The course supports teachers in translating complex EU concepts into age-appropriate, inclusive, and interdisciplinary learning experiences that promote critical thinking, student voice, and democratic culture. Special attention is given to addressing diverse perspectives, fostering respectful debate, and developing critical EU literacy without promoting uncritical narratives.

Designed for teachers of social sciences, history, geography, citizenship education, and interdisciplinary subjects—as well as school leaders and Erasmus+ coordinators—the course supports both classroom-level innovation and whole-school approaches to European citizenship education. By the end of the programme, participants are equipped not only with enhanced EU awareness but also with practical tools to embed European values, participation, and institutional understanding into curricula, school projects, and international cooperation initiatives.

Methodology and Assessment

The course is based on participatory, learner-centred, and experiential methodologies aligned with adult education and democratic education principles. Methods include interactive lectures, guided discussions, simulations, role-plays, case studies, collaborative workshops, and reflective practice.

Participants actively engage with real-world scenarios, policy examples, and classroom applications, ensuring a strong link between theory and practice.

Assessment is formative and reflective, focusing on active participation, collaborative tasks, and the development of practical outputs such as lesson plans, project ideas, or school action strategies. Peer feedback, self-assessment, and facilitated reflection are integral components. Learning outcomes are evaluated through participants' ability to apply EU concepts pedagogically and critically within their professional contexts, rather than through formal testing.

Learning Objectives

1. EU Historical and Conceptual Foundations

Participants will:

- Understand the historical context and key stages of European integration
- Analyse the political, social, and economic motivations behind EU cooperation
- Critically examine different narratives of Europe and European identity

2. EU Values, Rights and Citizenship

Participants will:

- Identify core EU values and their legal and educational significance
- Understand EU citizenship, rights, and responsibilities
- Explore value-based education approaches suitable for diverse classrooms

3. Institutions and Decision-Making

Participants will:

- Explain the roles and interactions of EU institutions
- Understand legislative procedures and decision-making mechanisms
- Analyse transparency, accountability, and democratic legitimacy

4. EU Policies and Everyday School Relevance

Participants will:

- Examine EU policies affecting education, youth, digitalisation, inclusion, and sustainability
- Connect EU priorities to school-level initiatives and Erasmus+ projects
- Translate policy frameworks into meaningful learning experiences

5. Pedagogical Application and Democratic Practice

Participants will:

- Design interdisciplinary and participatory EU-focused learning activities
- Foster critical thinking, debate, and student participation
- Develop action plans for integrating EU literacy into school culture

Preparation

After registration participants will receive a pre-course questionnaire which will be used by the trainer to learn about participants' teaching backgrounds and to assess their exact needs. Before the beginning of the course a basic reading list will be suggested to participants to prepare for the training. Participants will also be asked to prepare a presentation about themselves, their professional context and their culture. The presentation will be presented on the first day of the course to facilitate networking opportunities. Participants will receive information about the country they are going to visit in order to prepare them for their cultural experience.

Follow up

After the course participants will be asked to share what they have learned with the rest of the staff in their schools. Further books and articles to deepen the topic and contacts with some other practitioners all over Europe and in the world will be suggested by the trainer. The methods shared and explored and the bibliography given will allow the participants to complete and improve their educational path.

Certificate

Certificate complies with the guidelines of the Erasmus+ programme and includes the topic, number of didactic hours, dates and location of the course. We can list the record of learning outcomes on the Europass Mobility Document on request of participants. In case a participant requires a specific format of certificate we can accommodate that if requested at least one week before the start of the course. It is necessary to attend at least 80% of the hours in order to receive the certificate.

Accommodation

We do not directly offer accommodation and subsistence and participants are responsible for organizing it by themselves.

Paperwork

We also provide all the support with paperwork you might need for your Erasmus+ project documentation such as mobility agreement and registration letter.

Fee: 800 €

Cancellation policy

We have a flexible cancellation policy in force at the moment and you can cancel your registration up to 30 days before the course and receive a full refund. In case you don't cancel the registration more than 30 days before you will not receive any refunds, but you will be able to choose to attend any other confirmed course session later (within 6 months) without any additional costs. In case you are not able to travel, your school can send someone else to take instead of you and you can change the details of the participant any time before the start of the course at no additional cost.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME (50 didactic hours - 5*45min per day) Monday to Friday	
Day 1	Europe and the Origins of the European Union
09.00 - 09.45	Introductions & Icebreakers
09.45 - 10.30	Course Overview & Learning Agreement
10.30 - 11.15	Europe after 1945: Why European cooperation emerged
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	From the ECSC to the EU
12.15 - 13.00	Historical narratives of Europe in school curricula
Day 2	EU Values, Principles and Citizenship
09.00 - 09.45	Core EU values
09.45 - 10.30	EU citizenship and identity

10.30 - 11.15	Fundamental rights and the Charter
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Teaching values in pluralistic classrooms
12.15 - 13.00	Workshop: values-based classroom activities
Day 3	The EU Institutional Architecture
09.00 - 09.45	Overview of the EU institutional system
09.45 - 10.30	The European Commission
10.30 - 11.15	The European Parliament
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	The Council of the European Union and the European Council
12.15 - 13.00	Simulation: "Who does what?"
Day 4	How EU Decisions Are Made
09.00 - 09.45	The ordinary legislative procedure
09.45 - 10.30	Qualified majority voting and consensus
10.30 - 11.15	Transparency, lobbying, and accountability
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	From Brussels to the classroom
12.15 - 13.00	Role-play: EU law in action
Day 5	EU Policies That Matter for Education
09.00 - 09.45	Education and training in the EU
09.45 - 10.30	Erasmus+ and European cooperation
10.30 - 11.15	Digital, green, and social priorities
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Inclusion, equity, and lifelong learning
12.15 - 13.00	Reflection and mid-course review
Day 6	The EU and Everyday Life
09.00 - 09.45	The single market and consumer rights

09.45 - 10.30	Mobility, work, and study across Europe
10.30 - 11.15	Environmental and climate action
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Media representations of the EU
12.15 - 13.00	Classroom activity design
Day 7	Democracy, Participation and Youth Voice
09.00 - 09.45	Democratic participation in the EU
09.45 - 10.30	Youth participation and EU programmes
10.30 - 11.15	Student voice and school democracy
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Participatory methods for teaching EU topics
12.15 - 13.00	Workshop: planning a student-led EU project
Day 8	The EU in a Changing World
09.00 - 09.45	The EU as a global actor
09.45 - 10.30	Enlargement, neighbourhood policy, and diversity
10.30 - 11.15	Current challenges
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Critical EU literacy
12.15 - 13.00	Reflection and discussion
Day 9	Teaching the EU Across the Curriculum
09.00 - 09.45	Interdisciplinary approaches to EU education
09.45 - 10.30	Project-based and inquiry-based learning
10.30 - 11.15	Assessment of EU-related learning
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Adapting content for different age groups
12.15 - 13.00	Tailoring ideas to participants' school contexts
Day 10	Individual support, presentations & Closing

09.00 - 09.45	Action Planning for School Implementation
09.45 - 10.30	Preparing the final presentations and individual support
10.30 - 11.15	Final presentations and feedback
11.15 - 11.30	Break
11.30 - 12.15	Evaluation & Reflection
12.15 - 13.00	Validation of learning outcomes and certification

*This is only a tentative timetable. The exact hours or the course might differ and will be announced for each session 2 weeks before the start. However, there will always be a total of 5 didactic hours per day and all will be in line with the Erasmus+ quality standards. The trainer might slightly modify the content in response to the needs of the group.

**Cultural and social programmes will be organized in addition to the academic programme. The exact cultural and social programme depends on the location, season, weather, etc.