



# Learning about the EU: European topics and school curricula across EU Member States

*Framework Service Contract  
to Provide Expertise and  
Support for European  
Cooperation in Education,  
Training, Youth and Sport  
(EAC/072015)*

**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture  
Directorate A — Policy Strategy and Evaluation  
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

This study reviews the extent to which European Union (EU) topics are embedded at a range of levels across the school curricula of Member States of the EU. It first sets the scene by referring back to a previous report which summarised the situation back in 2012, and which made a series of recommendations for action by the EU and Member States.

It then introduced a further review of the specific topic of European citizenship in the curricula, undertaken in 2017 by the Eurydice Network, bringing together the action points from 2013 and 2017.

The following section summarises EU actions over the past 10 years that have supported education systems and education stakeholders across Europe, looking ahead to the ambition of achieving the European Education Area by 2025 which will be an overarching framework for education and learning across all ages.

The scene is then set for the current study context, bringing together a series of Eurobarometer surveys to show the current context of knowledge and understanding of European issues, particularly among the young people who are the focus of schooling. However, there also is relevance in looking at how young people in their 20s are understanding European issues, since they will have come through the school system during the last 10 years, and they would be expected to have a more positive understanding of the EU than some older generations.

However, this study does not aim to make any specific comparison between 'now and then' since the economic, social, and political situation of the EU in 2012 is dramatically different to 2020. The two contexts are very different. 2012 was a time when Europe was climbing out of the economic crisis of 2008, with the Europe 2020 Strategy<sup>1</sup> aiming for "*smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*"<sup>2</sup>.

The Strategy set ambitious EU targets in the areas of employment levels, investment in research and development, addressing climate change (reducing emissions, boosting renewables and energy efficiency), improving education (reducing school leaving, levels of completion of tertiary or equivalent education), and significantly reducing the numbers of those at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The education targets were enriched by the ET 2020<sup>3</sup> Strategic Framework for Education and Training, which provided a rich context within which Member States could cooperate on education matters.

The 2020 Strategy established a regular pattern of review towards the targets, with the European Semester<sup>4</sup> and the yearly National Reform Programmes<sup>5</sup> which were accompanied by yearly country specific recommendations (CSRs<sup>6</sup>) approved by the

<sup>1</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework_en)

<sup>4</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline_en)

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/national-reform-programmes-and-stability-convergence-programmes_en)

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/eu-country-specific-recommendations\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/european-semester-timeline/eu-country-specific-recommendations_en)

Council of the European Union, and which advised Member States on recommended priority actions over the following 12-18 months to ensure that the national and the Europe 2020 targets were achieved.

This structure then informed the new European Commission (2019-2024) as they reviewed progress, and then set the priorities for the next 5 years. Over the timeline of Europe 2020 much had changed in the European and global economies and societies. The EU has been challenged by issues such as the migration crisis<sup>7</sup>, populism<sup>8</sup>, rapid developments in the digital transformation<sup>9</sup>, and the increasingly urgent needs to comprehensively address the causes and the outcomes of climate change<sup>10</sup>.

The new Commission, under President Ursula von der Leyen has been very aware that in addressing the economic, environmental, and technological challenges there is a strong need to be inclusive, and to empower citizens with a strong sense of democratic participation and 'being European'. Policy priorities will need to be resilient to the many global social, political, environmental, and economic uncertainties that will emerge, and the six priorities<sup>11</sup> embrace these aspects:

- *A European Green Deal: Europe aims to be the first climate-neutral continent by becoming a modern, resource-efficient economy.*
- *A Europe fit for the digital age: The EU's digital strategy will empower people with a new generation of technologies.*
- *An economy that works for people: The EU must create a more attractive investment environment, and growth that creates quality jobs, especially for young people and small businesses.*
- *A stronger Europe in the world: The EU will strengthen its voice in the world by championing multilateralism and a rules-based global order.*
- *Promoting our European way of life: Europe must protect the rule of law if it is to stand up for justice and the EU's core values.*
- *A new push for European democracy: We need to give Europeans a bigger say and protect our democracy from external interference such as disinformation and online hate messages.*

The need for the priorities and Commission actions were no more evident during the writing of this report, as Europe developed a common response to the global pandemic of COVID-19<sup>12</sup>, and where the closures of education institutions, and the rapid move to online teaching and learning, both showed how the digital transformation had significantly enabled some continuity of education to avoid extreme learning loss<sup>13</sup>, but has also highlighted the levels of exclusion that still existed in the ability of all young people to receive a high quality education.

The six priorities of the Commission therefore provide a framework for moving forwards with ensuring that EU topics are embedded in education curricula and activities, but first we look back to the previous initiative to provide a perspective on the situation back in

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<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/topics/migration-and-asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/topics/migration-and-asylum_en)

<sup>8</sup> <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/421470-demos-identifies-four-types-of-populism-in-european-political-parties>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/content/european-digital-strategy>

<sup>10</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/index\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/index_en)

<sup>11</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024_en)

<sup>12</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en)

<sup>13</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/likely-impact-covid-19-education-reflections-based-existing-literature-and-recent-international>

2012, the subsequent actions taken by the Commission, and then bring it up to date with recent statistics on citizens' awareness of the EU topics.

Following that, the main part of this report brings together 27 country reports from education experts. They were tasked with exploring the extent to which EU issues are embedded in the legal frameworks for education, the national curricula, and teaching and learning practices, to identify good practice examples, and to make recommendations for action.

## Methodology

The project team reviewed the previous 2013 publication, the policy developments, the Commission actions, and the opinions of Europeans as reported by a range of Eurobarometer surveys.

A range of country education experts were then commissioned to produce country level reports (two for Belgium, one each for the Flemish and Walloon parts) to the following brief:

- A summary of the situation of the current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU across primary and secondary schools, and VET general education and training (at ISCED 1- 4).
- Key points on how the EU dimension is embedded into the school and VET institution curricula and teaching and learning practices
- How is the EU dimension is embedded (or not) into education legislation and national curricula. Are there complementary initiatives that raise the skills and competences of young people to focus on authoritative information?
- How does learning about the EU actually exist in the curricula. Are there key subject areas, or extra-curricular activities, where the EU context is explicitly embedded?
- What are the factors that result in effective teaching about the EU? For example, teacher training, teacher support networks, participation of teachers in EU projects, innovative teaching methods in the classroom, impact and sustainability of the learning for the students.
- Can you identify and summarise case studies of good practice, innovative teaching and learning, and particularly examples that look forward to the priorities of the new Commission?
- What would you recommend as the priorities for EU action in the national context, and why?
- Conclusions and recommendations.

The project team then summarised the reports into the summary fiches that are provided in section 3. From these fiches, and the lessons learned and reported in section 2, a set of recommendations were drawn for consideration by the European Commission.

## 2. The Context

### Following on from the 2013 Report

In April 2013, the predecessor report to this one was published. “*Learning Europe at School*”<sup>14</sup> reviewed the situation across Member States during 2012 about:

*“what Member States are doing to promote learning about the European Union (EU) but also identifies what works to develop students’ understanding of the EU. On the basis of the analysis of these elements, the study identifies a number of scenarios of what the EU could do to support EU learning and provides recommendations for action to address EU learning.”*

Across a wide range of recommendations of action for the European Commission there was a strong underlying theme that any actions must deliver ‘European Added Value’<sup>15</sup> by ensuring there is a multiplier effect, that building capacity across teachers and schools is essential, that all stakeholders in the education process should be included (teachers, administrators, students, parents, community groups etc.), and that any resulting materials must be readily usable, sustainable and relevant in the medium- to long-term. In summary the recommendations included:

- *Focus on teachers as multipliers, but also support cooperation across schools and organisations.*
- *Focus EU funding on activities that do not just focus on producing materials – capacity building across schools and Member States.*
- *Ensure that the European Commission actively disseminates multi-lingual information about relevant EU topics and funding opportunities to schools, teachers, teacher training institutions or other associations.*
- *Engage with existing networks and organisations within and across Member States.*

The recommendations regarding the EU topics being embedded in the curriculum at Member State levels were more complex and challenging. They needed to acknowledge the EU Treaty obligations that the EU has no competence over education systems. Consequently, it was not possible to mandate any curriculum changes, but to recommend and advise, or to help support curriculum developments through EU actions and funding, and (as with the ET 2020 Strategy) to facilitate Member States to work together and cooperate within the context of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC<sup>16</sup>).

Recommendations were more phrased as encouragement, to find the best place in any national/federal curriculum to embed EU topics, to relate them to national topics, and to train and reward teachers for their professional development in the area of the EU:

- *Those in charge of curricular design should review how the topic of the EU is embedded into the curriculum.*
- *Consider whether the context in which students are taught about the EU is the most adequate for development of European citizenship.*

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<sup>14</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/83be95a3-b77f-4195-bd08-ad92c24c3a3c>

<sup>15</sup> “the value resulting from an EU intervention which is additional to the value that would have been otherwise created by member states alone” <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/publications/publication/did/the-european-added-value-of-eu-spending/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/EPRS-AaG-542142-Open-Method-of-Coordination-FINAL.pdf>

- *Consider the space given to the topic of the EU in teaching materials given the impact the EU has on citizens' activities.*
- *Enlarge the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers to be prepared to teach about EU topics.*

A third set of recommendations were addressed at intermediary organisations working with schools, and who could support them in building knowledge and competences about EU topics:

- *Add value to existing teacher activities, without minimising the demands on their time.*
- *Focus support in a way that gives the students 'agency' and responsibility in their learning.*
- *Encourage students to be active participants in civic education and EU topics that engage them fully, and that are relevant to their daily lives.*
- *Focus on supporting action-oriented teaching and learning, such as interactive games and simulations, since these both engage students, and are more time-consuming and resource intensive to develop.*
- *Help organisations to signpost teachers to teaching materials and tools.*

The fourth set of recommendations were addressed directly to the teachers, more in the context of focusing their attention, and encouraging them to engage with the EU topics in their teaching activities:

- *Teaching about the EU should lead students to develop an understanding of the EU that goes beyond knowledge of basic facts to engage with critical thinking.*
- *Encourage students to contact external people directly about EU issues, and invite them to speak to the students. For example, search for contacts via EDIC and related centres<sup>17</sup>.*
- *Use innovative and creative teaching and learning methods.*
- *Empower the students to take responsibility for their learning, and to engage with peer learning.*

## The Policy Response and EU Actions

Through DG EAC, the Commission has developed a range of policies, tools, and funding actions that address many of these recommendations, although to date there has not been an explicit and comprehensive action that considers all the recommendations as a whole. Actions that help schools are detailed below.

Running transversally up to 2020 across all areas of schools, teaching and learning, and across the 33 countries that are part of the Programme<sup>18</sup>, has been the **Erasmus+**<sup>19</sup> Programme. The "School Gateway"<sup>20</sup> provides multilingual advice to teachers and schools about funding opportunities, with Erasmus+ actions that specifically support schools including:

<sup>17</sup> [https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/meet-us\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/contact/meet-us_en)

<sup>18</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-a/who-can-participate/eligible-countries\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/programme-guide/part-a/who-can-participate/eligible-countries_en)

<sup>19</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/opportunities.htm>

- **Teaching exchanges**<sup>21</sup> and teacher training exchanges<sup>22</sup> of between two days and two months between schools in different countries.
- **Strategic Partnerships**<sup>23</sup>, which “are transnational projects designed to develop and share innovative practices and promote cooperation, peer learning, and exchanges of experiences in the fields of education, training, and youth”.

The May 2017 **Communication on School development and excellent teaching for a great start in life**<sup>24</sup> covered teacher professional development, enhancing the attractiveness of a teaching career, collaborative opportunities for teachers at the European level, leadership and governance, resources, autonomy and quality assurance.

In November 2017, the **Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture**<sup>25</sup> looked ahead to that of May 2018 below, and the development of the European Education Area. However, it also identified mechanisms to assist teachers in their mobility “through the ‘eTwinning network’, aiming to reach 600,000 users by 2020, by providing Massive Open On-line Courses as part of setting up an EU Teacher Academy”:

- The **eTwinning**<sup>26</sup> **platform** supports a diverse and rich community of teachers, students, schools, parents, and local authorities across countries, where “eTwinning teachers work together and organise activities for their students. They have an active role, interact, investigate, make decisions, respect each other and learn 21st century skills”.
- Through the **School Education Gateway**<sup>27</sup>, the **EU Teacher Academy**<sup>28</sup> is supported by Erasmus+ to develop onsite and online courses, run webinars, and develop teaching materials. For example, teaching resources<sup>29</sup> include those focused on citizenship, green issues, climate change, democratic participation, cultural diversity (such as a *We are Europe* game for students aged 6-10<sup>30</sup>). However, while there is a diverse range of resources, not all are fully multi-lingual and therefore easily implemented across all countries, there is not a consistent means of assessment and certification across the diversity. These are issues that have been addressed by the following Communication and the goal of establishing the European Education Area.

In May 2018 the Communication on **Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy**<sup>31</sup> set out the new Youth strategy for 2019-2027. It will engage young people's participation in civic and democratic life, connect young people across the EU “to foster voluntary engagement, learning mobility, solidarity and intercultural understanding”, and empower them through “quality, innovation and recognition of youth work”<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/school-education\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/school-education_en)

<sup>22</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/school-education-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/school-education-0_en)

<sup>23</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/strategic-partnerships-field-education-training-and-youth\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/strategic-partnerships-field-education-training-and-youth_en)

<sup>24</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1496304694958&uri=COM:2017:248:FIN>

<sup>25</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-strengthening-european-identity-education-culture\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-strengthening-european-identity-education-culture_en.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/index.htm>

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/teacher\\_academy.htm](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/teacher_academy.htm)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/teacher\\_academy/teaching\\_materials.htm](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/teacher_academy/teaching_materials.htm)

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/teacher\\_academy/teaching\\_materials/weareeurope-game.htm](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/teacher_academy/teaching_materials/weareeurope-game.htm)

<sup>31</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/youth\\_com\\_269\\_1\\_en\\_act\\_part1\\_v9.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/sites/youth/files/youth_com_269_1_en_act_part1_v9.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/eu-youth-strategy-adopted\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/eu-youth-strategy-adopted_en)

The May 2018 **Communication on Building a stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies**<sup>33</sup> importantly set out the development of the European Education Area, looking ahead to an enriched successor programme to Erasmus+, inclusive education and cross-border cooperation between schools, and innovation-driven approaches to education and training.

There is political commitment across Member States to fully **develop the European Education Area**<sup>34</sup> by 2025. Priority areas for schools include going abroad to study and learn, mutual recognition of school qualifications across the EU, learning two languages in addition to a 'mother tongue', a right for all children to receive inclusive high-quality education, and (importantly for the context of this study) people in Europe "should have a strong sense of their identity as a European, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity". A new Communication<sup>35</sup> from the Commission on 30 September 2020 on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 further highlighted the importance of achieving the goal, noting that the importance of collaboration across Europe, and the importance of citizens having a strong European identity, is vital in the context of global geopolitical, health, and environmental factors:

- "Cooperation in education has gradually become an important instrument for the implementation of EU external policies as an indisputable instrument of soft power. The Union's exchange programmes help people to connect worldwide, reaching out to a large number of stakeholders, including civil society".

There have been working groups<sup>36</sup> of the **ET 2020 Strategic Framework** for Education and Training. The **Working Group on Schools** has focused on quality assurance and "how the school education system can support the broad-competence development of young people and promote a whole-school approach, based on the engagement of all people involved in school life", teacher and leadership competences and career developments. In addition, the yearly **Education and Training Monitor**<sup>37</sup> is the flagship publication of the Commission, and the 2019 edition<sup>38</sup> focused on 'Teachers' and "the common challenges that EU Member States face to attract and maintain the best teaching professionals".

Transversal policies that support schools across Europe include the **Digital Education Action Plan**<sup>39</sup>. The current plan has run from 2018-2020<sup>40</sup>, and was renewed in a Communication from the Commission on 30 September 2020<sup>41</sup> to run from 2021 to 2027. It has operated across three overarching priorities of improving the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning, developing the skills and competences of teachers, school leaders, and students, and looking ahead at developing digital innovations so that the teaching profession can make best use of them. Actions in the first phase of the Action Plan included:

- Improving **digital connectivity in schools**.

<sup>33</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0268>

<sup>34</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en)

<sup>35</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/eea-communication-sept2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/eea-communication-sept2020_en.pdf) and [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/eea-factsheet-sept2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/eea-factsheet-sept2020_en.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-working-groups\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-working-groups_en)

<sup>37</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en)

<sup>38</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/education-and-training-monitor-eu-analysis-volume-1-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/education-and-training-monitor-eu-analysis-volume-1-2019_en)

<sup>39</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:22:FIN>

<sup>40</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en)

<sup>41</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/deap-communication-sept2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/deap-communication-sept2020_en.pdf)

- A multilingual **self-assessment tool (SELFIE<sup>42</sup>)** for all those in a school to explore where they stand in digital skills and competencies, and then to “*use the findings from SELFIE to see how technologies could support teaching, learning and student assessment in your school. Formulate an action plan and set your priorities*”.
- Promoting digital coding in schools through the **EU Code Week<sup>43</sup>**, offering “*students the possibility to make their first steps as digital creators, by providing schools and teachers free professional development opportunities, teaching materials, international challenges and opportunities to exchange*”.
- A **Digital Education Hackathon<sup>44</sup>**, with the second version run in November 2020. The winners in the 2019<sup>45</sup> event developed solutions in areas such as approaching digital education with engagement methodologies, improving collaboration among students, supporting teachers to develop digital teaching games, and a climate change action hub.

The revised Digital Action Plan of September 2020 emphasised that ‘digital’ was no longer something that was ‘special’ in education, but (as the Covid-19 school closures demonstrated) **digital is now pervasive and essential in teaching and learning**. However, the Covid-19 experiences had shown the many remaining challenges in digital education, such as access and inclusion, gender differences, and the varying skill and competences of teachers and learners. Of particular relevance to this study is the proposal to:

*“Establish a **European Digital Education Hub** to: support Member States by setting up a network of national advisory services on digital education to exchange experience and good practice on the enabling factors of digital education; link national and regional digital-education initiatives and strategies; and connect national authorities, the private sector, experts, education and training providers and civil society through various activities; monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and the development of digital education in Europe including through results from EU-supported projects and share good practice by contributing to research experimentation and systematic collection and analysis of empirical evidence, in part through peer learning; support cross-sector collaboration and new models for the seamless exchange of digital learning content.*”

The revised plan provides clear pointers for this study. First, digital content is a priority, especially where it involves innovative teaching and learning. Second, coordinated availability of multilingual content will maximise utility value. Third, as well as training teachers and learners in digital skills, there is significant value in the sharing of knowledge and competences and working together across subject and borders.

Further insights into the teaching of EU subjects came from the 2017 the **Eurydice** network survey of the **teaching of citizenship education in schools** across the EU<sup>46</sup>. Their conclusions further underlined that the topic was not so much mainstreamed as a curriculum subject, but it was taught more transversally across school curricula and activities. The main thematic results from the survey (Table 2.1) provide an initial framework within which to review the material from this study about the Jean Monnet

<sup>42</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/schools-go-digital_en)

<sup>43</sup> <https://codeweek.eu/schools>

<sup>44</sup> <https://digieduhack.com/en/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://digieduhack.com/en/year/2019/solutions-winners-2019>

<sup>46</sup>

[https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Citizenship\\_Education\\_at\\_School\\_in\\_Europe\\_%E2%80%93\\_2017](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Publications:Citizenship_Education_at_School_in_Europe_%E2%80%93_2017)



activities, looking at a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to both enrich curricula, and build knowledge and competences of educators through EU actions.

**Table 2.1: Eurydice 2017 Study outcomes on teaching of citizenship education in schools**

Eurydice 2017 outcomes	Considerations for this study
<p>While not necessarily being a mainstream curriculum subject in its own right, there is a rich portfolio of material that is adapted to each education level</p>	<p>A one-off set of core material about the EU cannot simply be adapted within the 27 Member State national curricula and at all levels.</p> <p>Consider raising the curriculum development activities of educators so that they can build focused curriculum materials.</p> <p>At the primary level, the focus is more on <i>“personal development and interpersonal interactions”</i>, and at secondary level on critical thinking at lower secondary and active citizenship and democratic participation at upper secondary levels.</p>
<p>Most countries use specific objectives to express the curriculum goals</p>	<p>In the past this has been more about fine-tuning the European goals to national goals. In the current populist climate, there are additional issues relating to more anti-Europe and pro-nationalist goals, plus the potential challenges of Brexit on maintaining European solidarity.</p>
<p>A transversal European theme (such as citizenship education) is usually integrated into other subjects</p>	<p>Ensure that the EU themes are linked to general aims, specific objectives and learning outcomes across the widest range of subject areas. This could involve base curricula materials that can be translated and re-purposed in the classroom. Additional value could be generated where the materials are available on a well-maintained resource hub.</p>
<p>Where the European theme is provided as a separate subject, there are substantial differences between countries in the duration of provision</p>	<p>Understand where the coverage is the richest and use the Open Method of Coordination to establish sharing of knowledge, skills and teaching competences across Member States.</p>
<p>Ensure that the ‘voice’ of the students and the parents is present in building curriculum resources.</p>	<p>Establish mechanisms for strong partnerships across all stakeholders in the education process.</p>

Eurydice 2017 outcomes	Considerations for this study
Provide teachers with guidelines for student assessment	Assess (using innovative as well as traditional mechanisms <sup>47</sup> ) and recognise the achievements of the learning outcomes in terms of EU added value through mechanisms such as EU prizes. Build added value for educators through the awarding of Digital badges, and develop micro-credentials that can build a portfolio for CPD.
A supply of trained teachers in the subject area at EU level as well as national level. Defined knowledge and competences linked to the subject area.	What are the social skills that bring the subject alive for students, parents, peers and the local community?
Guidance materials available to support teachers, supplemented by well-maintained links to other relevant material.	There are challenges of language availability, and the ability to implement material within a 'local' or national context.
CPD activities for school leaders organised or supported by top level education authorities	Should this be organised at country level?
Citizenship education in school-based IVET, compared to general education	The Eurydice study emphasises that this is a relatively weak area compare to schools, and only 7 of 28 Member States included citizenship education where they had national testing available. This is an area where attention and action is needed, particularly in the context of the role of education in the EU recovery plan <sup>48</sup> post-COVID-19 pandemic.

One message running through has been the importance of engaging teachers and students. In that context DG EAC has been helping to stimulate the embedding of core EU themes as curriculum subjects by directly engaging teachers to build curriculum resources. This has been within the remit of **European Schoolnet**<sup>49</sup> (EUN) and its operation of the **European Schoolnet Academy**<sup>50</sup> and the MOOCs (Figure 2.1) and other courses<sup>51</sup> and teaching materials that have been developed. For example, are courses on the use of the Europeana digital archive<sup>52</sup>, social media literacy<sup>53</sup>, and the European role in ceasing the use of animal testing in scientific experiments<sup>54</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> "Both traditional assessment methods such as multiple choice tests and alternative methods ... such as project-based assessment or self/peer assessment". Also consider developing interactive games.

<sup>48</sup> "first convergence, second resilience and transformation. Concretely, this means: repairing the damage caused by COVID-19, reforming our economies, remodelling our societies"

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-recovery-plan/>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.eun.org/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/>

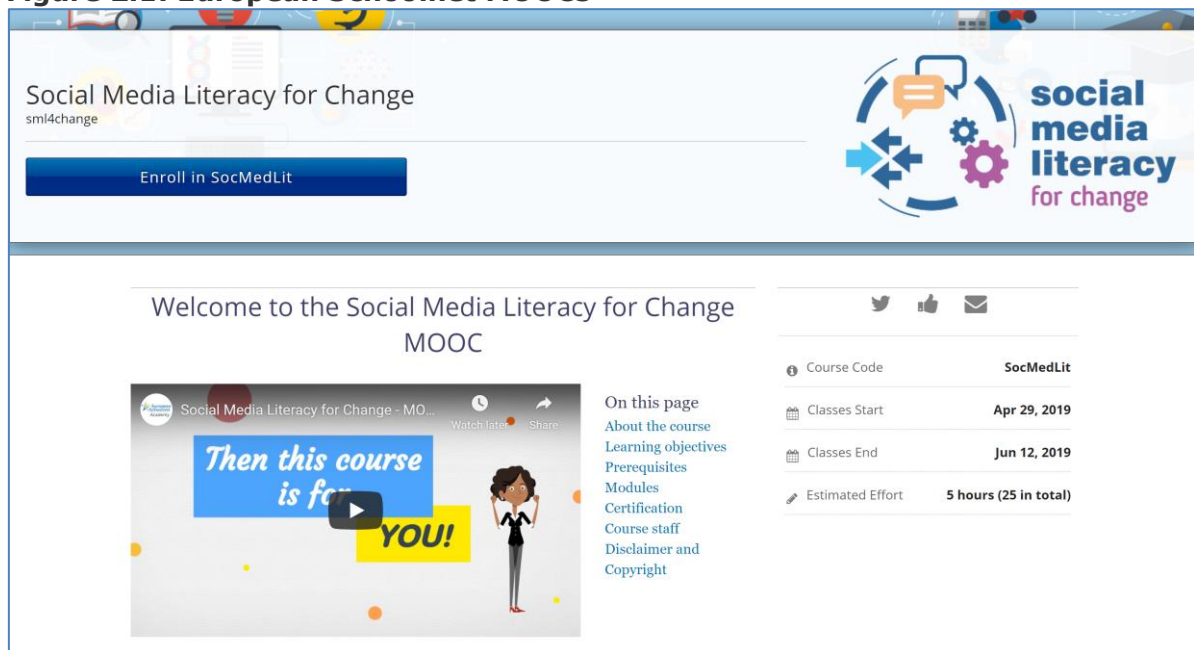
<sup>51</sup> <https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/courses>

<sup>52</sup> [https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/courses/course-v1:Europeana+Culture\\_EN+2020/about](https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/courses/course-v1:Europeana+Culture_EN+2020/about)

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/courses/course-v1:sml4change+SocMedLit+2019/about>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.europeanschoolnetacademy.eu/courses/course-v1:3Rs+AnimalsInScience+2020/about>

**Figure 2.1: European Schoolnet MOOCs**



Social Media Literacy for Change  
sml4change

Enroll in SocMedLit

social media literacy for change

Welcome to the Social Media Literacy for Change MOOC

Then this course is for YOU!

On this page  
 About the course  
 Learning objectives  
 Prerequisites  
 Modules  
 Certification  
 Course staff  
 Disclaimer and Copyright

Course Code	SocMedLit
Classes Start	Apr 29, 2019
Classes End	Jun 12, 2019
Estimated Effort	5 hours (25 in total)

Source: European Schoolnet

EUN brings together '**Future Classroom' Ambassadors** who "are networked professionals who address local audiences of teachers and their task is to support innovation and professional development. They are appointed by the national Ministry of Education (or an agency working on its behalf)"<sup>55</sup>. They support the multilingual Scientix<sup>56</sup> portal (Figure 2.2) for science teachers across Europe, and this animates a community of practice, organises physical and online events, maintains interest through an active newsfeed, and structures resources related to EU issues and topics, and which can be readily implemented in the classroom.

<sup>55</sup> <https://fcl.eun.org/fcl-ambassadors>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.scientix.eu/>

Figure 2.2: Scientix Portal



Source: European Schoolnet

The **curriculum development model used by EUN** is strongly collaborative. When an EU-relevant topic is identified a call is made via Ministries of Education for interested teachers to take part in a project to develop a specific curriculum based on detailed and formal learning scenarios, and clear learning outcomes. This usually involves 24 teachers from 12 countries, or 12 from 6 countries if budget is limited<sup>57</sup>, who meet on two occasions at EUN in Brussels. There is a strong focus on sustainability and outreach in these activities, and the teachers are asked to:

- Test these learning scenarios by implementing them in the classroom and support the measurement of the impact of the implementation.
- Support the creation of an online massive course to help other teachers address animal welfare, sustainable science and critical thinking in their classes.
- Promote the adoption of these learning scenarios at the national level.
- Help disseminate the project through delivering webinars, promoting in social media, and producing content for newsletters.

A **MOOC** that accompanies the curriculum developments can lead to certification via **digital badges**<sup>58</sup>, and becoming part of a trans-European network of teachers<sup>59</sup>. EUN further works with Ministries of Education across Europe to establish working groups on themes of common interest, such as digital citizenship<sup>60</sup>.

A final potential European-level curriculum activity that is yet to be a formal part of curricula is the **use of games** to build on the creative potential of the digital transformation and make issues participatory. One example in the Netherlands has been the use by Geodan of Minecraft (over 140 million copies downloaded, so it is a pervasive

<sup>57</sup> For example:

[http://www.scientix.eu/documents/10137/847404/3Rs\\_Call\\_for\\_ambassadors\\_v09.pdf/a034bfa9-610b-45aa-bfa1-9771db623427](http://www.scientix.eu/documents/10137/847404/3Rs_Call_for_ambassadors_v09.pdf/a034bfa9-610b-45aa-bfa1-9771db623427)

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.eun.org/professional-development/academy>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.eun.org/professional-development/teacher-communities>

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.eun.org/about/working-groups>

game) to engage children and youths in planning and environmental sustainability. The Geocraft<sup>61</sup> (Figure 2.3) resource has built a detailed 3-D map of the Netherlands down to street, building, and feature level using 100 million Minecraft blocks.

**Figure 2.3: Geocraft Application**



Source: Geodan

Students can add features (such as trees or other very local features), and in a new 'Ecocraft' module "to be powered by UN Environment and partners, users must also weigh up environmental and other planning factors while designing the cities of tomorrow" – the City of Amsterdam used this in an event involving 500 young people (Figure 2.4) at the Ajax football stadium in 2018 "to simulate building more sustainable cities on one of the world's most popular computer games"<sup>62</sup>, and the City emphasised that they would take the best solutions away as potential policy developments.

<sup>61</sup> <https://geocraft.nl/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://connectingnature.eu/news/ecocraft-take-gaming-another-level-greening-minecraft%C2%A9>

**Figure 2.4: Amsterdam Geocraft Event**



Source: Geodan

One further innovative application based on the same concept is a 4-D global representation of the globe<sup>63</sup>, going back in time to see the evolving environment.

One further means of uncovering the extent to which EU issues are embedded in curriculum activities (rather than being formally embedded in the rubric of a curriculum) have been **EU prizes for innovative teaching and learning**. Prizes are 'discovery tools' that encourage teachers and learners to articulate their activities and to formally document them. Success has been achieved with competitions such as Jan Amos Comenius<sup>64</sup> prizes for innovative teaching about the EU, and the Altiero Spinelli<sup>65</sup> prize for innovative outreach relating to European identity.

The **Jan Amos Comenius Prize for high quality teaching about the European Union** was awarded earlier this year for the first time, to 22 secondary schools from across the EU. The prize seeks to reward secondary schools that help their pupils learn about the European Union in ways that inspire<sup>66</sup>. The prize identified a number of examples of good practice, and also showcased the diversity of innovative teaching and learning practice that takes place at the level of schools:

- Spanish award winner '*IES Manuel de Falla*' (a public upper-secondary bilingual school) received the Prize for its 'EUducation: A Different Approach' project, led by its Junior Ambassadors, and focused on teaching about the EU, its objectives and institutions. Based on the idea 'when one teaches, two learn', the Junior Ambassadors at this school have co-created resources that focus on teaching

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.geofort.nl/en/home-engels/>

<sup>64</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/jan-amos-comenius-prize-winners-announced\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/jan-amos-comenius-prize-winners-announced_en)

<sup>65</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/funding-opportunities/altiero-spinelli-prize-for-outreach-call-for-applications-2019\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/funding-opportunities/altiero-spinelli-prize-for-outreach-call-for-applications-2019_en)

<sup>66</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/funding-opportunities/jan-amos-comenius-prize\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/funding-opportunities/jan-amos-comenius-prize_en);  
[https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/jan-amos-comenius-prize-winners-announced\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/jan-amos-comenius-prize-winners-announced_en)

about the EU, its objectives and institutions. The activities enhance the students' sense of belonging to the EU and their motivation to participate in European-level democratic processes. Learning groups, e-twinning projects, social networks, webpages and a wide range of ICT tools are used, along with an escape room, flash mobs, podcasts, quizzes and a kahoot activity. The activities are a permanent activity at the school<sup>67</sup>.

- Italy's *Liceo Chris Cappell* in Anzio won the prize for its 'Cittadinanza europea'<sup>68</sup> initiative. The school is a public high school for classical studies, music and the humanities. The project mainstreams the EU across the school and all age groups, through a flipped classroom approach, a website, integrated teaching materials, contests, debating and active learning. The scope of the work is broad, ranging from the governance and institutions of the EU to rights and responsibilities of European citizens, and history and economic integration of Europe. Following the success of these activities, the school is reaching out to local institutions that can adopt a similar methodology for their own students<sup>69</sup>.

The European Commission provides coordinated support to schools and individuals through the **Permanent Representations**<sup>70</sup> in each Member State, where they "connect with national, regional and local authorities and stakeholders, organise visits of the President and the Commissioners, provide the Commission with political information and analysis, maintain media relations, and communicate to various audiences".

Finally, the European Parliament actively supports schools and students in developing their sense of European citizenship. The **Euroscola**<sup>71</sup> programme (currently during the Covid-19 pandemic operating 'virtually':

*"offers an immersive experience in the Chamber of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, allowing high-school students to learn about European integration by experiencing it first hand. Students from the 27 EU Member States are selected to become Members of the European Parliament for one day. They take the floor in plenary and committee sessions to debate and vote on resolutions on current affairs, all the while practising their language skills and making friends with fellow students from across Europe. Teachers also have the opportunity to meet their colleagues and exchange feedback about their own classroom practices & experiences"*.

The **European Parliament Ambassador Schools (EPAS)**<sup>72</sup> programme has been a significant contribution to raising democracy and European citizenship values in young people across the EU. Schools apply against specific criteria to be certified as an EPAS, and they can display a plaque which is presented at a yearly award ceremony. After following a programme of activities teachers can become 'Senior Ambassadors' (6 modules covering the History of the EU, How the EU affects your life, Decision-making, Europe without borders, European values and Your voice in Europe). Students can be 'Junior Ambassadors', which involves establishing and maintaining an information resource (physical and virtual) in their school. Events are organised around the Europe Day on 9 May each year. There is extensive social media support for the initiative.

<sup>67</sup> <https://ambassadorsfalla.wixsite.com/ourproject>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.liceochriscappell.edu.it/concorso-jean-amos-comenius-cittadinanza-europea/>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.liceochriscappell.edu.it/>

<sup>70</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/contact/representations-member-states\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/contact/representations-member-states_en)

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/euroscola/en/home.html>

<sup>72</sup> <http://www.ambassadorschool.eu/>

## Levels of knowledge and understanding of EU issues across European societies

Insights into the extent to which EU topics are 'known' by EU citizens come from the extensive range of **Eurobarometer Surveys**, and they help to identify some trends over time, but importantly they provide robust quantitative evidence about differences of opinion across countries, and about the priority issues that could be addressed across education systems.

Six more recent surveys have been studied to extract the key statistics. We avoid too much 'then and now' comparisons, with statements such as 'x% understood an issue in 2012 and y% in 2019', although where Eurobarometer have normalised and standardised data, we do note their comparisons over time.

First, as noted earlier in this study, the sample populations are very different, and a more longitudinal survey would be needed in an evaluation to find whether understanding had increased. Second, it would be difficult to differentiate (even using contribution theory) out whether an increase (or decrease) was due to developments (or lack of) in national curricula development, use of EU actions, or other factors. Third, as noted earlier, the 2020 context is dramatically different from 2012, and a primary challenge now it to scope how to move ahead. For example, Standard Eurobarometer 92 explicitly notes that the survey was undertaken within the context of specific EU and national issues that may affect how people respond to the questions at this particular point in time.

The six surveys are:

1. Standard Eurobarometer 92: "*Public opinion in the European Union*" (December 2019)<sup>73</sup>. This report looked at public opinion in the Autumn of 2019, providing comparisons with the levels measured in the Spring of 2019.
2. Flash Eurobarometer 485. EU Citizenship and Democracy (July 2020)<sup>74</sup>.
3. Flash Eurobarometer 478. Views of Young People (April 2019)<sup>75</sup>.
4. Flash Eurobarometer 455. European Youth (January 2018)<sup>76</sup>.
5. Flash Eurobarometer 466. European Education Area (May 2018)<sup>77</sup>.
6. Standard Eurobarometer 93<sup>78</sup> "Public Opinion in the EU". Published on 23 October 2020, and reflecting the views of EU citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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<sup>73</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2255>

<sup>74</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2260>

<sup>75</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2224>

<sup>76</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2163>

<sup>77</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2186>

<sup>78</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/standard/surveyky/2262>

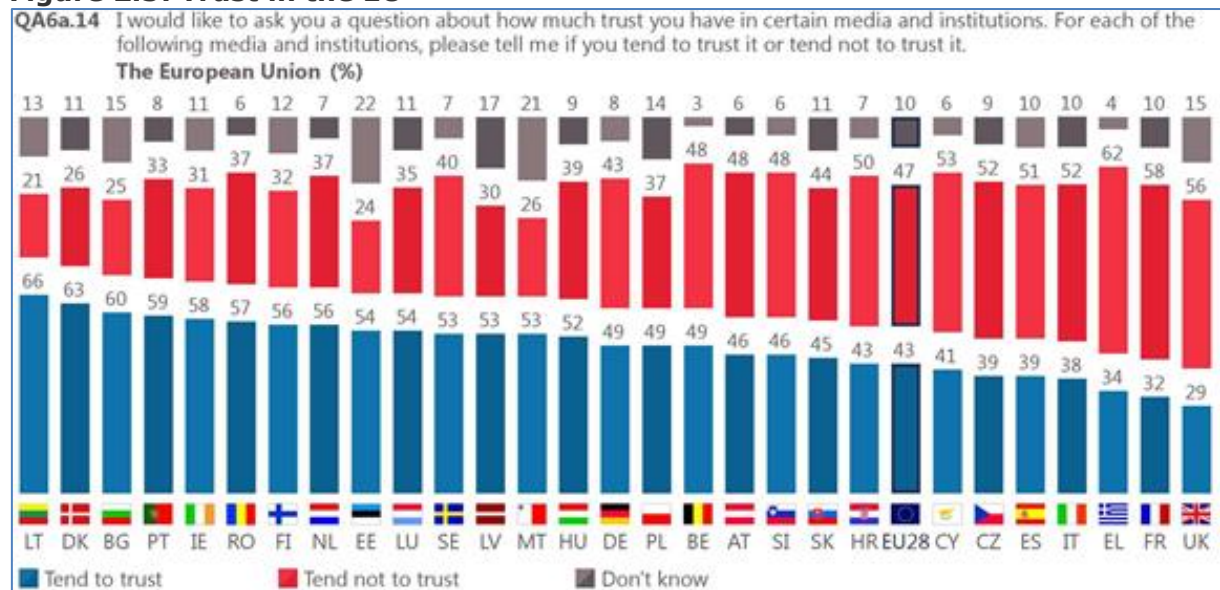


## Standard Eurobarometer 92 (December 2019)

43% of Europeans **trust the EU**, and 47% “tend not to trust”. However, this broadly is similar to the distrust of national governments (61%) and national parliaments (60%). The challenge of EU citizenship is therefore strongly related to building national citizenship<sup>79</sup>.

Looking at the individual Member States (Figure 2.5): The most **positive** about trust are Lithuania (66%), Denmark (63%) and Bulgaria (60%). The **lowest** are France (32%) and Greece (34%). (This survey also covered the UK where the level was 29%, but the UK leaves the EU at the end of 2020 and is not covered in this study).

**Figure 2.5: Trust in the EU**



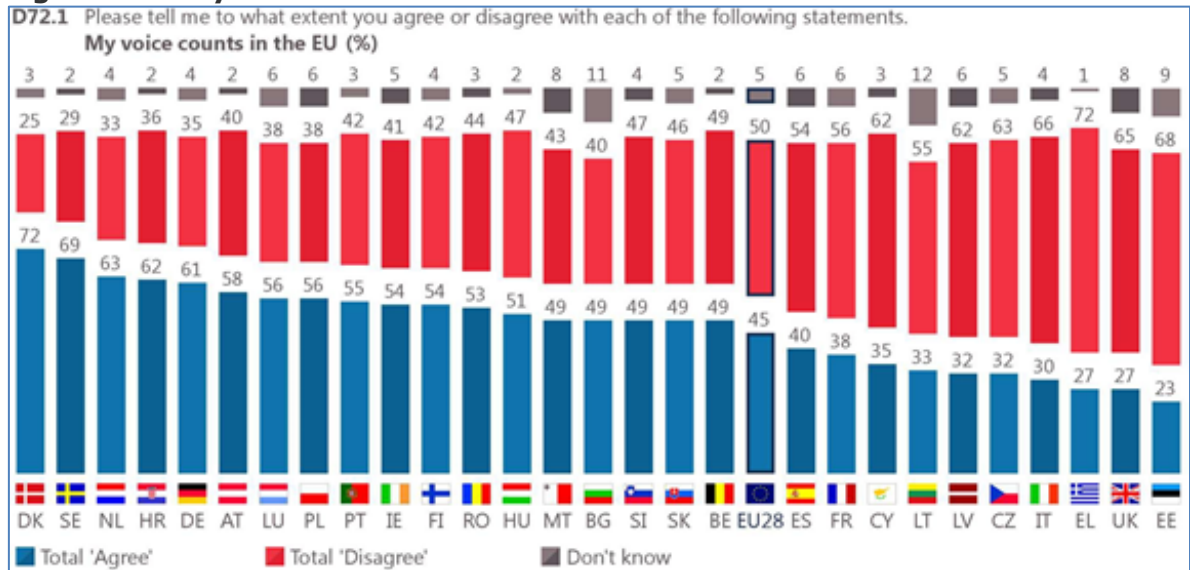
Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92

**Trust in the EU has increased** since spring 2019, in Bulgaria (+5 percentage points) and Romania (+5). **Declines** were in Cyprus (-13), Spain (-8), Lithuania (-6), Estonia (-6) and Austria (-6). Wide differences across countries continue (Figure 2.6) with the views about whether citizen voices ‘count’ in the EU. From 72% in Denmark to 23% in Estonia, with Greece having 72% of citizens who are negative about this issue, it remains clear that there are wide variations in views towards the EU between countries, and citizens in some (such as Greece and Italy) are more consistently negative in their views.

<sup>79</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2255>

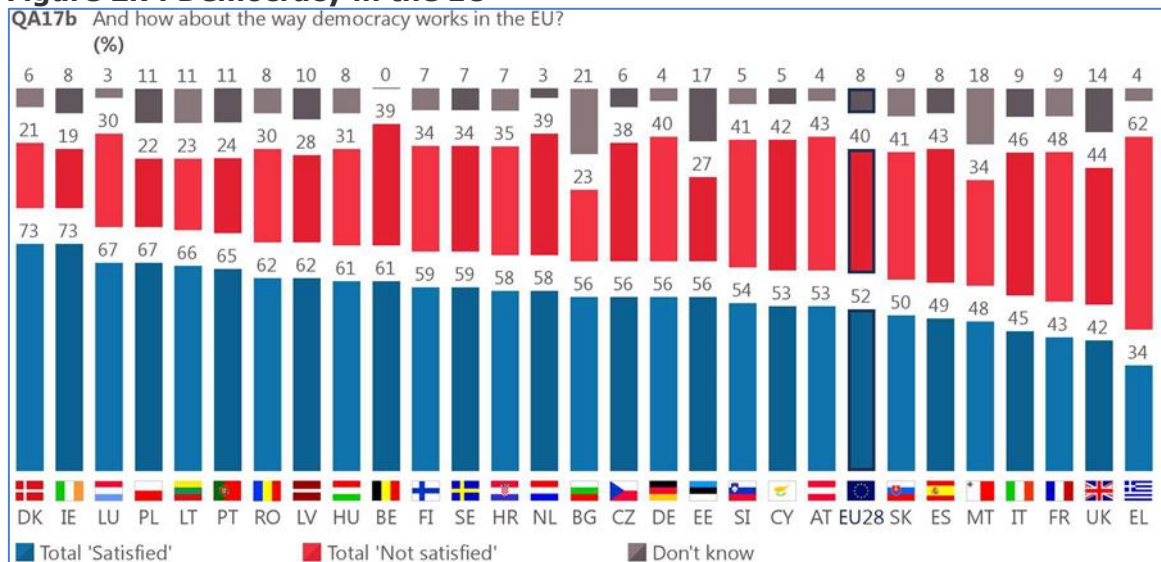
**Figure 2.6: 'My voice counts in the EU'**



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92

Satisfaction with the way that democracy works in the EU had been increasing (Figure 2.7) since the spring of 2016, but it reduced by 3 percentage points in this survey. Denmark shows strong positive views in the three areas of trust, a voice counting, and satisfaction with democracy.

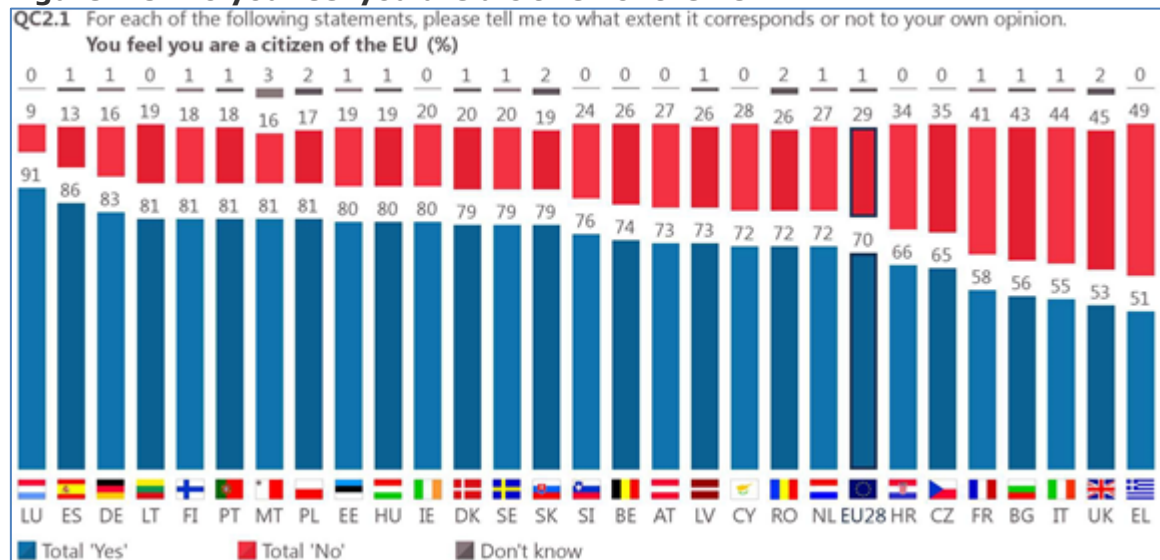
**Figure 2.7: Democracy in the EU**



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92

A feeling of being a 'citizen of the EU' (Figure 2.8) again saw Greece and Italy with large proportions of the respondents being negative. Luxembourg is strongly positive.

**Figure 2.8: Do you feel you are a citizen of the EU?**



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92

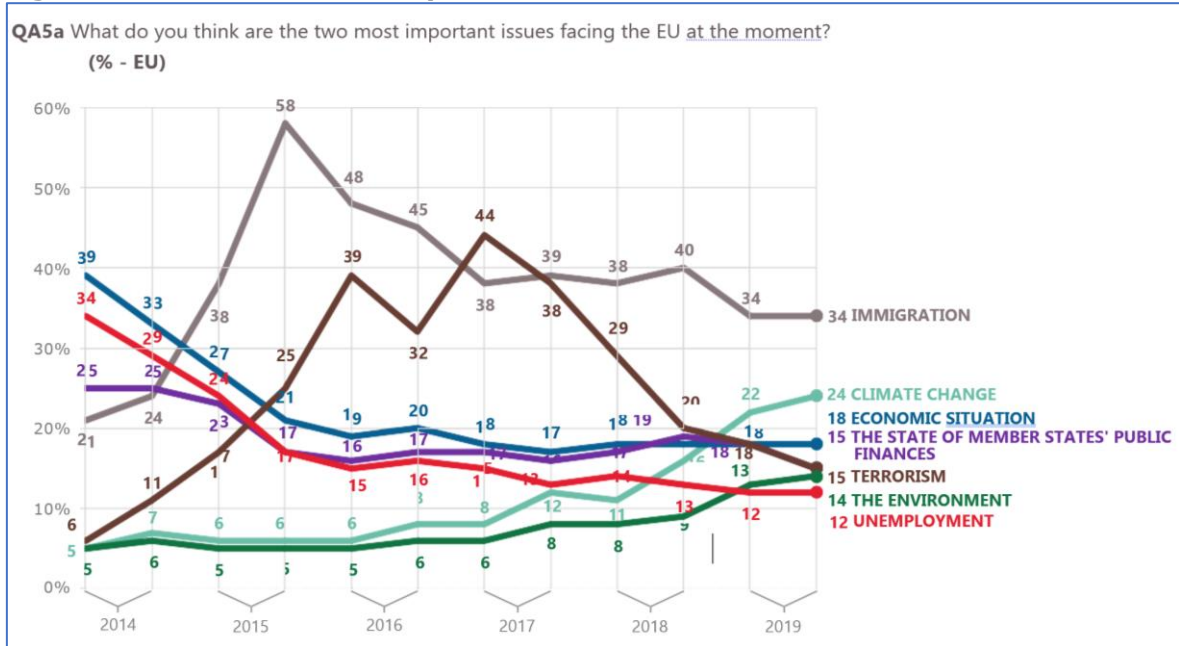
QA5a in the survey asked: “**what do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?**”. This table is particularly informative in that it shows how a politically and socially sensitive issue such as migration can dominate the public discourse. It also shows the strong growth of public concern over climate change and the environment. However, it further highlights how responses may be contingent on the situation at the particular points of time.

In 2019 the activities of Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg<sup>80</sup> brought climate change challenges to the forefront of public sensitivity. By contrast, unemployment reduced in importance from 34% in 2014 (as the EU emerged from the economic crisis and economies were generally more robust), to 12% in 2019. This may change dramatically as the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market leads to significant job losses.

It means that any focus on EU issues (Figure 2.9) need to be both relevant to the present, and future-proofed against changing social, political, and economic circumstances.

<sup>80</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta\\_Thunberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta_Thunberg)

**Figure 2.9: The two most important EU issues**



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92

In asking about issues at the national level the education system was only in eight position with 13% of Europeans mentioning it (NL was the highest at 25%).

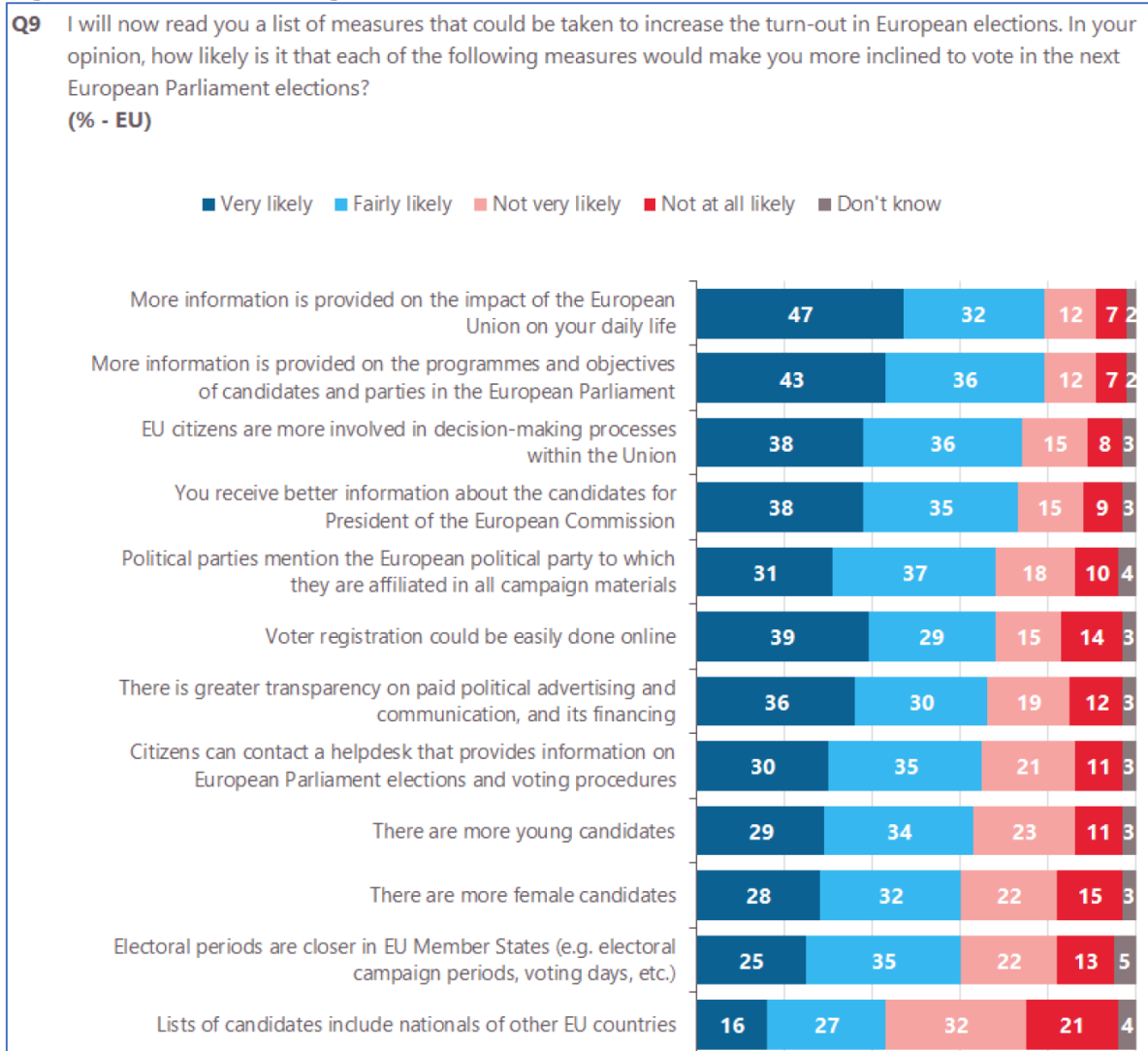
**Flash Eurobarometer 485. EU Citizenship and Democracy (July 2020)**

Between 27 February and 6 March 2020, a representative sample of respondents across 27 Member States were asked their opinion about citizenship and democracy, with comparisons being drawn against previous surveys in 2015, 2012, 2010 and 2007<sup>81</sup>.

A significant question gives a clear insight into the potential for stronger education about the role, values, and relevance of the EU (Figure 2.10). The most pressing response to a question about how to increase turn-out in EU elections was more information about the impact of the EU on our daily lives. Information from the earliest stage would be relevant in this context, along with a strong need for more information about how the EU takes decisions.

81

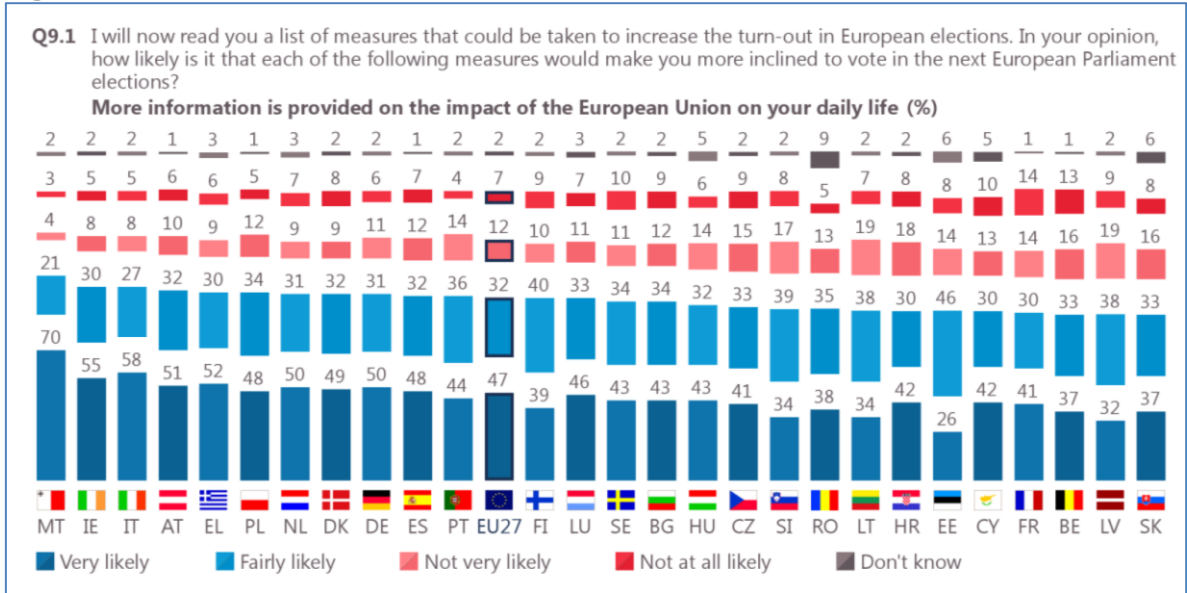
**Figure 2.10: Increasing turn-out in EU Elections**



Source: European Commission: Flash Eurobarometer 485

Across Member States the first priority does vary, with Malta having the strongest agreement. However, the combined percentages of very and fairly likely range from 91% in Malta to 70% in Slovakia (Figure 2.11). Furthermore, this should not simply be interpreted as Slovakia having the biggest challenge with information – it could also be the case that the priority of this issue was low because there has been good information availability.

**Figure 2.11: 'More information is needed'**

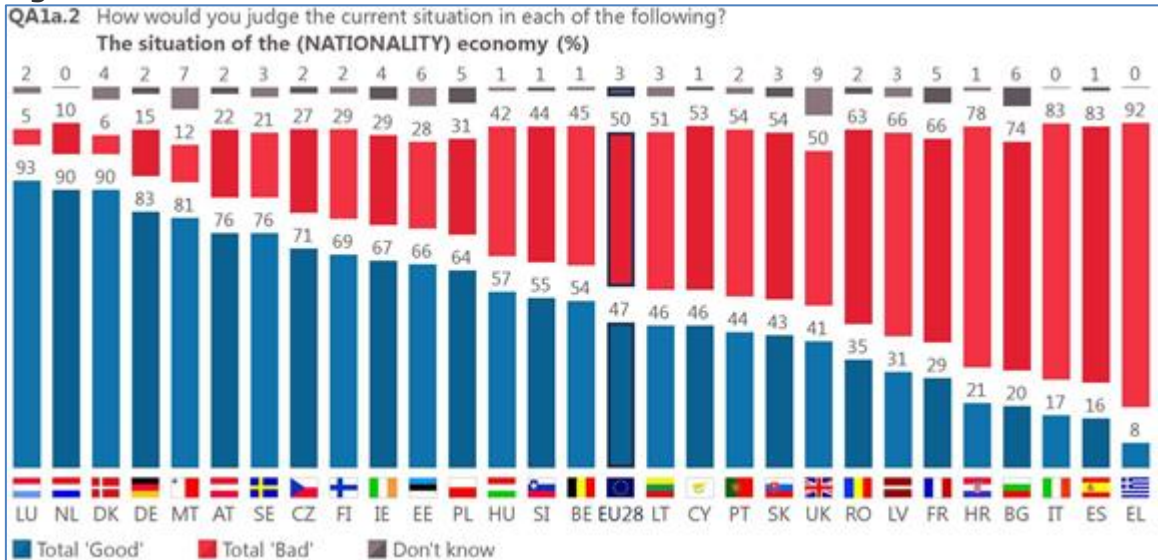


Source: European Commission: Flash Eurobarometer 485

When the responses to questions were disaggregated by age there seems to be much more awareness of EU citizenship among young people. Overall, respondents who had remained in full-time education beyond the age of 16 were more familiar (up to 93%) with the term 'EU citizenship' than those who had left education (83%). This may indicate that the concept of EU citizenship is something that is better understood by young adults who remain in education. The survey further identified that those who remain in full-time education beyond 16 are more inclined to consider the political parties in European elections if the political parties in their own countries mentioned their affiliation to EU parties.

There were very wide differences between countries regarding confidence (Figure 2.12) in their national economies, with a range between 8% in Greece and 93% in Luxembourg.

**Figure 2.12: Confidence in national economies**



Source: European Commission, Standard Eurobarometer 92

The overall demographic results from this survey do indicate that the younger respondents age group (15-24 years) are more positive about the issues related to European citizenship.

### **Flash Eurobarometer 478. Views of Young People (April 2019)**

This activity was a consultative process, where “during 2017 and 2018, young people from all over Europe were involved in a pan-European dialogue with decision-makers with a view to developing 11 European Youth Goals”<sup>82</sup>. The process was undertaken in the context of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027<sup>83</sup> (Youth meaning those aged 15-30). The 11 Goals are:

- Connecting EU with Youth; Equality of All Genders; Inclusive Societies; Information & Constructive Dialogue; Mental Health & Wellbeing; Moving Rural Youth Forward; Quality Employment for All; Quality Learning; Space and Participation for All; Sustainable Green Europe; Youth Organisations & European Programmes.

The ways in which the young people prioritised the goals can give some insight into the sorts of curricula topics that could be developed at secondary school and tertiary levels, although the nature of this process did not make it possible to potential differences between countries. The fact that young people prioritise EU action in certain areas means that more could be undertaken in those areas during the years of compulsory schooling. The overall finding across the EU 27 was:

- “fighting climate change (67%), improving education and training (56%), fighting poverty and economic and social inequalities (56%), boosting employment (49%) and improving health and well-being (44%)”.

This both identified four highly relevant thematic priorities for education, along with a desire of young people to improve the education and training systems in their countries. In that context the ongoing policy actions of the Commission (see above) are both supporting the improvement of education systems, and providing tools, resources, and funding actions to develop solutions with EU added value. Further insights were given into the competences needed by the young people.

- “The topics respondents most often say are not being taught sufficiently in schools are critical thinking, media and democracy (42%); climate change, environment and eco-friendly behaviours (41%) and entrepreneurship and financial competences (41%)”.

This conclusion does point towards a need less for subject-specific curriculum developments, and more for mobility opportunities, and developing the transversal skills and competences across the multi-disciplinary challenges facing young people.

### **Flash Eurobarometer 455. European Youth (January 2018)**

This survey of young people largely concurred with the priorities above of the later Eurobarometer 487:

- “The three areas where respondents are most likely to think the EU should take action to encourage young people to express solidarity are: education and training (68%), employment (49%), and welfare and social assistance (37%). From a second list of options, half (50%) think the EU should take action in the

<sup>82</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2224>

<sup>83</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en)

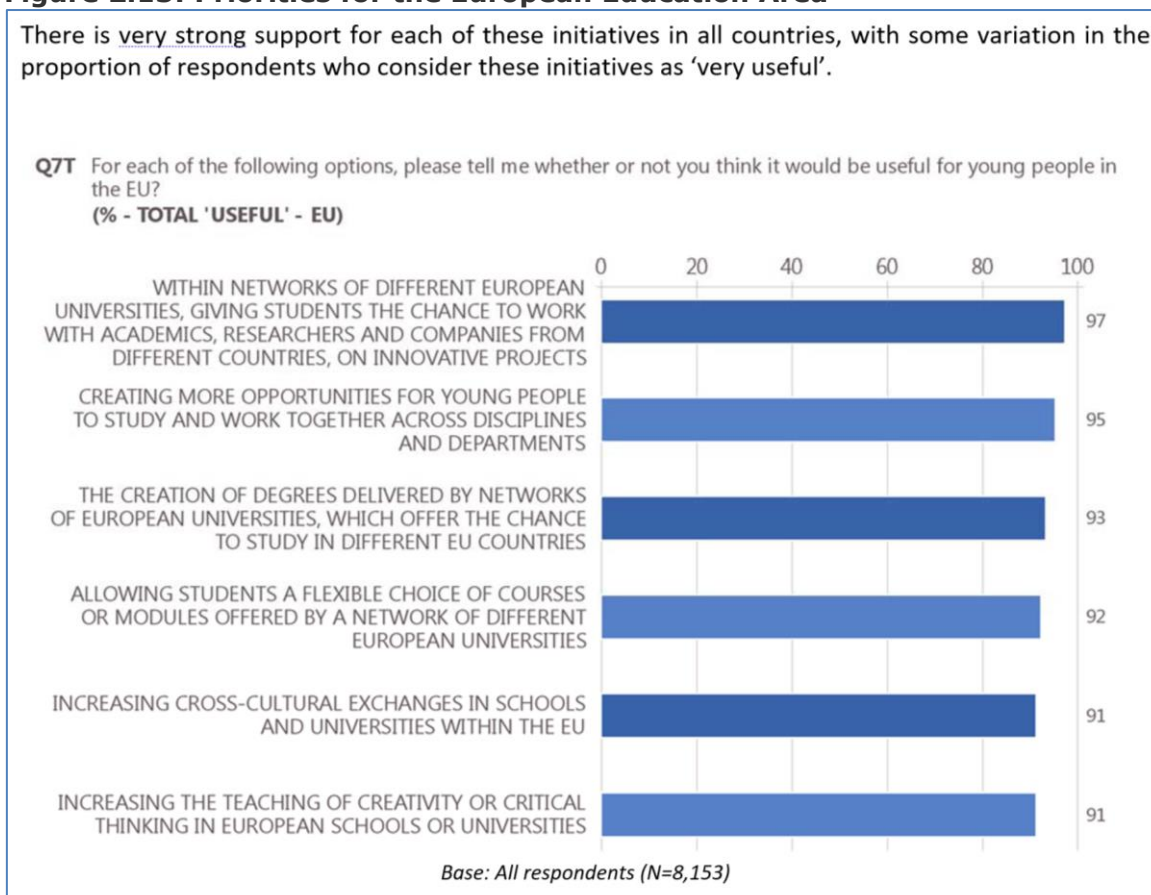
area of health and well-being, while 49% mention protection of the environment and nature. Almost four in ten mention creativity and culture (38%)”<sup>84</sup>.

### Flash Eurobarometer 466. European Education Area (May 2018)

The last Eurobarometer in this context was more one that looked ahead to the modernised and collaborative education systems<sup>85</sup> that would be needed across Member States in the 2020s, with the aim to focus on the full development of the European Education Area by 2025. The new Communication of September 2020 was introduced earlier in this report.

Figure 2.13 shows strong agreement by respondents to six priority areas.

**Figure 2.13: Priorities for the European Education Area**



Source: European Commission: Flash Eurobarometer 466

The responses in Figure 2.13 help to bring together many of the issues articulated across the Eurobarometer surveys, and contribute to the conclusions and recommendations in section 4:

- Mobility, sharing of expertise, and building solutions at the EU level delivers local, national, and EU added value.

<sup>84</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2163>

<sup>85</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/FLASH/surveyKy/2186>



- There are strong differences across countries regarding trust and knowledge. While the Open Method of Coordination has value at the policy level, the use of funding mechanisms has been successful at building synergies.
- Transversal skills and competences are fundamental, and the development of curriculum activities should help to build critical thinking in young people.
- Innovative and creative education is at the heart of making the EU issues 'live and relevant' for young people.
- Digital is pervasive in the post Covid-19 teaching and learning context. However, it must also be fully inclusive.

### **Standard Eurobarometer 93<sup>86</sup> Public Opinion in the EU (October 2020)**

This Eurobarometer was published as this report was being drafted. It provides an early indication of the opinions of EU citizens in the context of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic:

*"64% of Europeans think that the situation is 'bad' and 42% of Europeans think that their country's economy will recover from the adverse effects of the coronavirus outbreak 'in 2023 or later' ... Europeans are divided (45% 'satisfied' vs 44% 'not satisfied') regarding the measures taken by the EU to fight the pandemic. However, 62% say they trust the EU to make the right decisions in the future, and 60% remain optimistic about the future of the EU"<sup>87</sup>.*

While the early analysis is not disaggregated by age, it does show the sharp change (Figure 2.14) in opinion about the priority issues as people fear for their health, their jobs, and the general economy. Education does not appear in the top three priorities for any Member State. However, the ranking of education should not be taken as meaning it is not seen as very important. More, it shows how the pandemic has led to unprecedented levels of economic and health damage, with the European Commission undertaking a coordinated social, health, and economic response to the ongoing situation<sup>88</sup>.

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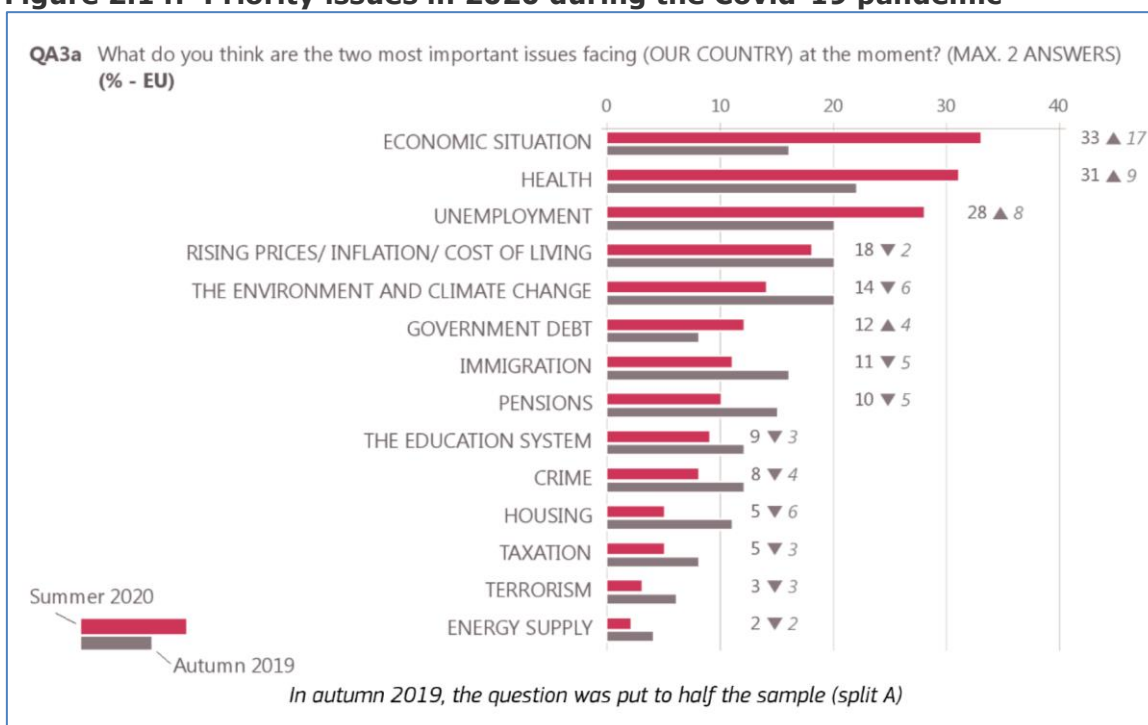
<sup>86</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/standard/surveyky/2262>

<sup>87</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_1975](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1975)

<sup>88</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en)

**Figure 2.14: Priority issues in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic**



Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 93

### Looking ahead to an enhanced Jean Monnet programme

To date the Jean Monnet Actions<sup>89</sup> within Erasmus+ were designed to support higher education in building “bridges between academics, researchers and EU policymakers”. This was undertaken through the development of ‘modules’ which were short programmes or courses for the teaching of EU studies. Jean Monnet Chairs were specialised senior academic posts for specialised teaching of EU studies over a three-year period.

The previous studies, the EU actions, and the recent survey results show that there is value for young people in learning about the EU, about how it functions, and how being an active citizen can ensure the development of active participation in EU society and the strengthening of democratic values.

Further developing EU citizenship and EU values in young people is even more critical on the current Covid-19 pandemic, with its dramatic impact on jobs, poverty, and health. However, the coordinated European approach<sup>90</sup> to Covid-19 shows clearly how essential it is to have a cohesive European response to an urgent global challenge. However, such as response is being taken within a challenging social and political climate across the EU, with the departure of the UK from the Union, the growth of populism, and an increase of extremism which may put at risk the foundations of the EU.

The emphasis of the current Jean Monnet programme on education, learning, EU issues and citizenship make it a relevant vehicle to extend coverage from just higher education to general education. In general education the emphasis ranges across learning the facts to developing critical thinking skills and competences – this can be an organic process from primary to upper secondary levels. Schools and teachers will need to be

<sup>89</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/jean-monnet\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/jean-monnet_en)

<sup>90</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en)

supported in the education activities, involving professional development opportunities “for creating content on the Union and a more inclusive classroom atmosphere using ICT and working in a multilingual / multicultural environment”. Importantly, these activities should be fully inclusive across the education spectrum for young people and involve VET institutions.

The overall objective of the policy on the European dimension of teaching and the new activities in the programme will promote a better understanding of the EU, its mechanisms and how it functions in primary, secondary and vet general education and training (ISCED 1 – 4). The aim is to empower teachers in schools to teach about the EU in engaging ways, and:

- Help young people to gain knowledge and understanding of the European Union, including the multi-perspectives of its history, values and aims, its institutions and decision-making processes’.
- Enhance the young citizens’ critical awareness of what the European Union stands for, help them to understand the difference that the EU makes to people’s daily lives including at local level by engaging pupils and students in projects about European citizenship rights as expressed in the rationale behind the European way of life’.
- Enhance pupils’ understanding of the European integration process and their motivation to participate in the democratic processes (elections, active participation in society through political parties, trade unions, NGOs, citizens’ representations such as pupils’ and students’ organisations, debates, citizens dialogues, surveys, etc. and at all levels – global, European, national, regional and in particular at local level) that will shape the future of the European Union’.
- Train and support teachers to better inform and inspire pupils and students in and outside of the classroom through formal, non-formal and informal learning about the European Union, using innovative approaches and methodologies tailor-made and appealing to children and young people.

The activities to be added to the Jean Monnet initiative are:

**Jean Monnet “Learning\_EU” Initiatives** will boost learning about the European Union in ways that inspire. They will be proposed by a general education institution (ISCED 1 – 4) and may be implemented with the support of higher education institutions or other organisations (NGOs, Associations, etc.). Activities should include the development of specific content (e.g. democracy, climate protection, EU history, cultural diversity) to be taught during the school year, summer schools or project weeks, study visits, seminars and debates, and other immersive activities.

**Jean Monnet Teachers Trainings** at Initial and in-service level will support educational staff. They may be developed, organised, and delivered in traditional and/or online format (MOOCs, blended learning). They should be structured and their output certified and recognised.

#### **Dialogue with the stakeholders:**

- 3a) Projects: Projects will support innovation, cross-fertilisation, and the spread of European Union content (e.g., linked to the European Green Deal, European Way of Life, Digital Education Action Plan, Social inclusion, European Education Area, etc.). They last between 12 and 24 months. They may explore new angles and different methodologies in view of making European Union subjects more attractive, or may promote discussion and

reflection among the education stakeholders (e.g. civil society and local authorities).

- 3b) Networks: Networks will foster the creation and development of consortia for sharing and discussing about teaching content and methodologies. They should gather at least five institutions from at least three different countries.

### 3. Country Summaries

Country experts were asked to compile reports relating to their country. Summary fiches of their key points and country-focused recommendations follow.

#### Austria

##### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Surveys on the state of young people's knowledge and attitudes conducted since 2013 show a **tendency of rising positive attitudes towards the EU** between 2014 and 2020<sup>91</sup>. From age 15 to age 20 the positive attitude declines somewhat. The attitude is also more positive in general academic school, and least positive among apprentices.

While some other surveys also point to a predominantly positive attitude among young people<sup>92</sup>, the Eurobarometer of May 2018<sup>93</sup> shows that only 49% of 15 to 25-year-olds are interested in European affairs; this interest increases with age and higher education. In 2012-13, a kind of 'competence analysis' observing the knowledge of young people about the EU was included in the survey<sup>94</sup>. It showed that more than half of the respondents gave incorrect answers to most of the basic questions. Moreover, a slight majority (58%) had felt to be insufficiently informed by school, 55% had not taken part in any informative activity about the EU so far.

##### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

###### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The **School Organisation Act** (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*), referring to the goals of schools, mentions that young people should be able to participate in Austria, Europe, and the world. The Teacher Education Colleges Act (*Pädagogische Hochschulen Gesetz* 2005) refers to the European dimension in the guiding principles.

The main decrees concern the regulation of assessment and of final exams. The general decree about assessment (*Leistungsbeurteilungsverordnung-LBVO*) does not mention Europe nor civic education (*politische Bildung*)<sup>95</sup>. The specific decree about the maturity exam of the academic secondary school (*AHS*) also does not mention Europe, but it refers to civic education in a suffix to 'History and Social Studies' as a topic for oral exams.<sup>96</sup> In the Colleges for Higher Vocational Education (*BHS*), Europe is selectively mentioned as one of six or seven electives of the oral exam.

The decrees about the final examination in the VET school sectors mention Europe only in some minor special types expressively. However, the main school types do not include any explicit reference to Europe, rather as part of civic education. The new schools for pre-primary teaching include neither Europe nor civic education. The medium level VET schools also do not include a reference to Europe, signalling that this topic might be only interesting for the advanced school types.

<sup>91</sup> Please note: The status of the sample is not clear, nor is it clear to what extent the results could be representative or whether the more interested part of the young people would rather participate.

<sup>92</sup> <https://jugendvonheute.de/jugend-trend-monitor-2017-neue-studie-zeigt-wie-oesterreichs-jugend-tickt/>

<sup>93</sup> News & APA (7.6.2018) Jugendliche: Wenig Interesse an der EU. Keine hohe Bedeutung bei 15-24-Jährigen - aber großer Wunsch nach Mobilität.

<sup>94</sup> "Wozu EU?" – EU-Kompetenzanalyse von ÖGfE und WKO an österreichischen Schulen. April 2013

<sup>95</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/ksthf6c>

<sup>96</sup> §27, „13. „Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Politische Bildung“ <https://tinyurl.com/y52vrao5>

In addition to the civics instructional principle, another instructional principle directly addresses the topic of Europe in schools: European policy education (*Europapolitische Bildungsarbeit*). However, except for the listing in a National Education Report 2012 chapter that analyses the instructional principles, no reference can be found about this principle. A main innovative collection of instructional material for civic education based on the new competence-oriented approach addresses European topics in two out of 22 exemplary materials (9%), confirming the average representation shown in the previous section (EU as a common house at primary level, and understanding the main European institutions at lower secondary level)<sup>97</sup>.

Moreover, the 'instruction principle political education' (*Politische Bildung*)<sup>98</sup> was introduced in 2015 as a cross-curricular teaching principle at all school levels<sup>99</sup>. Dealing with issues of the European Union as well as with Europe-wide questions and topics is part of political education.

In the **primary school curriculum**<sup>100</sup> reference to Europe is made under seven rather general aspects (general goal, didactic principles, intercultural and social learning, experience with communities and with space, and foreign language learning). The reference to the didactic principles sets out the 'European dimension' as a topic of attitudes, mindsets, and orientations.

The curriculum for the **lower secondary common school track** (now *Mittelschule*)<sup>101</sup> includes reference to Europe in the introductory guiding principles and under the subject matters of Latin (that is not really chosen in this school, see below academic school), history and social matters (e.g. European values, EU Human Rights Charter, foundation and development of the EU, Austrian accession and related changes and influences of the EU), geography and economic matters (e.g. EU regional policy, Economic and Monetary Union), and vocational orientation. In the guiding principles, reference is made first to a participative process of Europeanisation and globalisation that poses issues to interculturality and equity, and second emphasis must be given to a regional, Austrian, and European identity considering openness to the world.

In the **academic secondary school**, the curricula for the lower secondary section are more or less identical with the compulsory lower secondary school. Reference to Europe is made in several subjects, foreign language learning, the classical subjects of Latin and Greek, history, geography, mathematics, chemistry and arts education.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

Little is known about how the EU dimension is processed in the everyday practices of schools. In general, textbook material and teacher education are seen as much more influential for teaching practice than curricula. However, civics education and European policy education are not formally institutionalised at this level. Support to European policy education is offered by the network 'Netzwerk Europa in der Schule'<sup>102</sup> managed

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<sup>97</sup> Ammerer, H.; Krammer, R.; Windischbauer, E., Eds. (2009) Politische Bildung konkret. Beispiele für kompetenzorientierten Unterricht. Edition polis. Vienna: Zentrum polis – Politik Lernen in der Schule.

<sup>98</sup> [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulrecht/rs/1997-2017/2015\\_12.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulrecht/rs/1997-2017/2015_12.html),

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.schule.at/portale/politische-bildung/>

<sup>100</sup> [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/lp/lp\\_vs.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/lp/lp_vs.html);

[https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/dam/jcr:b89e56f6-7e9d-466d-9747-fa739d2d15e8/lp\\_vs\\_gesamt\\_14055.pdf](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/dam/jcr:b89e56f6-7e9d-466d-9747-fa739d2d15e8/lp_vs_gesamt_14055.pdf)

<sup>101</sup> [https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/lp/lp\\_nms.html](https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/lp/lp_nms.html);

<https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/Bundesnormen/NOR40207228/NOR40207228.pdf>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.politik-lernen.at/site/projekte/netzwerkeuropainderschule/>;

[https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20161128\\_OTS0149/mehr-europa-in-die-schulen-bild](https://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20161128_OTS0149/mehr-europa-in-die-schulen-bild)

by the 'Zentrum polis' institute. It was founded in 2016 by around 100 school leaders and has since organised an annual meeting of its members on a topic related to the EU.

The participating school representatives can establish contacts with groups and individuals working on this topic for further cooperation. Further initiatives of the network are the organisation of an annual 3-day teachers' trip to Brussels (approx. 20 teachers) and the creation of Ambassador Schools (programme by the European Parliament; with currently 60 Austrian schools participating).

Plenty of material for civic education is available from institutions formally outside or at the margin of the educational establishment, which must be actively sought by interested teachers<sup>103</sup>. Europe is considered as part of this material, however, to a minor extent. The main message about Europe coming out of the material is that still the national level is the main focus, and this level is seen as stepwise embedded in Europe and the world, the latter two being weighed similarly as parts of the environment of Austria. A rather strong difference is made between the European institutions and the EU on the one hand and the wider Europe on the other.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

Necessary but not sufficient factors might be to embed Europe in the curricula and provide material for teaching. To establish a degree of obligation and commitment about providing these topics in schools and among teachers is a further condition for effective teaching. Clear concepts and a lively discourse about Europe are further conditions for effective teaching. To institutionalise European content clearly in textbooks and in teacher education are also seen as necessary ingredients for effective teaching that are, however, not fulfilled in Austria.

As European issues are framed to a high degree as political issues, an important factor also concerns the overall political climate and government politics towards Europe. This environment is quite problematic in Austria, as inconsequent, critical, and to some extent hostile attitudes prevail<sup>104</sup>. It is not easy to provide examples of good practice as there is only a small minority of schools that are heavily involved in European projects and these activities do not seem to be really feasible for mainstreaming. There is a wealth of material on civic education, but its use depends mainly on the individual commitment of teachers and their subjective attitude.

### Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

The main results are that attitudes among young people towards Europe are mainly positive, and knowledge is rather poor. Overall, the appraisal made by a 2004 diploma thesis<sup>105</sup> still holds true: there is a weak, unclear, and fragmented implementation of Europe in the curricula. Recommendations are:

- A necessary discourse of **conceptual clarification** about what EU-Europe means for Austria and Austrian youth. These are more or less missing.
- More clear mechanisms of how **EU-Europe related teaching can be broadened** and **intensified** in Austrian schools; much material is available; however, the fragmented **material** and **initiatives** should be more

<sup>103</sup> A collection of instructional material is also available to support schools to provide instruction related to EU topics – e.g. <https://tinyurl.com/y562rj76>

<sup>104</sup> See a recent analysis by the doyen of Austrian political science Pelinka, A. (2020). Im Schlafwagen nach Europa...und dort noch immer nicht angekommen. Wien. ÖGfE Policy Brief, 05/2020

<sup>105</sup> Feldbauer, F. (2004) „Europa“ in der schulischen politischen Bildung. Diplomarbeit an der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften der Universität Wien

**institutionalised**, e.g., through obligatory textbook material and teacher education.

- the **distribution and impact of participation in European projects** should be **evaluated**; may be **used more systematically**.

## Belgium (FL)

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

According to the Eurobarometer 2019<sup>106</sup> in general 75% of the Belgian people believe that Belgium has benefited from membership of the EU, and 68% believe that their voice counts in the EU.

The attitude of Flemish youngsters towards Europe is not entirely positive. There is awareness of the importance of the European Union, but also scepticism about the organizational and administrative complexity and about the lack of decisiveness or exposure to negative issues like Brexit. This became clear in 2017 in the opinion of young members of 4 major political parties, published in a magazine for university students<sup>107</sup>.

A recent survey of 11 Flemish youth work actors<sup>108</sup> shows that they are positive about the youth policy of Europe, but that almost half of them are not really aware of this policy. A recent study on international mobility in the context of study & learning in Flemish youth<sup>109</sup> concludes that major European programmes such as Erasmus+ and Youth in Action are suffering from complexity issues, financial boundaries, and a lack of active support for smaller interesting projects.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

All schools wishing to receive government funding are required to use an approved curriculum. There is not a national curriculum or a regional curriculum for Flanders. There are several networks of schools, among which the network of the Flemish Community (GO) and the network of Catholic Education Flanders (KOV) are the largest. Also, cities and municipalities have their own schools.

In **primary education**, knowledge of Europe is included in the development goals for the upper degree (10-12 year-olds): "*orientation on the world*", with two domain components in which Europe has or can have an explicit place: society and space. According to the curriculum of the GO-schools<sup>110</sup>, pupils should be able to describe in their own words what the EU is, and to illustrate with examples how decisions made by the authorities affect their lives. They must be able to indicate that Belgium is located

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<sup>106</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2019/election2019/EB915\\_SP\\_EUROBAROMETER\\_POSTEE19\\_FIRSTRESULTS\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2019/election2019/EB915_SP_EUROBAROMETER_POSTEE19_FIRSTRESULTS_EN.pdf)

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.veto.be/artikel/europa-door-de-ogen-van-jongerenpartijen>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.vub.be/sites/vub/files/masterproefwwrinadoergamisier.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> [http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/internationalesamenwerking\\_doc/20200402\\_Internationale-jongerenmobiliteit-in-Vlaanderen-update2020.pdf](http://www.sociaalcultureel.be/jeugd/internationalesamenwerking_doc/20200402_Internationale-jongerenmobiliteit-in-Vlaanderen-update2020.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> <https://pro.g-o.be/pedagogische-begeleiding-leerplannen-nascholing/leerplannen/leerplannen-bao/wereldoriëntatie>



in Europe, list neighbouring countries and locate them on a map, and also locate ten Member States of the EU.

The new educational objectives of **secondary education** are ordered on the basis of 16 key competences established by decree. The new learning outcomes have been introduced in Flemish education since September 2019. There are five key competences within which insights about Europe can be given a place: (1) Citizenship competences including competences for living together, (2) Competences related to historical consciousness, (3) Competences related to spatial awareness, (4) Competences in sustainability, and (5) Economic and financial competences.

In the curricula of Catholic schools<sup>111</sup>, pupils in lower secondary education must know the levels of government and the recognized symbols of the Flemish community, Belgium and the EU. For contemporary democracy, the reference framework "*Competences for democratic culture*" (Council of Europe) is used. Europe is explicitly addressed as a didactic example concerning the relationship between geography and population.

Thus, in the new curricula for lower secondary education, Europe is addressed, but the explicit character is limited. Depending on current events, interests of pupils or teacher, spectacular elements in 'distant' continents, etc., a teacher can provide specific content.

The learning objectives for the second and third stage of secondary education are still classically structured according to curricula linked to subjects and lesson tables, which record the number of hours of lessons. In the curricula of GO-schools<sup>112</sup> as an example, for geography in the second and third stage, the specific context of Europe or the importance of a European spatial awareness is not mentioned.

In the subject area of history, recent developments in Europe are only discussed in the third stage. European unification and its problems are discussed within the final objective "*to analyse the fundamental conflicts with which the societies between 1939 and 1989 are confronted [...]*". When it comes to the period from 1989 to the present, the further development of Europe is only mentioned as a possible example of learning content to be used.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

Europe is currently mainly linked to subject domains of Geography and History. New curricula for the upper secondary will be developed in the coming year on the basis of new final objectives which have just been approved in a first draft. In recent decades, in universities a split has evolved between departments of history and political science, with recent and current developments in Europe being studied for a large part within the latter field, and history teachers in secondary education being trained as historians and not as political scientists. Whether young people in secondary education are sufficiently acquainted with Europe now strongly depends on the personal interest of individual teachers and the European-oriented culture in the school they are in, which is a fragile basis.

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.katholiekonderwijs.vlaanderen/secundair/modernisering-so-2018/leerplannen-algemene-vorming>

<sup>112</sup> <https://pro.g-o.be/pedagogische-begeleiding-leerplannen-nascholing/leerplannen/leerplannen-so>

## Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

The relatively low focus on Europe in curricula of Flemish secondary education is counterbalanced by a vast collection of initiatives, projects, and tools that are available to teachers and schools who want to give more explicit attention to Europe in teaching and learning. Tools used are mainly games and instruction materials. The website [www.klascement.net](http://www.klascement.net), supported by the Flemish government, provides digital tools, which teachers can rate according to their experience. There is, however, no comprehensive information on the effective use of the tools in schools, or on the impact and sustainability of the learning for the students.

**Europa Direct**, the European Union's information network for citizens, offers teaching support and materials (posters or maps). Schools and teachers can participate in *Sterrenklas*, an online quest for primary education. There are training courses for school teachers, and an EU crash course for secondary education teachers<sup>113</sup>.

*Sterrenklas* is an initiative of Europahuis in collaboration with Europe Direct Flanders and Flemish Brabant. It is aimed at the 3rd stage of primary education. Teachers can find various online and offline exercises via the website [www.wordsterrenklas.be](http://www.wordsterrenklas.be).

The educational offer of **Europahuis Ryckvelde**<sup>114</sup> is very extensive and includes one of the most focused and comprehensive set of tools tailored to pupils, youngsters, and adults. They offer various games and simulation experiences (e.g. European summit) and workshops for students in teacher training. They also produced the teaching material "*Europe @ school*" for secondary education which is available to all member states of the EU, within the project "*European Parliament Ambassador School*".

The **European Parliament Ambassador school** (EPAS) is a cooperation programme between the European Parliament and secondary schools. Each school has one or more senior ambassadors (teachers) and junior ambassadors (students). They organize European activities at school, ranging from debates over workshops to EU escape rooms. In 2019-2020, 15 Flemish schools were active EPAS schools, one of them Sint-Pietersinstituut Gent.

The **Belgian Directorate-General for European Affairs and Coordination** (DGE) has a set of 12 cards giving a concise overview of the EU for secondary education. DGE also developed two games<sup>115</sup>: a digital app game about EU and candidate countries and a puzzle for primary education. To promote the puzzle, the Minister of Foreign Affairs has sent a letter to every primary school in Belgium, but distribution of the materials through provincial offices seems to be a problem.

Contacts with schools abroad is an interesting way of promoting the international awareness of pupils. The agency **epos-vlaanderen** supports schools teaming up with other schools in Europe, using digital tools through **e-twinning**<sup>116</sup>. The **e-twinning project *Notre avenir en Europe***<sup>117</sup> is a project where students present, discuss and compare their feelings about their future in Europe. Ria De Wilde of the Sint-Janscollege in Poperinge won the eTwinning Award 2019 for Citizenship with this project.

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<sup>113</sup> <https://www.provincieantwerpen.be/aanbod/dese/dienst-europa/pop-up-europa.html>

<sup>114</sup> [www.europahuis.be](http://www.europahuis.be)

<sup>115</sup> [https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/Documentatie/documentatie\\_over\\_de\\_eu](https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/Documentatie/documentatie_over_de_eu)

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/nl/etwinning-0>

<sup>117</sup> <https://twinspace.etwinning.net/72112/home>

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

In Flemish primary education Europe is visible in the curricula. In the lower degree of secondary education, Europe is addressed, but the explicit character is limited. New curricula are now starting to be developed for implementation in the upper degree of secondary education the coming years, but a thorough revision in practice is not yet finalized. Whether young people in secondary education are sufficiently acquainted with Europe now strongly depends on the personal field of interest of individual teachers and the European-oriented culture of the school they are in.

Priorities for action are:

- Make more use of social media and online tools to promote Europe in youngsters
- Monitor the knowledge and opinion of Flemish youth about European themes and policies.
- Ask networks of schools in Flanders to include European themes in a more focused and explicit way in learning objectives of curricula in secondary education.
- Strongly support small-scale projects of educational institutions, at the level of secondary and higher education and across levels, to develop educational projects on European themes.

## Belgium (FR)

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

There is very little data to answer this question because most of the research on this theme concerns adults or adults and young people together. For this study, an exploratory survey of more than 215 students aged 5 to 20 from French-speaking Belgium was conducted. The aim was to collect the pupils' representations of Europe. In this questionnaire, young people were asked what Europe meant to them.

In almost all the answers, the word 'continent' appeared. They only see Europe from a geographical point of view, although this is less pronounced for older students, although the participants still considered the EU as a 'somewhat a fuzzy entity'. Only a few described the EU as a group, an alliance, an association, or a mutual aid group between different countries in Europe.

Finally, it is important to note (and that is also valid for the entire questionnaire) that students from schools with lower socio-economic indices are more likely to relate to their origins. Secondly, when asked: 'Where did you learn about Europe?', the answer is mostly at school. The family and the media come in second place but are also often mentioned. The next questions revealed that the majority of the young people surveyed consider themselves Europeans. However, these answers seemed to be determined by their origin. Indeed, students of completely foreign origin to Europe affirm almost every time that they do not feel European even if they live in Belgium.

Concerning Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects which were funded in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (FWB) show that 30.4% of young participants report learning about

European issues; 23% about youth European policies and only 16.2% about EU policies and structures<sup>118</sup>.

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

Unlike many countries, in the various curricula/programmes of the FWB there are few references to Europe or the EU. Yet, as the 2019 report of the European Commission shows: *'the Decree on the Missions of Schools stipulates in its Article 9 that all the controlling authorities providing education in the French Community must adapt the definition of their curricula and educational plans to take into account the increasing influence of the European and international dimension of education'*<sup>119</sup>.

The report also notices that the FWB offers a choice between religion and moral education and at least one of the two lessons per week should be devoted to 'philosophy and citizenship'. Instruction on this subject is part of compulsory education. In other schools, the content, and objectives of *'Education to philosophy and citizenship'* must be acquired through all subjects. Current school reforms are grouped together under a Pact of Excellence, they aim to improve basic skills, to fight against inequality as well as to improve efficiency and governance<sup>120</sup>. Finally, concerning the dimensions of mobility, as shown in BIEF Erasmus+ report (2017), the FWB has taken over all the general and specific objectives of the Erasmus+ programme<sup>121</sup>.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

When comparing the different curricula in French-speaking Belgium, 'Europe' and the 'European Union' are essentially only approached in common training during the early learning course for primary education and during the geography and history course for secondary education.

In **primary education**, Europe has only a geographical dimension in most curricula. Students must, among other things, master the following skills: locating countries on a map, identifying political or geographical boundaries, naming the main European conurbations and/or specifying the members of the EU. As for the theme of the construction of the EU, it is only addressed in the majority of programmes in the sixth year of general secondary education in **history and geography**, and the course includes 'the motivations of the founders of the Union, the major stages of construction and future prospects (enlargement and Europe as an area of political and social democracy)<sup>122</sup>.

For the second course, the geographical training allows the construction of key maps from the point of view of population, bioclimate, or hydrography and according to administrative divisions. There are some exceptions within the curricula, particularly in the **VET institutions**. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year of economics and social sciences courses deal with the role and place of the EU<sup>123</sup>. The 'office technician' courses in the last 2 years of the SEGEC qualification courses contribute to the French Community's desire

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<sup>118</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y6r9exb5>

<sup>119</sup> <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice>

<sup>120</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/fr/IP\\_17\\_4521](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/fr/IP_17_4521); <https://tinyurl.com/yyp89kct>

<sup>121</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yym94s8x>

<sup>122</sup> Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles. (2000). Programme d'études du cours d'histoire du deuxième et troisième degrés de l'enseignement secondaire général et technique de transition, p. 22.

<sup>123</sup> Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique. (2002). Programme d'études du cours de sciences économiques appliquées du deuxième et troisième degrés de l'enseignement secondaire technique de transition, p. 31.

to help students become active European citizens<sup>124</sup>. Finally, most **philosophy and citizenship** courses within the different networks lead students to question and debate in order to build an autonomous and critical thinking based on the political institutions (including the EU). The new programmes under development for the Pact of Excellence (but which have not yet been voted) seem to want to remedy this lack of learning about the EU earlier in the learning process and cover European construction and its motivations in the third year.

Erasmus+ **mobility projects** allow school staff to train abroad: Participants can attend a course or seminar, do an observation internship or go and teach in a partner school. The **strategic partnerships** allow cooperation around a common theme between organisations active in education and training. In conjunction with these two project categories, E-twinning, the community for schools in Europe, is becoming ever more successful. It offers a platform for staff to communicate, collaborate, develop projects, share and to be part of the most exciting learning community in Europe.

There are now 3,776 projects (354 in FWB), involving 8,552 teachers and 2,350 schools in Belgium<sup>125</sup>. Further initiatives include the **Back to school programme** (aiming to make EU policies more accessible to young people), the **EPAS programme** (partnership programme between the EP and secondary schools to develop the European dimension in schools), the **Euroscola** programme (selects classes to participate in the plenary session of the EP in Strasbourg), and the **EYE programme** (meeting of young Europeans).

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

As there is so little research on the different programmes related to Europe in the FWB, the questionnaire prepared for this research included questions concerning education on Europe and the elements useful for the students to deepen their knowledge. The responses were very varied. The main wish of these young people is to learn more at school, covering not only the history of the EU, but also the culture of the different countries, the different languages spoken within Europe, etc.

According to the responses, more visibility should be given to the various European subsidies and projects, including evaluation. The representatives responsible for the European projects who were contacted within the framework of this research agree with the young people on the need for training and information, and also on the fact that until now, there are no large-scale institutional incentives to make it possible.

Concerning mobility, as the Erasmus+ report (2017) shows, *'it is particularly the opportunity to acquire professional experience abroad (via internships for students) that is highlighted by the member bodies of the management committee.'* Many institutions involved in education for Europe would like to be as close as possible to the needs of the young people of the FWB. But they still often seem very far from many school actors who continue to ignore their functions and / or even their existence.

Training courses for teachers are organised at various levels (but they are never compulsory). Activities, presentations, visits, and tools are also offered (often free for classes) but many school actors are unaware of their existence and participation is often limited to the same schools. These projects lack recognition from the educational authorities, and as long as these projects remain at an informal educational level,

<sup>124</sup> General Secretariat for Catholic Education. Secrétariat Général de l'Enseignement Catholique. (2010). Programme d'études du cours de technicien/technicienne de bureau du 3e degré technique de qualification, p. 67.

<sup>125</sup> <https://www.etwinning.net/fr/pub/community/countries/country.cfm?c=56>

teachers with little or no interest in an Education in Europe will not undertake research on the tools available.

*Good practice:* The BIJ (Bureau International Jeunesse) is very active in information work: via information sessions, its presence in various fairs, the production of tools (in particular on mobility possibilities for young people at European level). It provides guidance and contributes to the Eurodesk network by publishing information about the FWB on the European Youth Portal and in the European database and by answering questions posed via the network's intranet. It organises events on Europe and/or European priorities; the BIJ also allows the participation of many young people in a multitude of projects as: Citoyens d'Europe; Droits de l'Homme Droits sociaux; Eurodyssée; and the European Solidarity Corps. Finally, the BIJ is responsible for the Erasmus+ Youth in Action in the FWB.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

The young people interviewed as part of this exploratory study seemed overwhelmingly in favor of Europe and/or the EU. According to the various people interviewed, young people, representatives of European programmes and/or institutions, and project beneficiaries, what is missing above all is courses on Europe during the school curriculum. From this first analysis, it seems essential to continue to finance projects at the level of informal education as these seem to have many effects in terms of education about Europe and reaching European axes. Findings are:

- The ESF projects as well as the Erasmus+ programmes (which fall within the European priorities) are highly appreciated by respondents.
- The various initiatives to educate on Europe seem to appeal to those who know them but very often remain unknown to many actors in the FWB school system. What is also underlined by the participants in this study is the difficulty for the school system as a whole to know about various projects, and/or be engaged by them.
- It would therefore be important to allow meetings and partnerships between these various initiatives in FWB but also between the school environment and that of non-formal education, by zone or by region, in order to start a dialogue to co-construct a research community on these issues. These communities would also be places for meetings and exchanges with other European school actors in order to think about ways of truly operationalising the Pact of Excellence<sup>126</sup>.
- These research communities should evaluate the multiple projects in understand the brakes and levers, the avenues to be avoided, and those to be explored. To better meet the requirements of the 'Youth on the move' Recommendation, putting in place an evaluated process for regular improvement of the provision could also be considered.
- Better coordination allowing the centralization of information relating to experiences, projects and funding for the school system is more than necessary in FWB.
- In the context of the pandemic crisis, it seems essential to open the school framework so as to respond to the problems of dropping out and more generally

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<sup>126</sup> During the participatory process of the Pact of Excellence for example, meetings with Finnish school actors have already been held in order to think the operationalization of the new common polytechnica and multidisciplinary core. They were able to show their effects in opening up school stakeholders to other ways of thinking about school and school learning.

to meet the European priorities. A common reflection should be carried out, in order to experiment with alternatives to school with those concerned.

## Bulgaria

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Overall, attitudes toward the EU are positive. Young people (15-24 year-olds) demonstrate high trust levels towards the EU. When asked whether the economic integration of Europe has strengthened or weakened their country's economy, however, only 25% in Bulgaria say it has strengthened it.

Europe and the EU is a reference reality for the majority of young people and students. A survey conducted in 2019 on Bulgarian youth<sup>127</sup>, shows that Bulgarian, European and cosmopolitan identities are becoming very salient issues. In Bulgaria, Euroscepticism among young people is not clearly evident. The survey, however, also shows that disadvantaged and less-privileged groups express more hesitation and doubts in their sense of belonging to the EU. Lack of, and insufficient confidence in having a high social status creates distance from the EU.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The educational system is in a process of transition including the implementation of new objectives, approaches and thematic emphasis, including aspects of learning about the EU and related to that themes.

The Pre-School and School Education Act<sup>128</sup>, which entered into force in 2016 as the main legislative normative act in the area of education, explicitly refers to European dimension of education. It clearly defines the acquisition of knowledge and understanding about the European Union as an objective of the education in the country in Section III Objectives of pre-school and school education.

The analysis of the national curricula shows subjects which incorporate the European dimension of education as a clear thematic focus ("*Citizenship education*" in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, "*History and civilization*" in 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade), subjects which have potential references to topics related to the EU (Geography, "*People and nature*") and subjects with references to some special aspects or relevant regulations and directives in vocational school curricula.

For example, "*People and society*" (3<sup>rd</sup> grade of *primary education*<sup>129</sup>) aims to support the development of national and European identity, human rights and citizens' duties and values in a democratic society. The main EU related topics are Bulgaria as part of Europe, Citizens of Bulgaria and of the EU.

"*Citizenship education*" in 12<sup>th</sup> grade is the main focus in the school curricula on learning and teaching about the EU: e.g. EU institutions, EU citizenship, role of the EU in a global

<sup>127</sup> Mitev, P.-E., Popivanov, B., Kovacheva, S., Simeonov, P. (2019). The Bulgarian youth. 2018-2019. Surveys of the Youth in Southeastern Europe 2018/2019. Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2020.

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.mon.bg/bg/57>

<sup>129</sup> National curricula, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade introduced in 2018/2019 <https://www.mon.bg/bg/1689>

perspective. It was introduced in the school curriculum for the first time this school year 2020/2021.

Curricula for vocational schools are also centrally approved by the Minister of Education and Science and include Citizenship education, entrepreneurship and economics and sectoral professional preparation. There are examples of references to EU regulations, directives and policies essential for the specific professions. For example, “*European cooperation in environmental policy*” in the curriculum on “*Ecological legislation*”. However, these are rather occasional and rare.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

In a survey with more than 500 participants, 52% of the teachers said that they include EU-related topics in the lesson of the class: around 10% in history classes, 7% in Geography classes and in “*World and People*” classes. 25% of the teachers say that they include EU-related topics in other classes<sup>130</sup>. Additionally, they share the opinion that EU-related topics are of interest and significance. However, less than 26% say that there is a plan or guidelines for learning and teaching various aspects of the EU in the school where they teach.

Most of the teachers point out that the state educational requirements in the national curricula are rather strict and divergence from topics is neither preferable nor possible due to shortage of time<sup>131</sup>. The majority of teachers (90%) consider that learning about the EU should also be part of the extracurricular activities.

Learning about the EU often takes place in the initiative of “*Lesson about Europe*” in the *lesson of the class* that is held once a week as part of the official school curriculum. This depends on teachers’ initiative and is often organized around Europe Day. Materials and ideas for the preparation of the Lesson of Europe are published on the Ministry of Education and Science website. Teaching materials were developed under several Jean Monnet projects between 2014 and 2018.

A significant channel for promoting knowledge about the EU and understanding of how it works is related to *teaching foreign languages in schools*. The national curricula mandate compulsory teaching of two foreign languages. Curricula include references to knowledge about the national culture in the context of European cultural heritage.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

Teachers consider that EU-related topics are best introduced by presentations, videos, educational games, electronic quizzes, through social media and platforms for distance education. Besides educational excursions, visits to events and organisations outside the school, meetings with EU representatives, educational projects in collaboration with other schools in Europe are effective and provoke students’ interest<sup>132</sup>. Also, mobility projects (especially the Erasmus+ programme) are mentioned in this regard. This highlights the extracurricular activities and their significant role in learning about the EU.

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<sup>130</sup> Teacher’s Manual for 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade of general schools European Institute Foundation and Bulgarian Union of Teachers.

<sup>131</sup> Survey conducted among 259 teachers at teacher training seminars in 2015 at the Department of Information and In-service of Teachers, Sofia.

<sup>132</sup> Survey conducted among 259 teachers at teacher training seminars in 2015 at the Department of Information and In-service of Teachers, Sofia.



Additional training is among the factors that teachers indicate as important for more effective teaching about the EU (88% of respondents). However, there is insufficient preparation of teachers in the field of European integration and the EU in initial teacher training, and there are very few opportunities for in-service qualification in the area of the EU. Only 7% of teachers have attended a qualification course or training on EU-related topics. Furthermore, a lack of time for preparation of the topics, difficulties and uncertainties in selecting the best up-to-date information, and a shortage of interactive materials for direct use are mentioned.

There is an **Association of European clubs** in all types of schools. Some of the clubs transferred into Ambassador Schools under the Programme of the European Parliament (around 100 schools in 2018/2019, e.g. Vazov School<sup>133</sup>). Teachers also benefit from international training under the Programme. The potential scope of involvement of schools is limited as it is project based as an initiative by the European Parliament.

A significant number of active teachers in European clubs, extracurricular activities and mobility projects are foreign language teachers, e.g. at William Gladstone Secondary School, Sofia: *The EU: A Better Place to Live* covers topics about the EU in teaching English at school<sup>134</sup>.

Three Jean Monnet projects can also be considered as good practices: Two Jean Monnet projects coordinated by Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski *Learning by doing Europe* and *Promoting excellence in teaching and research in EU Studies at primary and secondary school level through digital and visualization tools* (EU PETR) and the Project 'Unite reaffirmed: turning to more innovative teaching content and to borderline regions' coordinated by the European Institute Foundation, Sofia in collaboration with the Bulgarian Union of Teachers.

Another good practice example is a post-graduate one-year teacher training course leading to a 3<sup>rd</sup> level national teacher qualification ([www.diuu.bg](http://www.diuu.bg)).

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

Based on the analysis of the embeddedness of the EU-related topics in national curricula and teachers' teaching practices, the *need for teacher training* is of major importance. In the Bulgarian context it is important to engage official teacher training institutions. There is the need for a better embeddedness of EU-related topics in initial teacher training as well.

Even though EU topics are featured in curricula, the effectiveness of teaching is hampered by lack of dedicated time and the current system of assessment might not encourage development of critical awareness and thinking.

In practical terms and considering the structure of the Jean Monnet Action several ideas could be put forward:

- Identification of a special Jean Monnet Chair dedicated to teacher training – providing training at different levels and having as their PhD students-teachers in various subjects.
- Special support for (or actions addressing) teachers embedding EU-related topics and supporting inter-subject and whole-school policies.

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.epjambassadors.vazov-school.com>

<sup>134</sup> [https://www.beta-iatefl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BETA-E-Newsletter-September\\_October-2016.pdf](https://www.beta-iatefl.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BETA-E-Newsletter-September_October-2016.pdf)

- European scholarships for university students: *European Teacher Doctoral Schemes* providing scholarships for best teachers and PhD students, or a period of moderate support for research and implementation of good practices in schools.
- Extended outreach of the Jean Monnet action, but avoiding the risk of further concentration of funding in institutions.
- Vocational education: involvement and support for institutions engaged and responsible for curricula development in vocational education.

## Croatia

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

According to the Youth in Croatia study<sup>135</sup> on the views of young people, the results of Croatia's five-year EU membership are not strong. Although the assessment of economic effects was slightly more favourable than that of political effects, the most important finding is that in both cases two-fifths of respondents did not think that EU integration resulted in any noticeable changes. However, 67% of respondents were of the opinion that Croatia should not leave the EU.

The ICCS<sup>136</sup> in Croatia showed that students show a high level of affiliation to the EU (the average result is higher than the average result across countries participated in ICCS and 85% of students stated that they feel like they are part of the European Union. In general students feel positive about the EU and 75% of students show trust in the EU institutions such as the Commission and Parliament. The study showed that only 17% of students stated that they learnt about the political and economic systems of other EU countries in their school and only 23% of students stated that they were learning about EU in their school.

### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The concept of the European dimension and its indicators are clearly and unequivocally stated in a small number of regulations and strategic documents in Croatia. The *Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools* states that one of the goals of education is to educate students "in accordance with general cultural values, human rights and children's rights". The Act is largely (implicitly) based on the European dimension as it endeavours to promote different European values, and it acknowledges the different identities of the Croatian pupils and the pupils who come from the European Union member states. In other analysed Acts (e.g. Textbook Act, Act on science and higher education, State Pedagogical Standards, VET Act etc.) the European dimension is observed only in certain segments and usually it is not stated as "European".

The Strategy for Education and Science (2014) lists the main principals of educational system in Croatia in the Introduction, and includes multiculturalism and the European dimension in education, which is presented an important step forward in defining

<sup>135</sup> Gvozdanović, A., Ilišin, V., Adamović, M., Potočnik, D., Baketa, N., Kovačić, M. (2019), Youth Study Croatia 2018/2019, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V., Berlin, Germany

<sup>136</sup> Losito, B et al. (2016), Young People's Perceptions of Europe in a Time of Change – IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, IEA, Amsterdam; Croatian version available at: <https://mk0ncvvt6usx5xu4d.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Percepcija-mladih-o-Europi-u-vrijeme-promjena-finale-web1.pdf>

national legislation and framework of national education policies. Additionally, the European dimension in Strategy is also mentioned in the context of development of the Comprehensive Curricular Reform and its implementation along with re-definition of the National Curriculum Framework.

Taking into account that the Strategy represents a master plan for the achievement of long-term goals, it is more difficult to identify specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes "about Europe, in Europe and for Europe" which represent the European dimension in education indicators. The Strategy has only been partially implemented since adoption in 2014, due to the change in Government and subsequent turbulence in the educational system. The NFC was never adopted (despite development in 2016) and that Croatia has not adopted the National Curriculum but only subject curriculum documents and cross-curricular topics. The new Government (elected July 2020) have announced a new Strategy for education is being developed.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The obligation of the education system under both the Constitution and the Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools is to educate students "*in accordance with general cultural and civilizational values, human rights and children's rights, to enable them to live in a multicultural world, for respect for diversity and tolerance, and for active and responsible participation in the democratic development of society*". However, this obligation is not adequately transferred into appropriate documents, so teaching on these topics depends on enthusiastic teachers and their sense of obligation to provide students with basic competencies.

When it comes to the presence of European values in the curriculum (or as part of curriculum content elements incorporated in the syllabus), the following conclusions can be made: (1) a lack of European values in certain subject curricula that are not suitable for the implementation of interdisciplinary themes of citizenship education and intercultural education; (2) explicitly defined European values as part of cross-curricular or interdisciplinary themes, with a list of values and contents whose values are implemented within citizenship education; and (3) implicit values present both in the interdisciplinary themes and in subjects (Croatian language or mother tongue, foreign languages, history, geography, etc.).

The topic of the "European Union" is mentioned only sporadically in the curricula and mostly related to Geography and the cross-curricular topic Citizenship Education<sup>137</sup>. The analysis showed that learning outcomes are mostly focused on informing students about the EU, and not about educating them and there is a lack of important topics (such as elections for the EU Parliament).

It is important to emphasize that most of the topics related to European dimension in education on the school level are implemented through different school projects in cooperation with NGOs and international/national/EU organisations. These programs are especially popular with secondary school students. Also, more and more schools are participating in Erasmus+ projects and lifelong learning programs which includes both teachers and students in the activities.

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<sup>137</sup> Bajkuša, M. (2016), Građanski odgoj i obrazovanje u prijedlogu Cjelovite kurikularne reforme - ISTRAŽIVAČKO IZVJEŠĆE S PREPORUKAMA, Forum za slobodu odgoja, Zagreb; available at: <http://www.fso.hr/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2016-04-29-GOOD-FSO-Analiza.pdf>

## Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

The following factors result in more effective teaching:

- Raising awareness among teachers and expert associates on the importance of acquiring competences related to European dimension in education (Competencies related to the European dimension in education are at the bottom of the list of competencies required for successful pedagogical work in schools<sup>138</sup>).
- Revising study programmes in accordance with documents prescribing the direction of the future European education policy.
- Incorporating competencies related to the European dimension into the School Curriculum (i.e. through organising projects in cooperation with external stakeholders such as EU organisations and NGOs).
- Analysing the content of textbooks for students (in coordination with the development of the NFC and Textbook Act).
- The development of pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes that help teachers to include the EU dimension in their subject curriculum (and cross-curriculum topics) in interesting, innovative, and interactive ways that emphasize the importance of critical thinking.

**The EU Literacy Programme** was developed by NGO GONG in 2012 and is implemented by experts from the Faculty of Political Science, the Faculty of Law in Zagreb and GONG. The aims of the programme are: to develop the competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes) of teachers in topics related to the European Union and European integration; to enable teachers to attend professional development training designed by experts from various fields (political science, law, sociology); to provide teachers with teaching materials in the form of handouts and the Handbook for Teachers "Learning about the EU"<sup>139</sup>.

The **Teaching about EU Programme** was developed by NGO Forum for Freedom in Education in 2010 in order to encourage teachers to teach about these topics in their classroom but also to organise different projects on the school level. The programme provides a set of workshops, and training courses for teachers and working sheets for students.

The **European Parliament Ambassador School Programme**<sup>140</sup> has been active since 2017 and there have been more than 50 secondary schools involved in the last 4 years. According to the evaluation results in the last 4 years it was noted that almost 80% of all students stated that due to participation in this project their attitude towards EU changed in a positive way.

The project "**EU for EVERYONE!**"<sup>141</sup> was implemented in 2019. Young people from the Šibenik-Knin County were informed and educated about the European Union, its benefits for young people and the rights and obligations they have within the EU through the implementation of activities.

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<sup>138</sup> Ledić, Staničić, Turk (2013.), Kompetencije školskih pedagoga, Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci, Rijeka

<sup>139</sup> <https://edu.gong.hr/eu-pismenostucimo-eu/>

<sup>140</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/croatia/hr/za\\_mlade/skola-ambasador.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/croatia/hr/za_mlade/skola-ambasador.html)

<sup>141</sup> <http://mladi-eu.hr/projekti-2018/>

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

Young people in Croatia do not show high levels of knowledge about the processes of the European integration, they do not fully know and understand the functioning of European institutions as well as the creation and implementation of the European public policies. A significant proportion of young people have not developed a feeling of belonging and attachment to the European Union. One of the current shortcomings of the public education system in Croatia is a lack of European dimension in education across curriculum.

### *Recommended priorities*

- Encourage state institutions such as the Ministry of Education and other relevant agencies and institutions to focus more on the development of a curriculum that will support the implementation of the European dimension in education.
- Encourage education policy to take into account the European dimension of education during further educational reforms, and especially to act proactively on the introduction of comprehensive and functional citizenship education in schools as a separate obligatory subject.
- Support NGOs and other institutions and organisations to develop and provide educational programmes and school projects by funding different projects and encourage educational and state institutions and local authorities to collaborate more with such institutions to raise quality of content.
- Increase the funding in Erasmus+ project for schools and teachers to increase the number of schools that are participating in mobility projects on the EU level.
- Support and fund projects that are developing and publishing innovative and interactive digital teaching materials in the Croatian language.
- Encourage all providers of different projects and educational programs to assess the impact of their programmes at school level and the impacts on student's attitudes and values through independent evaluation of the programmes or any other objective impact analyses.
- Support tertiary education institutions who would like to introduce more topics regarding European dimension in education into their syllabus.

## Cyprus

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

There is no study with a nationally representative sample which has examined the knowledge and attitudes of Cypriot students towards the EU. Through a Comenius project (PAM-INA)<sup>142</sup> researchers evaluated the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of Europe of students. Generally, there is a positive attitude towards Europe but at the same time the survey showed a lack of concrete knowledge. Student perceptions of Europe were predominantly as a geographical or even territorial entity rather than as a socially constructed concept, which sees Europe as united in diversity. A study based on

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<sup>142</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yyvkejtm>

this data shows that the more youngsters identified as Cypriot, the less they felt European<sup>143</sup>.

Overall, Cypriot students have positive attitudes towards the EU, based on the fact that they are interested in participating European programs such as the Erasmus+ programs<sup>144</sup>.

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

The EU dimension (i.e. principles, values, ethics etc.) in the national curriculum of Cypriot primary, secondary general and technical (vocational) education follows a cross-curricular approach and addresses EU topics indirectly. An EU dimension is not explicitly visible in either of the two legislations for primary and secondary education<sup>145</sup>. The only direct references to Europe concern the celebration of "Europe Day" on May 9<sup>th</sup> and the hoisting of the European flag in primary education<sup>146</sup>. According to the curriculum in primary education, there are specific courses that promote aspects of European policy and the EU<sup>147</sup>:

- *Health Education*: Self-development and empowerment, [...], Creating an active citizen.
- *History*: Development of a coherent knowledge on important features, phenomena, and events of the various historical periods locally and globally from Roman Empire to present day.
- *Environmental Education/Education for Sustainable Development*: [...] create autonomous and active citizens who are environmentally aware, [...] explore and think critically, participate in decision-making processes, and intervene dynamically and democratically in social events [...].

In secondary general education, aspects of the EU dimension can be found in the following courses<sup>148</sup>:

- *Geography*: Exploring the natural geography of Europe and Europe's multiculturalism, [...] Analysis of the policy and related strategies implemented by the European Union on sustainable development issues, [...].
- *History*: Cyprus as a full EU Member State (the inclusion of Cyprus in the EU in 2004).
- *Household Economy*: Interculturalism, Human Rights and Obligations, European Municipal Solid Waste Management Strategy.

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<sup>143</sup> Philippou, S., & Symeou, L. (2013). Students' identifications with Cyprus and Europe and their attitudes towards national groups: exploring the links. In A. Klonari & T. Resnick (Eds.), *Learning Europe-Perspectives for a didactics of European Cultural Studies Vol. 3 - European identity at the crossroads* (Ch. 3, pp.30-52). Münster: LIT-Verlag.

<sup>144</sup> <http://www.erasmusplus.cy/Default.aspx>

<sup>145</sup> <http://www.moec.gov.cy/dme/nomothesia.html>

<sup>146</sup> [http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/dimotiki/kanonismoi\\_2008\\_2017\\_anepisimi\\_enopoiisi.pdf](http://www.moec.gov.cy/dde/nomothesia/dimotiki/kanonismoi_2008_2017_anepisimi_enopoiisi.pdf)

<sup>147</sup> based on information collected through a short interview/discussion with Marios Epaminondas, Officer of European and International Affairs Office, of the MOECYSY. Information on the subjects can be found here: <http://agogyd.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/> [http://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/2/agogi\\_ygeias.pdf](http://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/2/agogi_ygeias.pdf) <http://istod.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/> <http://peeaad.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/>

<sup>148</sup> <http://geom.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/>

<http://istom.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/> <http://oikiam.schools.ac.cy/index.php/el/>

In secondary technical and VET education, aspects of the EU dimension are more frequently visible through four specific European programs<sup>149</sup>:

- *ECVET - European Credit System for Vocational Education & Training.*
- *EQAVET - European Quality Assurance Framework in Vocational Education and Training.*
- *Erasmus+:* Currently, more than 15 Erasmus+ programs are being implemented in the technical (vocational) schools of Cyprus.
- *Re-CVET – Reform of Continuing Vocational Education and Training Systems:* RE-CVET programs aim to improve the quality, attractiveness and effectiveness of Continuing Vocational Education and Training Systems (CVET) in the participating countries.

A European and International Affairs Office (GEDY)<sup>150</sup> was established in September 2009. Its mission is to contribute to the effective and successful participation of the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY) in European and international affairs. GEDY cooperates with the European Commission Representation and the European Parliament Office in Cyprus to promote and implement education activities related to the aims, values, and institutions of the EU.

### How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula

There are numerous European programs implemented in Cyprus schools to promote learning about the EU, which are not part of the official curriculum. The European Commission Representation and the European Parliament Office in Cyprus in collaboration with MOECSY, instituted four European programs<sup>151</sup> concerning the promotion of students' knowledge about the EU, its institutions, and their role, how decisions are made and how they directly affect citizens.

**The Ambassador School of the European Parliament** is a programme to promote the idea of the EU to young people, providing them with knowledge and ensuring that they are aware of their prospects for action and participation as European citizens. The program included 25 secondary general schools and vocational (technical) schools with the direct participation of over 60 teachers and 120 students. Teachers attended two training workshops and organized innovative actions designed to promote European parliamentary democracy. The program will continue during the academic year 2020-2021<sup>152</sup>.

The **National School Competition** is a program of the EC Representation in Cyprus and MOECSY for the period 2016-2020<sup>153</sup>. Its aim is to increase knowledge on EU issues, especially the decision-making processes between the European Commission, European Parliament, and the Council of the EU, as well as the impact of EU policies in everyday life. The program included 39 secondary general and vocational schools, with participation of over 80 teachers and 1,400 students. Activities included educational workshops, seminars, district competitions, a final competition, and a trip to Brussels for selected participants.

<sup>149</sup> <http://www.MOECSY.gov.cy/dmteek/en/ecvet.html> <http://www.MOECSY.gov.cy/dmteek/eqavet.html>; <https://www.eqavet.eu/> [http://www.MOECSY.gov.cy/dmteek/erasmus\\_plus.html](http://www.MOECSY.gov.cy/dmteek/erasmus_plus.html), <http://www.MOECSY.gov.cy/dmteek/recvet.html>; <http://www.re-cvet.org/index.php/el/>

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.moec.gov.cy/eiao/en/index.html>

<sup>151</sup> <https://lceducational.com/en/services/european/>

<sup>152</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y2vvmn3o>, <https://tinyurl.com/yync37o2>

<sup>153</sup> <http://enimerosi.MOECSY.gov.cy/archeia/1/ypp9565a>

The **Get informed-Participate Vote** program was organized in 2017-2018 to enhance young people's understanding of the value of active citizenship and to encourage them to exercise their electoral rights in the European Parliament elections in May 2019<sup>154</sup>. Presentations and workshops were held in upper secondary and vocational schools, technical colleges, universities, and military camps.

The **Uniting Youth in Cyprus program** main purpose was to reach out to young Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and to create a core of young people who will act as multipliers and promote the values and principles of the EU and peaceful coexistence in Cyprus<sup>155</sup>.

Cyprus secondary schools also participate in "**Euroscola**" (**Youth Parliament**)<sup>156</sup>, where young people aged 16-18 have the chance to meet, exchange views on experiences and problems and express expectations and plans for the European structure. While the aim of the programme is to familiarize young people with the way European institutions function it also helps them to become aware of the need to defend democracy and fundamental rights. Students are selected through competitions.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

In Cyprus, the most important factors that result in effective teaching about the EU are associated with policies on *teacher training* including the establishment of *teacher support networks* and the encouragement of *participation of teachers in EU projects*.

Teachers in primary and secondary schools, may participate in Erasmus+ mobilities (*teaching assignment or staff training*)<sup>157</sup>. The national agency (IDEP) assists schools interested in submitting their application. Teacher support networks like the "*eTwinning platform*"<sup>158</sup> and the "*School Education Gateway platform*"<sup>159</sup>, also help teachers in expanding their knowledge and skills in teaching about the EU. The platform enables teachers, schools, experts and others to be up-to-date on developments, policies, initiatives and activities in the field of school education, as well as to participate in discussions.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

- Develop teaching materials and learning resources: directions should be provided on why each aspect of the European policy and key concept of the EU are taught under a specific course. Consequently, supporting material should also be constructed for teachers in order to use the cross-curricular approach efficiently.
- A longitudinal study should be carried out in order to collect data from all levels of education regarding the effectiveness of the actions and programs already undertaken each school year.
- Evaluate the impact of programs on students' learning outcomes (i.e. gaining knowledge about the EU) and on students' attitudes about the EU.
- Furthermore, even if these programs serve the same general purpose, there is no connection between them, and they seem to be operated independently.

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<sup>154</sup> <http://enimerosi.MOECSY.gov.cy/archeia/1/ypp7140a>

<sup>155</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y5elzvb4>

<sup>156</sup> <http://www.MOECSY.gov.cy/dme/en/euroscola.html> <https://tinyurl.com/y3h7n72d>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.erasmusplus.cy/en/school-education-actions> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/school-education-0\\_el](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/school-education-0_el)

<sup>158</sup> <https://etwinning.org.cy/>

<sup>159</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/index.htm>



Policy makers should be in a position to establish connections between all these programs in order to avoid unnecessary overlaps.

## Czechia

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

There is only limited information on what young people in the Czech Republic today know about the EU and their attitude towards it. No systematic surveys have been carried out in this respect. A 2017 representative survey of the population of the Visegrád countries (sample not specified) shows that when it comes to young Czechs' attitude towards the European Union, membership is considered favourable by 43.8% in the age group 18-24 and by 41.3% in the age group 25-34.

Czechs' lukewarm position on EU membership is also confirmed by respondents' comments on a potential referendum. Still, the proportion of those willing to stay in the EU was higher by almost 20% in both groups (43.4% and 44.8% respectively) than of those who would vote to leave (polled at 24.8% and 24.4%). Young professionals aged 25-34 were the age group with the most vocal support for staying in the European Union.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

An important impulse for the introduction of a European dimension and integration of cross-curricular themes into FEPs was provided by the **National Programme of Education Development** (also called *The White Book*, 2001). The objectives of schooling for Europe are given here in the following wording: need to communicate in two languages; education for recognition, tolerance, and respect for diversity; education for recognition and awareness of European roots and our own national contribution to European civilization; objectives and reasons for European integration.

With the exception of higher education institutions, schools have been working in the mode of the two-level curriculum since 2005. The framework education programmes (FEP) for all levels and types of schools delimit a scope that each school should respect when creating its own specific curricular offer, i.e. the school education programme.

**At the level of primary schools**<sup>160</sup>, several European, global and intercultural topics are featured. FEP includes them as cross-curricular themes for various areas of education. Two cross-curricular themes are highlighted: (1) *Education for thinking in European and global contexts* – a substantial part of this cross-curricular theme consists in education for prospective European citizens; (2) The cross-curricular theme *Multicultural Education* deals with intercultural dimensions and makes pupils familiar with diversity in cultures, traditions, and values.

The FEP for **basic education** consists of a total of nine educational areas. Of these, teaching about Europe is included in the following: *People and their World* (part of the thematic circle 'People around us'; also focused on Europe and the world, this area deals with continents, European countries, the EU and travelling). *People and Society*

<sup>160</sup> MEYS (2017) Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání [Framework Education Programme for Primary Education]. Praha: MEYS.

(particularly in education for citizenship; thematic circle 'International relations – a global world'). *People and Nature* (comparison of countries in the world, examples of the Czech Republic's global involvement and participation, and knowledge of international and multinational institutions, organisations, and associations).

**At upper secondary level (secondary general education)**, European, global and intercultural dimensions form an important part of three cross-curricular themes and various educational areas: *Education for thinking in European and global contexts* (to enrich, deepen and systematise knowledge of European and global processes, enhance the value of upper secondary general education and facilitate a critical view of globalization and related developments in today's world), *Multicultural education* (focused on knowledge and understanding of cultural differences between people of different origins, interpersonal relations and intercultural communication, with special emphasis on the situation in Europe) and *Environmental education*. As for educational areas, the FEP stipulates that the European dimension and global issues fall into 'People and society' and 'People and nature'<sup>161</sup>.

**At VET upper secondary level**, the relevant educational area is 'Global issues and an intercultural dimension'. This area, among other things, includes the key competences stipulated for upper secondary vocational education, particularly in civic competences and cultural awareness. Students should learn to recognise values and attitudes essential for life in a democratic society, maintain these values and attitudes, act in accordance with sustainable development and promote values of national, European and global culture<sup>162</sup>.

A new strategic document currently in preparation in the Czech Republic does not explicitly treat the need for European dimensions in education, but the European framework is frequently mentioned as a necessary reference framework for Czech education<sup>163</sup>.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The ways in which schools meet the assignments of FEP are varied. The same applies to the European dimension of teaching, but the curricular programmes as published are not detailed enough to discern the specifics. Critics claim that there is no comprehensive concept of education about the European Union in the Czech Republic<sup>164</sup>. The discrepancy between increasing demands for competences achieved and, at the same time, decreasing numbers of lessons per week (usually one) represents a major problem. Also, the practical performance of teacher graduates varies, plus there is an absence of communication among teachers of these subjects at various types of schools, poor methodological support for some topics and poor provision of in-service training events<sup>165</sup>.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

For in-service training, useful methodological support is available from several sources, such as [www.ryp.cz](http://www.ryp.cz), which strives to help teachers share experience and inspiration in 'translating' the FEP into school education programmes and real teaching. On the other

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<sup>161</sup> MEYS (2016) Rámcový vzdělávací program pro gymnázia [Framework Education Programme for gymnasium]. Praha: MEYS.

<sup>162</sup> MEYS (2019) Rámcový vzdělávací program pro střední odborné vzdělávání [Framework Education Programme for Vocational Education]. Praha: MEYS.

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.msmt.cz/file/51582/>

<sup>164</sup> <http://www.amo.cz/akce/jak-ucit-o-eu-potrebuujeme-vychovu-k-evropanstvi/>

<sup>165</sup> <https://www.obcankari.cz/kdo-jsou-obcankari>

hand, the in-service training offer for teachers of civics and social-science basics is limited, and this applies to EU-related topics too.

The activities of the Association of Teachers of Civics and Social-Science Basics play a significant role in this. Its lessons on the EU contain a methodology list and a worksheet intended for students aged 14-19<sup>166</sup>. Another important factor that facilitates teaching about the EU concerns projects given by international cooperation of schools. Several Czech schools have established cooperation and partnership with educational institutions abroad within the Erasmus+ programme or, for instance, the Central European ACES (Academy of Central European Schools) project.

Language education, too, seems to be an important factor. Another important role among factors that encourage efficient teaching about the EU is played by the extracurricular sector:

- The **European House in Prague** holds a number of EU-focused educational events for pupils and students every year, and provides information for teaching about the Union, including specific teaching aids and online modules.
- The **Association for Education for Citizenship and Democracy** runs a project named *Me, a Citizen*, an alternative to the cross-curriculum theme Education of a Democratic Citizen. It provides schools with methods, topics and lessons that help implement the cross-curriculum scheme in a holistic way; the European dimension is an important constituent of the project.
- Administered by **Masaryk University's Centre for Civic Education**, *Education for Citizenship* is a methodological site providing methodological aids for many various topics concerning EU matters, such as *European Parliament Election*, *Future of the EU*, *Being an EU Citizen* and *Czech Republic in the EU*.
- **One World in Schools**, an educational programme created by People in Need. The teaching aids of this programme react to current developments and challenges at home and abroad. Through films, discussions, and teaching activities, it brings important themes and particular stories to schools, including topics that are directly related to the EU and the European dimension.
- Other NGOs, too, administer projects relevant to the European theme. They include AMO, creator of the common Czech and Slovak project **Take Decisions about Europe: Become a European Policy-maker for One Day**, within which one-day regional seminars are held in eleven regional capitals of the Czech Republic<sup>167</sup>.

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

The European dimension in education policy in the Czech Republic is not explicitly defined as a priority theme. Support for a European dimension in Czech schools can be delivered in various directions. It is necessary to recognise the need for a European dimension as a priority of education policy, not only in terms of curricular content but as a principle pervading the curriculum; to shift the accent from 'teaching about Europe' to 'teaching from Europe' and 'teaching for Europe'; to put a stress on 'European awareness' besides knowledge about Europe; to pay attention to both cognitive and affective components, i.e. not only knowledge about but experience of Europe; to support foreign languages; to make the European dimension part of teacher education; to support teachers in terms of methodologies and projects.

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.obcankari.cz/edukacni-material-evropska-unie-0>

<sup>167</sup> <http://www.amo.cz/akce/jak-ucit-o-eu-potrebuje-vychovu-k-evropanstvi/>

## Recommendations

- Accentuate working with cross-curricular themes in both undergraduate and in-service teacher education.
- Support teacher/school networking focused on the European dimension of education.
- Support the interconnection of schools, NGOs, and other relevant subjects, focusing on the European dimension of education.
- Support exchange programmes and other international projects for schools, students, and teachers, and explicitly accentuate themes related to the European dimension.

## Denmark

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

A study conducted in 2019 shows a high participation rate in the European Parliament elections among the 18-year-old cohort (68.8%). The study concludes that the climate debate and youth actions within the EU may have driven increased participation rates. Another explanation given is that 'democratic elections' were introduced as a topic in compulsory education in 2015. When the elections took place, youth who participated in the first 'school elections' were old enough to vote<sup>168</sup>.

The Danish Youth Council (DUF) has conducted a survey of young people's attitudes and knowledge about the EU in 2018. The three most frequently mentioned topics to be addressed by the EU were climate/environment, refugees/immigration, and the prevention of terrorism. Television broadcasts, online newspapers, social media, and educational institutions are the most important sources of knowledge about EU policy matters<sup>169</sup>. Democratic self-confidence among 16-25-year-olds is very low. Only 27% believe that they have views and insights about the EU that are worth listening to<sup>170</sup>.

Data from a Flash Eurobarometer survey from 2019 show that 86% of the 15-34-year-old age group in Denmark believe that what brings European citizens together is more important than what separates them<sup>171</sup>.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

In 2004, the Ministry of Education published a strategy on internationalisation. It is notable that the publication does not have any explicit reference to the EU dimension in education, and the examples provided throughout the publication are global in nature<sup>172</sup>.

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<sup>168</sup> Hansen, K. M., 2019. Valgdeltagelsen ved Europaparlamentsvalget 2019, s.l.: Københavns Universitet.

<sup>169</sup> The study is only referenced briefly by DUF, it was not possible to obtain the original study with full data sources

<sup>170</sup> DUF, 2007. Unge og EU. DUF FOKUS, pp. 3-9.

<sup>171</sup> Anon., 2019. Flashbarometer- Emotions and political engagement towards the EU- DK. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/da/be-heard/eurobarometer/emotions-and-political-engagement-towards-the-eu>

<sup>172</sup> Undervisningsministeriet, 2004. Internationalisering af Uddannelserne, s.l.: Undervisningsministeriet.

The Act for Danish compulsory education does not explicitly refer to EU and its institutions<sup>173</sup>.

The Act on general upper secondary education stipulates as part of the overall objectives: *"the education must prepare students to actively participate in a democratic society and enhance their understanding of how they individually and collectively can contribute to development and change in their immediate environment as well as in a European and global perspective"*<sup>174</sup>.

The subject ordinance for social sciences in the general upper secondary education has the most explicit reference to EU in that one of the learning objectives states: *"Analyse policy processes and political decisions and examine how these are influenced by the EU and by global processes"*.

For other subjects such as history, foreign languages, literature (Danish), drama, and arts, the European dimension is at par with a global dimension and understanding in the context of cultural meetings and communication with other nationalities and cultures.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The European dimension in compulsory education and in general upper secondary education is primarily focused on inter-cultural competences and cultural values as part of foreign language education, while in social science the EU dimension is more topic-related. In history the focus is on different periods' conflicts and collaboration within the EU and globally. Given the level of autonomy Danish teachers have in educational planning, there are variations in the degree to which the European dimension is explicitly covered.

In forms 8-10 pupils play out elections of the *Folketing* (parliament). The learning outcomes may increase the understanding of the election process. At the C-(advanced) level social science students will also be introduced to European institutions and decision-making processes. The coverage of EU-related topics varies substantially, from sporadic coverage in a couple of lessons to inter-disciplinary thematic weeks including where games are used.

In vocational education and training (VET), the European dimension is a feature through the Danish exchange program PIU, which enables exchanges to all parts of the world with a minimum duration of one month. Apart from placement schemes, the European dimension in VET is primarily focused on occupation-related questions, for example regulations on road transport of animals and hazardous goods.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

Teachers find it complex to teach in a way that engages students. Many feel overloaded and without the resources to develop educational materials. Instead, they depend upon what is available in a finished format. They feel that the best way to integrate an EU dimension is to deal with topics that 'speak' to the students' emotions, and where they gain new insights (e.g. focusing on issues such as refugees, climate, and the environment).

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<sup>173</sup> Anon., 2020. Læreplaner 2020. Available at: <https://www.uvm.dk/gymnasiale-uddannelser/fag-og-laereplaner/laereplaner-2020>

<sup>174</sup> Undervisningsministeriet, 2019. Bekendtgørelse af lov om de gymnasiale uddannelser. LBK nr 611 af 28/05/2019. <https://www.retsinformation.dk/eli/lta/2019/611>

**DEO Education** plays a central role as a multiplier and catalyst of education in EU-related topics. It facilitates a network of 300 teachers, and it runs seminars on pedagogical methods and thematic aspects of integrating EU topics in ways that are engaging younger students. DEO has developed a range of educational materials and specialises in educational games (debates), which typically include up to 100 students and last for 3-5 hours. DEO consultants also offer visits to facilitate debate<sup>175</sup>.

The **EU information centre** in Denmark also has some educational materials relevant to the sector. These materials primarily focus on EU institutions and processes<sup>176</sup>. Outcomes from ERASMUS+ projects are typically uploaded on the **online learning material platform EMU**, but material relevant to the EU dimension in education can be hard to find<sup>177</sup>.

**Via University College** has a knowledge centre on learning materials in different formats for subjects offered in compulsory education and youth education pathways. It also organises seminars and outreach activities for teachers. The college also developed didactical principles to strengthen the European dimension in social science education at upper secondary level<sup>178</sup>.

The **Danish Folk High Schools** also target youth. Since 1997 the Folk High School "Østersøen" in Aabenraa in Southern Jutland has played a unique role in bringing young people together from different youth organisations to discuss questions related to the rights and needs of minority groups in the EU.

**Aarhus Technical College** (VET college) took a strategic decision that all their VET students should experience European collaboration in practice. In 2014 they started to collaborate with business schools in five European countries to develop two- to three-week-long high-quality English-language modules. Today, the school network **Engineering Mobility in Europe (EMEU)** consists of 16 vocational schools. The school's goal is for at least 7% of the students to travel on mobility schemes and to include a greater number of education programmes<sup>179</sup>.

The project '**Smart City Smart Kids**' is a mobility project for more than 100 school practitioners and local school authorities from the municipality of Esbjerg. Participants are sent out in groups, so that knowledge they acquire will be shared in the group. Specific courses and job-shadowing activities are selected from 'The School Education Gateway'<sup>180</sup> run by the European Commission<sup>181</sup>.

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

- Undertake European comparative analysis to assess drivers and barriers to a European dimension in education across sub-sectors, at system and institutional

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<sup>175</sup> <http://www.undervisning.deo.dk/gymnasium/debatdag-om-eu/>

<sup>176</sup> <https://www.eu.dk/da/undervisning/grundskoler>

<sup>177</sup> <https://emu.dk>; A search on the site led to only one link specific to European identity in education.

<sup>178</sup> UC viden, 2016. EU-didaktik, medborgerskab og demokratisk dannelse.

<https://www.ucviden.dk/da/projects/eu-didaktik-medborgerskab-og-demokratisk-dannelse>

<sup>179</sup> Aarhus Tech, u.d. Aarhus Tech Netværkssamarbejde med 15 skoler. <https://ufm.dk/uddannelse/tilskud-til-udveksling-og-internationale-projekter/erasmusplus/erhvervsrettet-grund-og-efteruddannelse/praktik-og-skoleophold>;

<sup>180</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/index.htm>

<sup>181</sup> Uddannelses & Forskningsministeriet, 2020. Esbjergs børn skal rustes til en international fremtid.

[Online]

Available at: [https://ufm.dk/uddannelse/tilskud-til-udveksling-og-internationale-projekter/erasmusplus/bornehave-grundskole-og-ungdomsuddannelse/projekteksempler/copy\\_of\\_projekteksempler](https://ufm.dk/uddannelse/tilskud-til-udveksling-og-internationale-projekter/erasmusplus/bornehave-grundskole-og-ungdomsuddannelse/projekteksempler/copy_of_projekteksempler)

level; longitudinal study of mobility projects to gain insights into uptake, diffusion, barriers, and incentives to scaling.

- Prioritise institutions which have demonstrated quality as well as their ability to act as multipliers. Explore the need for multi-annual funding, facilitating teacher networks and teacher upskilling, and the development of high-quality educational materials.
- Assess which factors impact EU dimension becoming a priority in teachers' educational planning. This will be dependent on teacher knowledge and the availability of quality materials.
- Develop a modular micro-credential for training teachers in compulsory education and upper secondary education as part of an outreach strategy.

## Estonia

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Young people in Estonia demonstrate good levels of knowledge on active citizenship and democracy. Like in the rest of Europe, their sense of European identity has grown in the past years and it is very similar to other EU countries<sup>182</sup>. However, students in Russian-language instruction schools show a significantly weaker sense of belonging to Europe and the EU. They make up around 17% of all Estonian pupils in general education<sup>183</sup>. This difference might be rooted in the language of instruction at school and how much the European dimension is covered in the classroom.

Estonian students perceive less opportunities to learn about the EU in school than their European counterparts. For example, only around 50% of students reported that they have had the opportunity to learn about other European countries' economic and political systems, which is the lowest level among all 14 participating countries. They are also slightly less optimistic regarding the future of Europe. Estonian young people's intentions to vote at elections were one of the lowest in a global comparison, and their political participation through expressing their views, protesting etc., is also lower than the global average<sup>184</sup>.

91-94% of Estonian students agree that the freedom of movement in Europe has a positive effect on economic growth and reducing unemployment. The share of students who support restricting work-related migration was the lowest in the comparison of all participating Baltic Sea region countries. Immigration from non-EU countries is seen much less favourably.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The national curriculum for basic schools and upper secondary schools was last reformed in 2010, and it was implemented in 2011-2013. A study on the embeddedness of the EU dimension concluded that Estonian general education is quite European, with several themes related to the EU dimension, but they are not always explicitly associated with

<sup>182</sup> Toots, 2017. [https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/iccs\\_2016\\_eesti\\_raport\\_211217\\_loplik.pdf](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/iccs_2016_eesti_raport_211217_loplik.pdf)

<sup>183</sup> Statistics Estonia, 2018 <http://andmebaas.stat.ee/Index.aspx?lang=et&DataSetCode=HT18>

<sup>184</sup> Toots, 2017.

the EU<sup>185</sup>. For example, the curricula for basic schools and vocational secondary education refer to European values at a very general level<sup>186</sup>. The curriculum of upper secondary schools brings in a wider European dimension: for example, *'feeling as a member of society who is capable of dialogue in Estonian, European and global issues'* is part of *'social and citizen competence'*.

The EU dimension is not always explicitly covered in the subject area syllabuses. For example, EU topics receive little coverage in the **basic school** subject history. Recent history focuses on the relationships between the Soviet Union and the United States. The EU is mentioned as a term which students should be able to explain by the end of basic school, in the context of Estonian history after the 1990s when Estonia started EU accession negotiations<sup>187</sup>. Civics and citizenship education focuses on the principles of democratic participation and learning outcomes of the subject include knowledge on the structure, basic values and member states of the EU and perceiving oneself as a citizen of the EU.

On the **upper secondary** school level, the syllabus of history includes a more elaborate EU dimension. For example, *"Democratic world after WWII"* includes the developments and phases of European integration and Robert Schuman's contribution. Civics and citizenship education covers the EU dimension perhaps to the greatest extent: EU-related learning outcomes include the ability to describe the problems of today's society in the European context; European social protection principles; and positioning oneself as a citizen of Estonia, Europe, and the world.

The subject is divided into two 35-hour courses, both of which include content that covers EU-related topics, many areas explicitly deal with EU integration and institutions (e.g. Governance and functioning of the EU, EU's role in Estonian economy, Employment policies in Estonia and the EU, work-related migration). Geography also includes several general EU topics, but the European Union is not explicitly mentioned.

Assessment criteria of the social studies module in **vocational secondary education** include: *'characterizes the mechanisms of democratic governance on the example of Estonia and the European Union'*; and, *'explains Estonia's role in NATO, the EU and the UN'*. The assessment criteria of the foreign languages module include: *'prepares an application for a job / internship in a foreign language, CV / Europass'*

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

Since teacher professional autonomy in Estonia is extensive and schools have relatively much freedom in designing their curriculum, it can be assumed that teaching about the EU depends to a large extent on teachers' personal perceptions and knowledge about EU topics, availability of appropriate materials and teacher experience. There are no recent studies on the topic.

There are some elements in extracurricular activities that aim to strengthen the European identity. For instance, celebrations of the European Day, where delegates of the European Parliament and ambassadors of EU countries visit Estonian schools to introduce students to their work at EU institutions.

There are also various EU-themed weeks. However, these events do not include all students nor are they organized yearly in every school. In Estonian general education,

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<sup>185</sup> Jakobson et al. 2011: [https://www.riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/uuringud/el\\_ope\\_yldhariduskoolides\\_koolitusvajaduse\\_uuring\\_2011.pdf](https://www.riigikantselei.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/uuringud/el_ope_yldhariduskoolides_koolitusvajaduse_uuring_2011.pdf)

<sup>186</sup> National Curriculum for Basic Schools, 2011Standard of Vocational Education, 2013: <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/515012020003/consolide>

<sup>187</sup> Jakobson et al. 2011



most innovative learning activities that concern EU matters address multiculturalism and multilingualism in the EU, instead of promoting active citizenship or students' understanding of EU institutions, democratic processes in EU etc.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

There is a fragmented approach to develop teacher competences, and to effectively facilitate teaching about EU-related topics. Teachers might not be equipped with appropriate competences, which are often acquired only through projects.

International collaboration and teachers' personal experience in professional networks (e.g. Erasmus+ mobility projects for staff) are deemed important to gain experience in order to transfer not only knowledge but also values to the classroom. 70% of teachers who participated in a survey stated that after the learning mobility, their school adopted new learning methods which have allowed their students to be more creative and active in the classroom<sup>188</sup>.

In 2012-13 the **optional course "European Union"** for both secondary (in 2012) and basic school levels (in 2013) was developed. It was the first course developed for addressing EU matters in general education with such depth and breadth. In 2013, a competition for best methodologies for teaching the course received submissions from more than 30 different teachers<sup>189</sup>.

Other good practices include:

The Educational simulation game **European Parliament** is organised in Estonian schools as a collaboration between the European Parliament Office in Estonia and Targa Töö Ühing NGO. The objective of the game is to provide knowledge on the European Parliament through practical tasks<sup>190</sup>. In autumn 2019, seven two-hour games for 250 students in different Estonian schools were organised.

An example of integrating different subjects to promote knowledge about the EU comes from **Narva Old Town State School's educational game** on the topic of the EU. In the frame of a thematic week, the school integrated natural science subjects and subjects taught in Estonian language, and created an outdoor game where students learned about the culture and symbols of different EU countries<sup>191</sup>.

Each year there is a competition in Estonia for the best **eTwinning** projects, and one of the nationally recognized projects from 2017 "*Active European eCitizens #eTwCitizen16*" serves as an example for promoting active citizenship through the use of ICT<sup>192</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup> Valuckienė, J., Damkuvienė, M., Balčiūnas, S. 'Impact and Sustainability of the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 1 Mobility Projects for School Education'. 2019. Education Exchanges Support Foundation, [https://archimedes.ee/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/%C3%95pir%C3%A4ndeuuringu2\\_%C3%BClevaade\\_2019.pdf](https://archimedes.ee/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/%C3%95pir%C3%A4ndeuuringu2_%C3%BClevaade_2019.pdf)

<sup>189</sup> Tallinna Ülikooli Riigiteaduste Instituut, n.d: <http://elvalikaine.tlu.ee/index.php?wp=790>

<sup>190</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/estonia/resource/static/files/import/sim\\_mangud/epsim2019\\_targatuhing.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/estonia/resource/static/files/import/sim_mangud/epsim2019_targatuhing.pdf); <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/estonia/et/uudised-ja-sundmused/uudised/uudised2019/detsember-19/pr-2019-dets-01.html>

<sup>191</sup> (Õpetajate Leht, 2015) <https://opleht.ee/2015/05/loimitud-mang-teemal-euroopa-liit/>

<sup>192</sup> Õpetajate Leht, 2017: <https://koolielu.ee/info/readnews/539101/selgunud-on-tanavused-parimad-etwinningu-projektid>

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

- Teacher competences on EU-related topics are based largely on projects. It relies on teachers' personal motivation to include these topics in the study process and engage in the projects. Therefore, both international collaboration and cooperation at national level, as well as integrating these topics in teacher training courses, would help to facilitate inclusion of EU-related topics.
- Supporting teacher's professional networks and their sustainability should receive more attention. Teacher study mobility in groups has a potential to develop teachers' competence, increase their methodological toolkits and enrich international experience that all facilitate teaching EU-related topics.
- Strengthening study mobility both among teachers and student would establish professional links including the EU-related content in curriculum and activities.

## Finland

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Compared to Europe in general, EU positivity is remarkably high among the Finnish youth. Over 80% of adolescents agree that 'EU membership is good for Finland'<sup>193</sup> and, if a referendum on the Finnish EU membership was held today, over half would vote for it (Young People Understand the Value of a United Europe). After joining the EU in 1995 young people's attitude towards the EU has become more positive during the last twenty years. Young people of today have lived their whole life during Finland's membership in the EU. While at the end of 1990's 43% of the adolescents felt that the EU membership had been beneficial to Finland, in 2018 the corresponding figure had risen to 66%. However, while the survey results are largely positive about the future of the EU, one in three young people say European integration has already progressed too far<sup>194</sup>.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The Finnish educational legislation does not define the contents of individual subjects which are mentioned only at a general level (Basic Education Act; Act on General Upper Secondary Education). Learning objectives and key content areas are defined in curricula, but again only in general terms. Individual teachers implement the curriculum with great pedagogical freedom.

The EU is mentioned in National Core Curricula exclusively in 'social studies'. 'Social studies' teachers in lower and upper secondary schools in Finland are subject teachers who, in most cases, have 'social studies' as a minor subject alongside their major subject, usually history.

The EU dimension is not embedded in the Finnish National Core Curriculum for Basic Education in grades 1–6 but is mentioned in grades 7–9 in social study objectives. In

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<sup>193</sup> JEF Finland (2018). Nuorten mielipiteet EU:sta. Tutkimusraportti. [Young People's Opinions on the EU. Research Report]. <https://eurooppa-uoret.fi/artikkelit/2018/eurooppa-uoret-selvitti-suomalaiset-nuoret-pitavat-suomen-eu-jasenyytta-erittain-hyvana-asiana/>

<sup>194</sup> Myllyniemi, S. & Kiilakoski, T. (2019). Youth Barometer 2018. Influence On The Edge Of Europe. Summary. <https://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/julkaisut/verkkokauppa/verkkojulkaisut/2110-Summary>

lower secondary schools, 'social studies' are usually taught in grade 9, but the education providers may also decide to place social studies classes in any of the grades 7–9. In the Finnish Core Curriculum for Basic Education the objectives of social science education are defined in nine objectives of learning and four content areas. The EU is explicitly mentioned in one of the objectives of learning:

*'07 to guide the pupil in understanding the principles of decision-making and democratic practices on local, national and European Union level as well as globally and being an active citizen who develops his or her local community'*

In the National General Upper Secondary Education Curriculum, education consists of three compulsory courses: (1) Finnish Society, (2) Economics and (3) Finland, Europe and the Changing World (*Suomi, Eurooppa ja muuttuva maailma*), and one optional course (Law). EU-related topics are included in the third course and are not included in the curriculum descriptions of the other courses.

In the **National Vocational Education Curricula**, there are common vocational units that define social and working life competences, including an objective of society and citizenship. The EU is not mentioned in the curricula at all. In vocational education, social studies remain marginal which is a problem, considering that half of every age cohort goes to vocational education. In civic education, VET students are offered a passive, duty-oriented stance to citizenship, whereas general upper secondary education promotes active participation and critical thinking (Brunila et al., 2013<sup>195</sup>; Lappalainen et al., 2019<sup>196</sup>; Tenojoki et al., 2017<sup>197</sup>). VET students themselves say that they have limited possibilities to participate meaningfully and make their voice heard (Maunu & Kiilakoski, 2018<sup>198</sup>).

### How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula

Since the national curricula in Finland only provide a general framework, teachers have a high degree of autonomy. As there is no teacher or textbook inspection in Finland, it is difficult to judge what actually happens in the classroom. It may be that a class teacher in grades 7-9 brings EU matters into the classroom. However, one way to assess Finnish lessons is to look at the textbooks.

The 'social studies' textbooks for grades 7-9 contain EU-related topics in one chapter on about three pages. In one of the textbooks examined, the chapter dealing with the EU was mainly related to EU legislation and the administrative structure. Another had taken a more value-oriented approach by addressing loosely interpreted topics from the 2018 Youth Barometer (see above, Myllyniemi & Kiilakoski, 2019). There were subheadings such as Finland in the EU, benefits, problems and the future of the European Union.

<sup>195</sup> Brunila, K., Hakala, K., Lahelma, E. & Teittinen, A. (eds.) (2013). *Ammatillinen koulutus ja yhteiskunnalliset eronteot*. Gaudeamus.

<sup>196</sup> Lappalainen, S, Nylund, M. & Rosvall, P. (2019). Imagining societies through discourses on educational equality: A cross-cultural analysis of Finnish and Swedish upper secondary curricula from 1970s to the 2010s. *European Educational Research Journal* 18:3, 335-354.  
<<https://doi.org/10.1177/1474904118814140>

<sup>197</sup> Tenojoki, A.-M., Rantala, J. & Löfström, J. (2017). Nuorten kokemukset yhteiskunnallisen vaikuttamisen oppimisesta koulussa ja koulun ulkopuolella. [Young people's experiences of learning civic participation in and outside of Social studies in Finland 101 school.] In, Myllyniemi, S. & Pekkarinen, E. (eds.) *Opinpolut ja pientareet. Nuorisobarometri 2017*. [Youth Barometer, 2017. Roads to learning.] Helsinki: Ministry of Education and Culture, pp. 133–148.  
[https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/234496/Tenojoki\\_Rantala\\_Lo\\_fstro\\_m\\_2018\\_1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/234496/Tenojoki_Rantala_Lo_fstro_m_2018_1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>198</sup> Maunu, A., & Kiilakoski, T. (2018). Ohjausta osallisuuteen? *Aikuiskasvatus*, 38(2), 112–129.  
<https://doi.org/10.33336/aik.88333>

In vocational education, however, 'social studies' remains in a marginal position and the EU dimension is not embedded at all.

The EU dimension in the course 'Finland, Europe and the Changing World' in the National General Upper Secondary Education Curriculum contains the following aspects:

- Being a European and the European integration.
- European identity, values, and the diversity of societies.
- Finland as part of decision-making in the EU.
- The EU economic and regional policy.
- The EU as a global actor.
- Security policy of Finland and the EU.

The matriculation examination at the end of the upper secondary school providing access to higher education frequently includes EU-related questions.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

There is already plenty of educational material available, including official and unofficial pages with games, tests, figures and videos. Some examples include:

- **Learning corner** (*Eurosoppi*)<sup>199</sup>.
- **Europe Information** (*Eurooppa tiedotus opetuksen tueksi*)<sup>200</sup>.
- The Association for Teachers of History and Social Studies in Finland (*Hyol*)<sup>201</sup>.
- **EU Game (EU Peli)** provided by the Europe Information: It uses Seppo platform to create an interactive gaming environment for students (Seppo). In two games learners help friends, Jusu and Emma, to review facts about the EU before their visit to EU institutions in Brussels.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

Compared to Europe in general, EU positivity is remarkably high among the Finnish youth. It can be interpreted that the young Finns trust the European Union and are interested in its operation, as half of young people in Finland consider themselves to be very European and almost nine out of ten at least somewhat European. However, according to the interpretation based on the decreasing voter turnout, Finnish young people are increasingly apolitical and do not engage in traditional politics. Young people's political participation varies according to their level of education.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Embed the EU dimension in all levels of education explicitly into curricula.
- Initial and continuing teacher training and education at all levels should improve their knowledge and competences related to the EU in the context of the whole society.
- Textbooks should focus on creating an image of the EU as a more equal actor, for example with national or private actors, and creating a multi-layered field of action, where the EU plays in many roles. This way students are able to see

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<sup>199</sup> [https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home\\_fi](https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home_fi)

<sup>200</sup> <https://eurooppatiedotus.fi/opetuksentueksi/>

<sup>201</sup> <https://hyol.fi/linkkivinkki/yh-lukio/yh-lukio-yh3.html>

themselves as active players of the society, who can have an agency also at EU level.

- For a more comprehensive picture, the EU should also be reflected in other disciplines, such as history and geography in a broader, rather than national, manner. For example, in history lessons, the narrative of the birth of the European Union as a peace project would shift the focus of EU education from the 1990s to the end of the Second World War, providing a more comprehensive perspective to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The narrative of a divided world would become a story of an integrated Europe, and it would enlarge the image of the EU from a bureaucratic machinery to its ideological basis.
- The well elaborated simulations of EU meetings and decision-making offered by EU institutions should be used. Virtual tools could be used to ensure simultaneous participation by young people living in different countries. Moreover, both virtual and interactive visits to the EU institutions should be more frequently offered.

## France

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

Almost 6 in 10 young people consider themselves committed to France and Europe. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that 25% do not consider themselves sufficiently informed about Europe. Indeed, almost 6 in 10 young people say they have knowledge about the construction of the EU and the knowledge they say is founded for most of them. However, there is a lack of learning which, according to them, is at the level of education<sup>202</sup>. Almost half of young people are not satisfied with the functioning of the European institutions, and only one quarter of young people feel like European citizens<sup>203</sup>.

### **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

#### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

Since the reform of middle and secondary schools in 2017, students benefit from a more diversified education that strengthened international and European teaching offer. This enriched offer goes through the provision of European culture and languages courses. While the share of secondary schools offering or that plan to open at least one course in European languages and cultures was of 16% in 2017, this share increased to 30% at the start of the 2018 school year.

In Île-de-France, the development of binational and international sections, as well as the creation of new classes with equal time in languages, have made it possible to strengthen the international educational offer. France applied to the European authorities for two new European schools in Lille and Courbevoie, for the start of the 2019 school year. There are 1,000 additional places available in public and private schools, secondary schools, and high schools<sup>204</sup>.

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<sup>202</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y4573mvw>

<sup>203</sup> <https://www.studyrama.com/international/sejours-linguistiques/>

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.education.gouv.fr/ouvrir-l-ecole-sur-l-europe-et-le-monde-2969>

In France, two types of initiatives are implemented<sup>205</sup>:

- **'European Sections'** that were launched in 1992 in secondary schools and colleges practically throughout the entire country and which now number more than 2,500. The *raison d'être* of this system, apart from language learning, is to enhance the European dimension in education and to reinvent teaching by providing extensive knowledge of the civilisation of the country or countries concerned. The student's education is endorsed by a special reference on the school-leaving certificate to the 'European Section', if the student passed the modern language examination and took a special school-leaving examination.
- **'International Sections'** were designed to take in foreign pupils (who must account for at least 25-50% of the section intake) in order to facilitate both their integration within the French education system and their eventual return to their own school. In this section, foreign teachers teach history, geography, and literature in their own language based on a syllabus established jointly by the French education authorities and their country of origin.

Finally, bilingual courses at secondary level were also established to promote educational cooperation. Germany and France have co-founded Franco-German bilingual courses that manage the school twinning association and jointly design projects that are carried out as part of a foreign exchange.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The French approach to including the European dimension into teaching in its schools is mainly through the promotion of multilingualism, which is argued to be key for the future of Europe<sup>206</sup>. On the other hand, there are four main subjects that systematically grant considerable status to the European dimension in secondary education<sup>207</sup>: *geography* (study of physical and political Europe, the states, regions and towns of Europe, with emphasis on neighbouring countries and the Member States of the EU, the geographical position of countries and 'trans-European' concepts such as climatology, environmental protection, the water cycle, etc.); *history* (study of the construction of the EU, the historical position of countries and 'trans-European' concepts such as the European institutions, conflicts, alliances, etc.); *foreign languages*: study of one, two or three foreign languages; and *civic education and citizenship*.

In the **professional baccalaureate** programme, one of the themes in geography concerns *the European Union and its territories*, presenting the economic and geopolitical construction of the EU, the Schengen area, Euro zone, and the major European projects. Territorial contrasts and the efforts undertaken to reduce them are evoked. *France in the European Union and in the world* presents the French territory, its diversity, its openness to the EU and to the world. *The idea of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century* explains the major political and economic projects of the EU, the debates, and the opposition they raise<sup>208</sup>.

In the **CAP programme**, the theme called *France and European construction since 1950* allows students to situate France in the European context, to understand the stakes of its position and its active participation in the unprecedented construction that is the EU.

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<sup>205</sup> <https://eduscol.education.fr/pid24109/enseignements-europeens-et-internationaux.html>  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/332201/DG-4-CULT\\_ET\(2003\)332201\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/332201/DG-4-CULT_ET(2003)332201_EN.pdf)

<sup>206</sup> <https://www.education.gouv.fr/ouvrir-l-ecole-sur-l-europe-et-le-monde-2969>

<sup>207</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/332201/DG-4-CULT\\_ET\(2003\)332201\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2003/332201/DG-4-CULT_ET(2003)332201_EN.pdf)

<sup>208</sup> <https://eduscol.education.fr/cid144227/histoire-geographie-voie-pro.html>

The framework is national and European. Students should be capable of identifying the borders of the Schengen Area and the countries belonging to the Euro zone, raising elements that characterise a 'European capital city of culture', and building a chronological frieze showing the main stages of European construction and the enlargement process<sup>209</sup>.

The Ministry of National Education launched a new label in 2019: '**Euroscol**' with the objective to recognise the mobilisation of public and private establishments which are part of a European dynamic and with the ultimate aim being to create a genuine European education area<sup>210</sup>. The label is awarded by the rectorate for three years, and it has already been awarded to 405 schools across the country. Concretely, teachers must integrate a European dimension in their teaching by offering, for example, plurilingual training, combining educational content and foreign language. The creation of this label also aims to encourage schools, colleges and high schools to organise European cultural actions, to celebrate the national holidays of European countries, or other thematic European days such as Europe Day (May 9) and others. Finally, particular emphasis is placed on mobility.

'**My professional path in Europe**' is a portal dedicated to the mobility of young people in the vocational field. It offers information and advice for secondary school pupils and students wishing to spend a stay in Europe as part of a voluntary service, work placement, training or exchange programme<sup>211</sup>. **Toute l'Europe**<sup>212</sup> is a website dedicated to the dissemination of information on European issues. It offers educational content on the functioning of the EU as well as on major European current affairs. The site also offers a daily press review and interactive content. All content is freely accessible and reusable.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

The **European Movement – France**<sup>213</sup> has been mobilising since 1950, across all generations, to bring to life a pluralist public debate on Europe. It is also mobilising through its young branch, the Young Europeans - France, which has 26 local groups spread across the territory. The association for complementary education, educates more than 10,000 young people per year in popular education classes and places. It also creates and distributes more than 100,000 educational documents per year intended for all audiences to decipher European issues, on a wide range of subjects: local Europe, culture, citizenship, fundamental rights, etc. In addition, the numerous media passages of the European Movement, both at the local (RCF, Euradio, etc.) and national (BFM TV, RFI La Croix etc.) level as well as its presence on social networks, allow it to raise awareness among millions of French to European issues. The platform of the European Movement gives access to educational tools and materials for talking about Europe to all audiences from which students of all ages.

The '**Europe at school**' programme<sup>214</sup> intends to challenge the preconceived ideas about Europe by allowing students or young professionals to demonstrate in schools their interest in Europe, or their experience abroad. This programme seeks to educate on past and present challenges of European construction through more than 200 classes, or more than 7,000 students each year. The programme initiates a reflection on European values and the European project and invite students to seize the

<sup>209</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3e5wssq>

<sup>210</sup> <https://www.touteleurope.eu/>

<sup>211</sup> <http://mavoieproeurope.onisep.fr/blog/category/actualites/>

<sup>212</sup> <https://www.touteleurope.eu>

<sup>213</sup> <https://mouvement-europeen.eu/qui-sommes-nous/>

<sup>214</sup> <https://www.taurillon.org/L-Europe-a-l-ecole-le-projet-pedagogique-des-Jeunes-Europeens-France>

opportunities offered to them by the EU in terms of mobility or employment. volunteers come into the classroom and intervene in classic subjects of primary and secondary education, which are history, geography and civic education, and recourse to other less common disciplines, such as political science, economics, and law. Present throughout France, Young Europeans intervene in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, working mainly with public establishments.

## **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

Understanding how Europe works, promoting the EU dimension of learning, and boosting a feeling of belonging among young cohorts in France appear to be real challenges. France promotes a multilingual and cultural approach to introducing the European dimension in schools and VET institutions. In addition, initiatives such as the Euroscol label or the Europe at School project promote and reward European dimension. They provide concrete examples of best practices to boost engagement of the French youth. Multiplying such initiatives is key to promoting European dimension.

**Integrating the notion of Europe into the syllabuses:** Bardonnnet-Ditte<sup>215</sup> draws particular attention to the 'haunting problem of the sheer overloading of the curriculum'. 'As long as the notion of Europe is not integrated into the syllabuses and into the training course for teachers, we will be faced with a brick wall of fundamental scepticism'<sup>216</sup>. The syllabuses for the initial training of teachers need to be formulated in a way which gives young teachers a European spirit to supplant that of more sceptical teachers.

Finally, further developing curricula that encompass the European dimension seem key for learning. Raising awareness of teachers on the importance of European culture, history and geography within the syllabuses is essential to further enhance this dimension.

## **Germany**

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

The available studies suggest that the young generation in Germany is in its majority clearly pro-European. Their knowledge of the EU seems to be comparable to that of older generations. According to a study on 'Youngsters and the EU: Perceptions, Knowledge and Expectations in the Member States', 56% of the young Germans involved in the study consider their knowledge about the EU to be fair at least. 11% would describe themselves as European rather than German. They reported that they learn relatively often about the EU at school.

Social media and internet research are also common sources<sup>217</sup>. In 2017, the Bertelsmann Stiftung did a survey among young people aged between 15 and 24 in Germany, Austria and the Visegrad States regarding their attitudes towards the EU. In all six countries, more than 70% rated their country's EU membership positively. The

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<sup>215</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yxpc09q8>

<sup>216</sup> J. Bardonnnet-Ditte, "Prise en compte de la dimension européenne à l'école élémentaire française, dans la formation des instituteurs en France," in Actes de Palerme, ed. F. Vaniscotte (Paris: ATEE- ISAS/Hatier, 1990), pp. 134-40.

<sup>217</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y4fe23r7>



highest positive and lowest negative scores were found in Germany: 87% were pro EU, only 13% were sceptical<sup>218</sup>.

A meta-evaluation of several existing sources assessed the attitudes of Germans in the run-up to the European elections in 2019: 63% of 18 to 34-year-olds said that the EU is important to them personally, but for many young people Europe is not an affair of the heart. Only 9% feel first of all European, as opposed to 23% who see themselves as citizens of the world, and 22% who see themselves first of all as German citizens. Regarding the knowledge the interviewees had of the EU, one third knew that European elections would be held the coming year, about the same percentage as among older people. Almost 90% would like to learn more about the EU and think that this should also be a compulsory subject for school lessons<sup>219</sup>.

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

In Germany, teaching content is the remit of the 16 Länder. There are nationwide educational standards for core subjects, plus various recommendations regarding the teaching of the European dimension, education for democracy etc., but the way they are implemented varies at the level of the framework curricula of each Land. The curricula of all secondary – and sometimes even primary – levels of general schools in all Länder foresee an EU dimension, especially in ‘political’ subjects. The objective is to impart conceptual knowledge about European politics as well as European political motivations and attitudes.

The basis for teaching the EU dimension in primary, secondary and vocational schools is the recommendation *Europa im Unterricht* (Europe in the classroom), adopted by the Education Ministers of the Länder back in 1978. The version of 5 May 2008 *Europabildung in der Schule* (European education in schools) is still valid<sup>220</sup>. It states that in order to strengthen the European dimension in teaching and education, all subjects and disciplines of the school should contribute to promoting the awareness of a European identity among young people.

It is for the Länder to ensure that their curricula and educational standards contain concrete goals and topics as well as references to suitable learning content, appropriate forms of work and desirable attitudes. It may seem surprising that the nationwide educational standards for core subjects at primary and secondary levels seem to contain no reference to Europe or the EU. However, the situation looks different at the level of the reference curricula of each Land.

As for **VET**, there is a framework curriculum for each of the more than 300 training professions. They are based on a KMK-framework agreement on vocational, but even the more recent ones contain barely any reference to ‘Europe’. The KMK has realised the need for action in this field and is preparing a new policy paper.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The great complexity of the EU multi-level system and the dynamic nature of European integration pose particular challenges for political European education. EU knowledge

<sup>218</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y9uelmdu>

<sup>219</sup> <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/dialog/15066.pdf>

<sup>220</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y4hz5clr>

can quickly become outdated, and the same applies to teaching materials. On the other hand, teaching materials provided by the EU tend to be rather one-sided in the sense of promoting the EU.

Other problems are the often-perceived remoteness of the 'EU' from citizens and a lack of previous knowledge as well as prejudices on the part of the learners. Specific publications inform teachers in Germany on numerous didactic approaches to meet these challenges. They recommend taking examples from the everyday life of pupils such as mobility and consumption (e.g. food safety, cosmetics free of animal testing), but also training and career opportunities, to illustrate the relevance of the EU's achievements to everyday life. Political excursions, but also encounters with political actors in the classroom can make European policy tangible and give the EU a face. Simulation games enable the students to understand European institutions and political processes 'from the inside' and playfully promote their knowledge and ability to judge. In line with the principles formulated by the KMK, education about 'Europe' is normally provided in a special block with an EU focus, e.g. in civic/social education, but also as a cross-curricular teaching principle, for example when it comes to local politics, environmental policy, cultural issues and in all other subjects.

Another important tool for promoting Europe is the annual **EU-Projekttag** an Schulen in May: on that day, politicians throughout Germany visit schools to discuss with pupils, from the Chancellor and Federal Ministers to state or European parliamentarians. It complements the *Europawoche* (Europe week) that takes place each year in all German Länder to give citizens and pupils the possibility of informing themselves about EU politics. Teaching European content at primary schools is rather the exception. An interesting initiative for fourth grade pupils was a Jean Monnet project on simulation games for action-oriented EU teaching at primary level), carried out at the University of Göttingen in 2015/16.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

A precondition for teachers to be able to acquaint their pupils with knowledge about the EU is that they themselves possess this knowledge. There are two main ways to acquire it: either in the course of their studies at university, or later on, in the form of continuing education. Concerning the first, the European dimension seems to play a rather small part in teacher study programmes, with the exception of subjects like history, politics or economics. The second option, continuing education, is organised in most Länder in a very decentralised way. Hence it is difficult to assess the situation regarding 'EU education'.

In all Länder there are sites and sources for teachers that want to embed European and EU content into their teaching. E.g. Baden-Württemberg runs the website *Lehrerfortbildung Baden-Württemberg*, where teachers can download texts, slides, videos etc. to enrich their teaching, e.g. the unit *Die Europäisierung des politischen System'* in social studies, with quite advanced content on the European Semester<sup>221</sup>.

Another important source of information for teachers, but also for interested citizens, is the **Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung**, a publicly funded agency for political education. It contains a wealth of information on historical, social, economic and political topics<sup>222</sup>. Most Länder run their own **Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung** that complements the offers of the federal agency. E.g. the *Landeszentrale Nordrhein-*

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<sup>221</sup> [https://lehrerfortbildung-bw.de/u\\_gewi/gk/gym/bp2004/fb2/2\\_thema/3\\_europa/](https://lehrerfortbildung-bw.de/u_gewi/gk/gym/bp2004/fb2/2_thema/3_europa/)

<sup>222</sup> <https://www.bpb.de/internationales/europa/>

*Westfalen* offers the game *Wir sind Europa!* (we are Europe), to familiarise pupils aged 14 or older with facts and values of the EU<sup>223</sup>.

There are numerous projects organised by foundations, e.g. the ***Internationales Bildungs- und Begegnungswerk Dortmund*** regularly organises excursions for pupils and training courses for teachers. A somewhat similar approach, based on the common European history, is used by the digital exhibition ***Denkmal Europa*** (monument Europe): Monuments across Europe are used to inspire the teaching about European history, culture and politics<sup>224</sup>.

Further examples of practice include the following: The ***Europäischer Wettbewerb*** (European competition) started in 1953 and seeks to allow pupils to discover and help to shape Europe through creative learning. It involves around 85,000 participants each year at around 1,300 schools throughout Germany. From the first grade through to the Abitur, pupils are invited to submit creative contributions on current European topics<sup>225</sup>. ***Unionslabor*** (union laboratory) is an interactive online game developed for school lessons. Students assume the role of a head of state in 2030, but they are first sent back 30 years into the past to build their own union<sup>226</sup>. Another tool for schools is **#FutureLabEU**: a workshop in which school classes spend a day developing ideas for shaping the EU under their guidance. They assume the role of a think tank<sup>227</sup>.

### Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

The attitude of the large majority of young Germans towards Europe and the European Union is unequivocally positive. This is not to say that the level of knowledge of the young generation on how the EU works, how individuals can contribute, and more generally, the preciousness of common European values after centuries of warfare, could and should not be increased:

- Teacher education is the key to change this. It is a central problem of European education that even teachers who studied politics, history or economics often lack the specialised scientific and didactical knowledge for the successful teaching of EU contents, since the European project is still too little considered in study programmes for teachers.
- Special emphasis should be placed on strengthening the European dimension in vocational schools. The dual VET system is of high quality, and mentioning of the 'European dimension' can be found in many German policy documents, but in reality the system has been rather inward-looking for many decades. The German VET sector today reflects the increasingly international composition of the German population and all the arguments in favour of expanding European education in primary and secondary schools apply even more strongly to VET.
- With the European Commission intending to extend Jean Monnet actions to the school level, the coming weeks and months might be a good moment in time to seek a discussion with the KMK on what actions they would consider most helpful and promising. It seems quite likely that the KMK will present an update or amendment of its policy paper on European education and probably also a brand-new policy document on the need to strengthen the European dimension in VET. If Jean Monnet actions were extended, the target group should be school teachers,

<sup>223</sup> <https://www.politische-bildung.nrw.de/publikationen/titelverzeichnis/details/print/wir-sind-europa/>

<sup>224</sup> <https://ibb-d.de/>; [www.denkmal-europa.de](http://www.denkmal-europa.de)

<sup>225</sup> <https://www.europaeischer-wettbewerb.de/>

<sup>226</sup> <https://unionslabor.de/>

<sup>227</sup> <https://www.eurosoc-digital.org/de/projekt/futurelab-35-eu>

both at general schools and vocational schools. It has become more urgent than in the past that teachers should be well equipped to teach their pupils about the European project.

## Greece

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

There is only limited information available in Greece regarding young people's knowledge and attitudes towards the EU. In the most recent Eurobarometer 92<sup>228</sup> conducted in 2019, Greece has the smallest share of citizens with a positive view about the EU (31% vs. 42% in the EU 28). Greeks are also feeling less European compared to citizens in other Member States (51% vs. 70% in the EU 28). Nevertheless, Greeks continue to trust the EU more than national institutions, but less than most countries.

A recent survey on youth aged 16-26 by TUI titled 'Young Europe 2019'<sup>229</sup> shows that Greek youth consider migration and asylum the most important problem in the EU. Economic and financial policy ranks second (46% in Greece vs. 28% EU average) and fighting unemployment ranks third. Greek youth more often consider themselves as both Greek and European citizens (77% vs. 59%). This share, as well as support for EU membership have strongly increased since 2017.

Greece has the highest share of youth (96% vs. 89%) agreeing that national governments should strengthen school education about rights and responsibilities of EU citizens. 87% also agree that learning about European matters, should be part of compulsory school education<sup>230</sup>. Young Greeks also agree that Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps<sup>231</sup> make them feel more European.

Greeks seem to believe that the EU action is adequate in a number of issues, like the promotion of democracy and peace in the world (44%) and environmental protection (40%)<sup>232</sup>. Interestingly, the Greek youth aged 15-24 think that the EU is doing well more often than the general population. This suggests that youth are more in favour of the EU, perhaps because they feel they can take advantage of the opportunities it provides, like free movement to study and work abroad.

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<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2255>

<sup>229</sup> <https://www.tuigroup.com/en-en/media/press-releases/2019/2019-05-03-tui-foundation-youth-study>; [https://www.tui-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019\\_Report\\_EN\\_TUI-Stiftung\\_Junges-Europa.pdf](https://www.tui-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2019_Report_EN_TUI-Stiftung_Junges-Europa.pdf)

<sup>230</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/index#p=1&instruments=FLASH>

<sup>231</sup> Information on EU Solidarity Corps can be found at [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en)

<sup>232</sup> The survey is available at [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2018/delivering\\_on\\_europe\\_citizens\\_views\\_on\\_current\\_and\\_future\\_eu\\_action/report.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2018/delivering_on_europe_citizens_views_on_current_and_future_eu_action/report.pdf)

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

There is currently no clear EU dimension in teaching and learning practices in school and VET institutions: neither regarding the curricula in schools nor the teaching methods and practices.

The curricula in both primary and lower secondary education have very few and short references to the EU. In upper secondary general education, the EU is not mentioned anywhere in the curriculum. The same is true in upper secondary vocational education (EPAL).

There is no separate subject taught about the EU, but chapters or sub-sections in more general textbooks do attempt to provide students with some EU knowledge. Students encounter the concept of the EU in the subject of Geography for the first time in the fifth grade of primary school (history, member countries, institutions)<sup>233</sup>. History in the sixth grade of primary school<sup>234</sup> focuses on a review of the course of Greece towards the EU. The third mention is in the subject of Social and Political Education,<sup>235</sup> discussing the nature of the EU, its members, institutions, and responsibilities.

In Geology-Geography in the second grade of lower secondary education<sup>236</sup> there are two classes devoted to the EU discussing why the EU was established, its enlargement, institutions and their roles, the importance of the EU for the participating countries and Greece in particular, the EU's accomplishments and targets and why its diversity is also its strength. In Social and Political Education in the third grade of lower secondary education<sup>237</sup> the establishment and evolution of the EU, its basic institutions, its core policies, and the rights that accompany a citizen of the EU are discussed.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The teaching methods and practices used to learn about the EU are traditional, typically comprising of the teacher's lecture and only limited participation by the students. There is the exception of the Flexible Zone<sup>238</sup>, where is up to the teacher to discuss the EU or other issues, as well as to choose the teaching method, which can diverge from typical teaching practices, e.g. through projects, real-life experiences, observational learning.

However, teachers are neither obliged nor encouraged to discuss the EU. Given the tight syllabus facing primary education schools, Flexible Zone is often substituted for other subjects or downplayed to free playtime in the courtyard, when there are not enough teachers available.

In secondary education, both lower and upper, vocational (EPAL) and general, there is no time provided for extra-curricular activities, at least in public schools. Model and Experimental schools are exceptions along with private schools, in which case additional

<sup>233</sup> [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2278/Geografia\\_E-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/indexC\\_42.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2278/Geografia_E-Dimotikou_html-empl/indexC_42.html)

<sup>234</sup> [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2188/Istoria\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-empl/index5\\_12.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2188/Istoria_ST-Dimotikou_html-empl/index5_12.html)

<sup>235</sup> [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2348/Koinoniki-kai-Politiki-Agogi\\_ST-Dimotikou\\_html-apli/index3\\_a\\_1.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2348/Koinoniki-kai-Politiki-Agogi_ST-Dimotikou_html-apli/index3_a_1.html)

<sup>236</sup> [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2294/Geografia\\_B-Gymnasiou\\_html-empl/mat3\\_26.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/2294/Geografia_B-Gymnasiou_html-empl/mat3_26.html),

<sup>237</sup> [http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/4720/Koinoniki-kai-Politiki-Agogi\\_G-Gymnasiou\\_html-apli/index13.html](http://ebooks.edu.gr/ebooks/v/html/8547/4720/Koinoniki-kai-Politiki-Agogi_G-Gymnasiou_html-apli/index13.html)

<sup>238</sup> <http://www.opengov.gr/ypepth/?p=5130&cpage=15>

teaching hours are common practice, since schools are not allowed to diverge from the national curricula and must complete the syllabus on time.

Both EPAL and VET institutions participate in Erasmus+ and allow their students to study for some time in VET institutions abroad. Their stay can range from two weeks to twelve months<sup>239</sup>. In this context, ECVET<sup>240</sup> encourages students to spend part of their studies abroad and likely strengthens their European identity.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

Despite teacher training on modern teaching methods and practices, traditional teaching methods and practices prevail. Using the internet to track sources of information about the EU, watching educational videos and then discussing with the students can prove challenging due to lack of IT infrastructure.

Several practices and initiatives by the EU have however been welcomed by Greek teachers and schools and seem to have contributed to the strengthening of the European identity:

- The EUROSCOLA initiative<sup>241</sup> was a very good example of motivating upper secondary education students and allowing them to learn about the European Parliament, and at the same time interact with students from other member-countries, express their views in a democratic way.
- eTwinning<sup>242</sup> has proven to be a useful tool for teachers and is embraced by Greek teachers and schools as suggested by the 86 schools which have been awarded the eTwinning School Label award.
- The ERASMUS+ programme is another important tool. Several schools in Greece have utilised Erasmus+ for student exchanges<sup>243</sup>. According to a small case study of 103 Greek Erasmus students<sup>245</sup>, 64.1% of participants believe that their experience made them feel more European, 85.5% feel more European than before because they learned more about the EU (63.1%), they have become more interested in learning even more (96.1%) and 70.9% consider themselves more active citizens.

School Partnerships<sup>246</sup> benefit both schools and teachers by reinforcing the European dimension in schools, and they are more interested in teacher training abroad, and more willing to investigate European programmes that may suit them. Participating teachers and schools report being more eager to divert their students' attention towards actions

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<sup>239</sup> Extended stay abroad is provided only for students in VET institutions <https://www.iky.gr/el/kin-ekpedeuomenon>

<sup>240</sup> European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Training. Relevant information can be found at <https://www.iky.gr/el/ecvet-network>

<sup>241</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/greece/el/για-νέους-μαθητές-%0A-σπουδαστές/euroscola>

<sup>242</sup> <https://www.etwinning.net/el/pub/index.htm>;

<https://www.etwinning.net/el/pub/benefits/recognition/etwinning-school.htm>

<sup>243</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/greece-erasmus-2018-numbers\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/resources/documents/greece-erasmus-2018-numbers_en).

<sup>244</sup> <http://gym-peir-ag-anarg.att.sch.gr/new/index.php/2013-11-09-09-59-34/2013-11-09-09-59-36>

<sup>245</sup> Zervas, I. (2017). *European Identity as a Project - Is Mobility Enough?* Proceedings for the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Studying, Teaching, Learning the European Union.

<sup>246</sup> E.g. Made by Two Hands - Regional Handicraft in Introducing Youth into European Labour Market (MBTH) [https://www.up2europe.eu/european/projects/made-by-two-hands-regional-handicraft-in-introducing-youth-into-european-labour-market\\_83432.html](https://www.up2europe.eu/european/projects/made-by-two-hands-regional-handicraft-in-introducing-youth-into-european-labour-market_83432.html)

that involve learning about European countries, EU's functioning, European citizenship, values and languages<sup>247</sup>.

In the E+ initiative 'Teachers4Europe: setting an Agora for Democratic Culture (T4E)' participants form a network of teachers who operate as ambassadors, familiarising students with the EU's actions and initiatives, improving the quality of learning about the EU. It involves discussions, training and joint projects in currently 5 countries. The network of teachers (T4E ambassadors) is planning to organise and operate summer schools, conferences, set up labs, an online education platform and open courses.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the nat. context**

Recommendations could be made to enhance EU knowledge amongst Greek students:

- Introduce a separate subject about the EU and/or introduce discussions about the EU in everyday school life through projects that aim at allowing students to get to know other EU member-states.
- Increase extra-curricular activities, e.g. Flexible Zone, encouraging them to use the available tools provided by the European Commission, like eTwinning and Learning Corner<sup>248</sup>.
- Expand/Reinforce Erasmus+ and expand it to include more students, especially those who currently cannot afford it, since they will become the ambassadors of the EU.
- Improve initial and continuous teachers' education and training. Educate teachers in EU related issues. Support the T4E initiative, in order to allow more teachers to be trained and become ambassadors for the EU to schools and the society.
- Make sure every school has the necessary ICT equipment to allow teachers and students to take advantage of the new learning tools.

## **Hungary**

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

Apart from international value surveys (e.g. Eurobarometer, European Values Survey, World Values Survey, European Social Survey) and reviews of democratic education (see Eurydice), there has been little research in Hungary to evaluate young people's knowledge and attitudes towards the EU. As regards the views of Hungarian young people to Europe and the EU, in 2016, a total of 42% were in favour of Hungary joining the EU, compared to 30% four years earlier, while 38% thought that membership would be good for them personally, while in 2012, only 30% said the same.

The higher the level of education of their parents, the more positive attitude young people have to joining the EU in the dimension of their own lives. Children of university

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<sup>247</sup>

<http://dione.lib.unipi.gr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/unipi/12273/MONIOY%20ZΩH.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>248</sup> The address for the Greek site is [https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home\\_el](https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home_el)

graduate parents proved to be the most satisfied, while children of parents who have completed up to eight grades are the least optimistic in this regard<sup>249</sup>.

## EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

In the comprehensive or specific national strategies, few references can be found to the EU dimension. According to the vision of the National Youth Strategy<sup>250</sup>, "*children, adolescents and young people participate in their local and intercultural communities with an inclusive, tolerant attitude; their national and European identities help them to build a sustainable, peaceful society*" (p. 34).

Horizontal objectives include "*the display of the set of values and goals of social and youth policy declared by the European Union and the Council of Europe in youth policy actions*" (p. 35). "*A key goal is to strengthen a tolerant, conscious, local, national and European identity in young people based on a realistic view of history*" (p. 36). "*The production and presentation of programs and media content aimed at presenting national and European cultural values to young people should be encouraged*" (p. 54).

Another goal is to develop and expand the knowledge necessary for the acquisition of 'European citizenship' roles in the National Core Curriculum, to encourage its application in school curricula and extracurricular activities (p. 58). The recent Public Education Strategy<sup>251</sup> presents arts education as "*providing an opportunity for the transfer of universal culture, European culture, national traditions and values, the development of forms of preservation of values, and the harmonious development of the personality*" (p. 30). The strategy for the development of vocational education and training<sup>252</sup> does not mention the European dimension or European values.

The latest NCC (2020) is regulated by a narrow, subject-oriented framework and the European dimension is covered under a few subject tasks. These include *Hungarian Language and Literature* (literary works are embedded in Hungarian and European culture), *Foreign Languages* (knowledge gained through language acquisition and use can strengthen national identity and a sense of belonging to the European community), *History* (know and interpret the dual significance of national and European identity for the individual and the community), *Geography* (understand effects of globalization and recognize the importance of assuming and preserving national and European identity),

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<sup>249</sup> Boros, L., Bozsó, H. (2016). *A vallási, a nemzeti és az európai identitás megítélése a 2016-os nagymintás ifjúságkutatás adataiban.* (Evaluation of religious, national and European identity in 2016 large-sample youth research data.) In: Nagy, Á. (ed.) *Margón kívül. Magyar Ifjúságkutatás 2016.* (Outside the margin. Hungarian Youth Research 2016) Budapest, Excenter Kutatóközpont. pp. 204–236. <http://mek.oszk.hu/18600/18654/18654.pdf>

<sup>250</sup> *Nemzeti Ifjúsági Stratégia 2009-2024* (National Youth Strategy 2009-2024) In: *Az Országgyűlés 88/2009. (X. 29.) OGY határozata a Nemzeti Ifjúsági Stratégiáról* (Parliament Decision No. 88 of 2009 on National Youth Strategy <https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a09h0088.OGY>

<sup>251</sup> *Az Európai Unió számára készített köznevelési stratégia 2021-2030* [Public Education Strategy prepared for the European Union 2021-2030], Budapest, Emberi Erőforrások Minisztérium (Ministry of Human Capacities)

<https://www.kormany.hu/download/d/2e/d1000/K%C3%B6znevel%C3%A9si%20strat%C3%A9gia.pdf>

<sup>252</sup> Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium: *Szakképzés 4.0 – a szakképzés és felnőttképzés megújításának középtávú szakmapolitikai stratégiája. A szakképzési rendszer válasza a negyedik ipari forradalom kihívásaira.* (Ministry for Innovation and Technology: VET 4.0 - a medium-term policy strategy for the renewal of vocational education and training. The vocational training system's response to the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution.) <https://www.nive.hu/Downloads/Hirek/DL.php?f=szakkepzes-4.0.pdf> In: *1168/2019. (III. 28.) Korm. határozat a „Szakképzés 4.0” című stratégia elfogadásáról és a végrehajtása érdekében szükséges intézkedésekről* (Government Decision No. 1168 of 2019 on the acceptance of the VET 4.0 Strategy and on measures needed for implementing it.)

<https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=A19H1168.KOR&xtreferer=00000001.txt>



and *Ethics* (study of ethically important events, phenomena, processes and actors of Hungarian, European and world history).

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The NCC is the main document at the top level of a multi-level regulatory toolkit of education. The educational aims, tasks and learning outcomes set out in it are broken down and defined in detail for each subject in the central Framework Curricula, which are published by the Educational Authority<sup>253</sup>. Based on these documents, each school develops its own detailed local curricula. European issues can be found as content topics in certain subjects.

Within the framework of the History subject, there is a comprehensive '*Hungary and the EU*' topic for grades 7 and 8, divided into several sub-themes: The inception and enlargement of the European Union, The goals, achievements and problems of European integration, and Hungary's membership in the European Union. Related development tasks are Recalling the goals of the European Union, and an overview of the achievements and problems of European integration.

The same comprehensive topic appears for grades 9 to 12<sup>254</sup> with developed sub-themes. Within the framework of the subject Civic Studies in grade 8, there is a development task for up to a few hours to get to know and analyse the relationship between Hungary and the European Union. In Grade 12 themes such as the election of members of parliament, local government and the European Parliament can be found; as well as the role and responsibilities of nation states in the global world and in the European Union; and relations between Hungary and the European Union.

Geography has a task in grades 7 and 8 to create a mind map on the relationship between Hungary and the European Union, the future of the European Union and Europe in terms of sustainable development, Europe's diverse cultural heritage and future, the analysis of socio-economic indicators to describe the differences in Europe's regional development, and the future of Europe. Tasks for grades 9 and 10 include the comparison of the role of economically important countries and groups of European, Asian and American countries and their changes in the global world and presentation of differences in socio-economic development within the European Union.

For the upper secondary school leaving exam (*matura*), Geography students should demonstrate knowledge of the European Union and the socio-geographical nature of Europe. One of the topics defined in the framework curriculum of the subject *Ethics* for grades 1 to 8 is the influence of European culture on the value system of the individual.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

#### *Effective teaching*

In recent years, the development, introduction and dissemination of school theme weeks and project days have been started by EU-funded projects, in themes such as financial literacy, environmental protection, digital learning, entrepreneurship, democracy education. These are aimed at introducing playful, experiential transfer of

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<sup>253</sup> See the webpage of the Educational Authority

[https://www.oktatas.hu/koznevelés/kerettantervek/2020\\_nat](https://www.oktatas.hu/koznevelés/kerettantervek/2020_nat)

<sup>254</sup> A characteristic feature of Hungarian education is the cyclical progress of teaching and learning: the contents of the subjects for grades 5 to 8 are repeated comprehensively and in more in-depth detail in grades 9 to 12.

practical skills and competences that can be used in everyday life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and encouraging teachers to experiment with new pedagogical methods.

### *Good practice*

A Budapest upper secondary schools, II. Rákóczi Ferenc Gimnázium, provides an advanced European education profile<sup>255</sup> for one group per grade. In this programme students learn French language in a high number of hours in addition to English. In grades 11 and 12 they learn about the European Union in English and French in two hours a week. The aim of the program is to develop knowledge and understanding of different cultures of EU member states, to expand students' vision and enhance their cooperation skills, tolerance, and motivation to get to know nations and cultures.

Organized by the European Parliament's Liaison Office in Hungary, the European Parliament launched the European Parliament's Ambassadors' School in Hungary in 2017<sup>256</sup>, which aims to raise young people's awareness of the EU's work and achievements by providing active knowledge of both the EU and the EP. In the first round, 25 secondary schools joined the programme and participation has subsequently grown.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

The teaching of the European dimension in Hungarian primary and secondary education has been declining over the last two decades, and it is hardly represented in the currently valid policy and regulatory documents. Educational content and standards are defined within a narrow and rigid framework of subjects, and the teaching praxis cannot break through the limits of this framework.

Due to the operating conditions of and teachers' working conditions, schools are less interested in innovating education and teachers are less motivated for enriching the content and methodology of their own subjects, and for ensuring cross-curricular solutions and impacts. Innovation and new initiatives are created and operate more through extracurricular activities and often in the vast world of shadow education.

During the extension and further development of Jean Monnet Programme, it is worthwhile to provide opportunity to specify the programme locally (i.e. in Hungary), in order to make it fit in with local circumstances.

It is worth looking for opportunities and solutions that allow for extracurricular implementation.

Special attention should be paid to accessibility in terms of locality (small and distant regions), social background (disadvantages) and diversity (of actors working in formal and shadow education).

It is important to pay attention to the participatory nature of the supported programmes (in terms of both planning and implementation), as well as to the elaboration of the conditions and monitoring of sustainability.

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<sup>255</sup> *A Budapest II. Kerületi II. Rákóczi Ferenc Gimnázium Pedagógiai Programja* (Pedagogical Program of Budapest District II Rákóczi Ferenc Upper Secondary School), Budapest, II. Rákóczi Ferenc Gimnázium [http://www.budai-rfg.hu/joomla cms/components/pdf/alapdokumentumok/pedagogiai\\_program\\_2020.pdf](http://www.budai-rfg.hu/joomla cms/components/pdf/alapdokumentumok/pedagogiai_program_2020.pdf)

<sup>256</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/hungary/hu/ fiatalok-es-oktatas/ep-nagykovet-iskola-program.html>

## Ireland

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

There are a number of subject areas at primary and secondary levels which incorporate education on aspects of the EU and democratic processes, but they are quite piecemeal and lack an overall framework clearly setting out the priorities and focus at each stage of the education system.

There is limited evidence available on knowledge and attitudes and this limits the extent to which we can be definitive on the current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU across primary and secondary schools, and VET general education and training.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

Each of the key EU areas are embedded in national curricula frameworks at primary and secondary levels. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment oversees all curricular developments across primary and secondary education in Ireland. The NCCA commissioned "*Senior Cycle Reform: What do you want?*" looked at the need for senior cycle reform designed to promote dialogue. The evidence shows the Leaving Certificate exam as having strong currency from the perspective of teachers, parents, and students<sup>257</sup>.

#### How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula

Learning about the EU exists in curricula at both primary and mainstream secondary levels, but not in the two main VET programmes at upper secondary level: the Leaving Certificate Vocation Programme<sup>258</sup>, and the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme<sup>259</sup>, do not include any components addressing learning about the EU.

At **primary level**, the Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)<sup>260</sup> curriculum consists of three strands, one of which ('Myself and the wider world') aims to support students to begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity. The EU dimension is a particular focus of SPHE for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class primary students.

At **secondary level**, as part of the new Framework for Junior Cycle, a short course in citizenship was first introduced in 2016. This course is available as an option for schools and it is unclear how many schools have engaged with this programme as yet. All students at secondary level participate in the Civic, Social and Personal Education Programme (CSPE)<sup>261</sup>. The short course focuses on supporting students in become

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<sup>257</sup> Smyth, Emer, McCoy, Selina and Joanne Banks (2019) *Student, teacher and parent perspectives on senior cycle education*, Dublin: ESRI. <https://www.esri.ie/system/files/publications/RS94.pdf>

<sup>258</sup> Professional Development Service for Teachers (online) 'Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme Course Content'. URL: <https://www.pdst.ie/node/2198>

<sup>259</sup> NCCA (online) 'Leaving Certificate Applied'. URL: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/LCA/>

<sup>260</sup> NCCA (1999) *Social, Personal and Health Education: Teacher Guidelines*, Dublin: The Stationery Office. [https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/00e41b69-84cc-43b1-a881-ee7578907a64/PSEC06\\_SPHE\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/00e41b69-84cc-43b1-a881-ee7578907a64/PSEC06_SPHE_Guidelines.pdf)

<sup>261</sup> NCCA (2016) *Short Course: Civic, Social and Personal Health: A Citizenship Course*, Dublin: NCCA. <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/4370bb23-00a0-4a72-8463-d935065de268/NCCA-JC-Short-Course-CSPE.pdf>

active citizens through their learning in three strands: rights and responsibilities, global citizenship, and exploring democracy.

Collaborative and active learning and the development of skills in citizenship, research, reflection, and action are integrated across each of the three strands. The learning outcomes of this course are broadly aligned with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

The **Junior Certificate School Programme** is a national programme sponsored by the Department of Education and Skills and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and is currently operating in over 240 schools throughout the country. The programme includes one learning area of relevance: learning about the democratic processes of the State and the place of the State within a global context.

At **upper secondary level**, a new subject - Politics and Society<sup>262</sup> - was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 and introduced in a small number of schools in September 2016. Politics and Society aims to develop the student's ability to be a reflective and active citizen, in a way that is informed by the insights and skills of social and political science. It is a full Leaving Certificate subject, requiring the same amount of class time (180 hours per year) as all other subjects.

In terms of supporting EU knowledge and awareness, strand 4 includes: the discussion of the local, national, European and global dimensions of the issues studied; the exploration of the similarities and differences in social and political practices around the world; the analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative social and political research data; and, the use of active, participatory, democratic and discursive practices in teaching and learning.

One Irish school sector, **Educate Together**<sup>263</sup>, has developed a new Ethical Education programme for its primary and secondary students. Ethical Education involves exploring different worldviews and beliefs. Statement of Learning No. 7 states that the student learns to value what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts. The learning outcomes in this short course are aligned with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

The subject 'Politics and Society' has a focus on active and participatory learning, to engage students in learning activity that match their needs. Politics and Society involves engaging in democratic deliberation and in debating and interpreting diverse perspectives and positions on sociological and political issues, facilitating a focus on key skills. Effective engagement with the subject is underpinned by a set of key teaching and learning principles.

A number of specific methodologies may prove particularly valuable for supporting EU learning. These include discussion and debate, the use of a variety of contemporary media, data collection and analysis, portfolios, and reflective journals. A report on a citizenship project accounts for 20% of the total marks and a final written examination makes up the remaining 80% of the total marks.

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<sup>262</sup> Department of Education and Skills (2019) Politics and Society Curriculum Specification, Dublin: Department of Education and Skills. <https://curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/ee597f5d-180a-4531-ba50-2f4c966f2df3/Politics-and-Society-new.pdf>

<sup>263</sup> Educate Together (2019) Junior Cycle Ethical Education Curriculum, Dublin: Educate Together. <https://www.educatetogether.ie/app/uploads/2020/06/2020-Ethical-Ed-Curriculum-Combined.pdf>

Learning comprises participatory learning activities and in project work including a citizenship project that is facilitated by the teacher, which is allocated 30 hours class time. Over the course of their studies, students engage with both qualitative and quantitative data in order to examine local, national, European and wider-world issues. They develop numeracy skills as they access and interpret social research data, examine evidence and reach conclusions. Finally, it is important to highlight that learners are exposed to competing ideas about the world, have an opportunity to apply these ideas and to evaluate them in light of the evidence that is available, and to come to conclusions.

There are two main national organisations which provide supports and resources for teachers: the PDST (Professional Development Service for Teachers) and JCT (Junior Cycle training). For the most part they appear to provide valuable supports and digital tools for teachers to allow them to build EU learning into the relevant curricular components.

The Erasmus+ programme has provided funding for a range of international education and training projects. Irish students at all levels of education can access study and work placements in other EU countries, funded by Erasmus+ through the Higher Education Authority (for higher education) and Léargas (for school, vocational and adult education) – agencies of the Department of Education and Skills. Further organisations that enhance knowledge and understanding of the EU among students are the European Parliament Liaison Office in Ireland<sup>264</sup>; the Ambassador Schools Programme; and the Blue Star Programme<sup>265</sup>.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

Young people are supported in gaining knowledge and understanding of the EU, including the multi-perspectives of its history, values and aims, its institutions and decision-making processes, through a number of mainstream curricular programmes, in which all students participate.

At primary level, the SPHE curriculum includes a component 'myself and the wider world', which aims to support students to begin to understand the concepts of personal, local, national, European and global identity. A focus on the EU dimension is a particular focus of SPHE for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class primary students, where all students learn about national, European and wider communities.

At secondary level, as part of the new Framework for Junior Cycle, a short course in citizenship was first introduced in 2016. All students at secondary level participate in the Civic, Social and Personal Education Programme (CSPE).

The Politics and Society programme represents an innovative development in Irish secondary education. The programme includes a diverse range of subject areas, teaching and learning approaches and assessment components, supporting a far greater level of student engagement and collaboration than has been typical at upper secondary level.

Irish students at all levels of education can access study and work placements in other EU countries, funded by Erasmus+ through the Higher Education Authority (for higher education) and Léargas (for school, vocational and adult education) – agencies of the Department of Education and Skills. In addition, the European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the European Structural and Investment Funds. The ESF is also important, playing

<sup>264</sup> The European Parliament, Liaison Office Ireland URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ireland/en/>

<sup>265</sup> The European Movement Ireland URL: <https://www.europeanmovement.ie/blue-star/>

an important role in supporting educational attainment, particularly for vulnerable groups. Overall recommendations are:

- There are a number of existing programmes which effectively embed learning on the EU. It is worth exploring how (elements of) these components might be applied more widely in the curriculum.
- There is an important need for a clear progression of EU learning from primary through lower and upper secondary level for all students, not just for schools or students who select optional programmes or subjects. New developments in national curricular programmes, particularly revisions to the primary school curriculum and upper secondary provision, have the potential to place a greater emphasis on promoting and supporting teaching and learning on the EU, with the current NCCA framework proposals providing an opportunity<sup>266</sup>.
- There is a wide range of EU programmes operating in Ireland, however these require greater promotion to encourage higher uptake and raised awareness. It would also be important to see other EU programmes being made available to Irish young people. For example, Irish youth could benefit from the **Association des Etats Generaux des Etudiants de l'Europe (AEGEE)** which aims to empower students and young people in Europe to take an active role in society.

## Italy

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

In recent years, an external factor that may have influenced the attitude of the Italian people towards the EU has been the heated political debate on the future of Europe (and on issues such as nationalism, technocracy, euro-scepticism, geographical frontiers and cultural barriers, funding criteria adopted by the EU in relation to each Member State). The level of young people with 'high or good confidence in the EU' was found to be 49% in the age groups 15-24 and 25-34<sup>267</sup>. While this rate is higher than among older generations within Italy, it is significantly lower than for other monitored MS (e.g. 76% for the Netherlands).

In the 2019 EU elections, collected data shows an increase in participation of citizens aged under 25 (+14%) and 25-39 (+12%) compared to the previous EU elections in 2014<sup>268</sup>. A 2016 IEA study found that the 3,450 Italian students surveyed showed a strong sense of belonging to the European identity, with a very high percentage of students who agreed with it by expressing statements like 'I see myself as European' (97%), 'I am proud to live in Europe' (94%), 'I feel part of Europe' (93%)<sup>269</sup>. An AFS Italy study<sup>270</sup> found that two thirds of secondary school students feel both Italian and European.

Beyond these positive attitudes to being European, there is little knowledge of the theoretical aspects of the EU (role, legislation, instruments, measures). An ICCS study

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<sup>266</sup> NCCA (updated) Transition Year Programmes: Guidelines for Schools, Dublin: NCCA.  
[https://ncca.ie/media/2512/ty\\_transition\\_year\\_school\\_guidelines.pdf](https://ncca.ie/media/2512/ty_transition_year_school_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>267</sup> Demos e Osservatorio di Pavia, 2019

<sup>268</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/heard/eurobarometer?year=2019&type=eng.aac.eurobarometer.filters.type.europeanElections>

<sup>269</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/civic-attitudes-and-behavioural-intentions-2016-international-civic-and-citizenship>

<sup>270</sup> <https://www.youtrend.it/2020/06/09/sondaggio-quorum-youtrend-per-sky-tg24-i-risultati-per-eta-e-titolo-di-studio/>

(2016)<sup>271</sup> found that between 2009 and 2016, competences in civic roles and citizenship had not improved and only 35% of students had a performance rated as excellent (as compared to the EU average of 53%). A poll taken prior to the EU elections in 2019 found that in the 14-17 age group, 23% of students had never read the Constitutions and 70% of young people considered their knowledge of the Constitution to be null or low<sup>272</sup>.

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

Since 2000, schools have had the decision-making power on how to implement legislation in order to reach the goals and the expected learning outcomes. This power allows every school to set its courses and goals by following directions, guidelines and within a national unitary framework. In Italy, until 2019, there was no compulsory citizenship education for all students, nor any defined educational programme. This explains why the EU dimension was recommended but not embedded into national curricula. Law No. 92/2019 'Introduction of the teaching of civic education' provided a general picture of what is included under the topic of 'civic education'.

All public schools are required to design and improve curricula by dedicating about 33 hours/year to the subject and giving graded assessments to students. Every school will have a coordinator as leader and mentor for civic education plans. These new guidelines were adopted in June 2020 (Decree No. 35/202025) and will be implemented (taking into account the pandemic constraints and health protocols). The legal decrees and guidelines determine three core themes, according to the EU recommendations: Constitution, sustainable development, and digital citizenship, all linked, to varying degrees, to the EU topic. The knowledge of the European Union system and other international institutions are mentioned only very vaguely in Article 3.

The Guidelines determine the goal for the leaving exam at the end of upper secondary school, explicitly mentioning the knowledge of the values underlying EU and international institutions and their main tasks and functions. Consequently, from the school year 2020/2021, the self-assessment reports and the school improvement plans will better cover civic education and key EU competences. For level 4 post-secondary non-tertiary education, state-region agreements designed a new updated register of VET qualifications with an emphasis on the understanding of rights and duties of citizens, in order to increase inclusion, to enhance students' employability and their cross-cutting skills required to deal with the professional environment and the workplace.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

Until recently, schools, teachers and trainers have had wide freedom to decide which topic, among the many possible, without any assessment or national test. From now on, civic education will take a central place across the curriculum. It can be implemented along three perspectives: constitution, sustainable development, and digital citizenship, all linked, to varying degrees, to the EU topics and EU citizenship. This new formulation of civic education will be implemented from 2020/21.

<sup>271</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/civic-attitudes-and-behavioural-intentions-2016-international-civic-and-citizenship>

<sup>272</sup> <https://www.youtrend.it/2020/06/09/sondaggio-quorum-youtrend-per-sky-tg24-i-risultati-per-eta-e-titolo-di-studio/>

In the previous period (2008-2019), each school may have had very different ideas of the topics and content of 'citizenship education'. As civic education was not a compulsory stand-alone subject (with no clearly defined timetable), schools' staff and teachers led projects aiming to develop values for active citizenship. Schools delivered one general school project and could act either autonomously or as part of an institutional partnership. This led to many additional and complementary initiatives to raise the skills of young people, and in recent years many activities have focussed on the ability to recognise and distinguish fake news from authoritative information on media and social networks.

Until today, the common thread of most schools' practices is that they have been designed or set by public offices and institutions that are either part of or directly financed by the EU. These institutions have played a fundamental role, alongside private organisations, NGOs, and institutions active in social and cultural areas, particularly in the field of education for democratic citizenship. For the current phase of implementation of the new subject 'civic education', school coordinators are now starting to review, update and improve their approach and curricula. The 2018 CoE Recommendation general framework included eight key competences and three core themes: constitution; sustainable development; digital citizenship. All three core themes can include reference to EU topics and EU citizenship.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

**Training of school principals:** In the 2016/17 school year, top level education authorities organised and supported professional in-service training for school heads on how to promote citizenship education in schools, through the curriculum as well as through a democratic school culture (beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, relationships, and written and unwritten rules) and governance; through work with parents; extra-curricular activities, and through promoting teacher cooperation.

**Initial Teacher Education (ITE):** New teachers could have training on views, themes, and approaches to EU citizenship teaching. **Courses and teaching tools for teachers and trainers:** Law No 107/2015 introduced compulsory on-the-job training for teachers. The 2016-2019 National Plan for Teacher Training included integration, citizenship, competences and global citizenship under priority theme 4.7.

**Materials and textbooks:** Textbooks must be consistent with school curricula and the three-year educational offer plan, and many textbooks are now available that offer new civic themes or insights that provide key proficiencies in the subject of citizenship. A wide range of guidelines and content is provided by specialised centres and by EU institutions and NGOs.

**Teaching approaches:** Experiential approaches and the role of foreign languages to develop intercultural knowledge and competence are both valuable.

**Exchanges and teacher mobility:** Erasmus+ offers international networking through mobility opportunities for schools. In 2019, 165 school partnerships were coordinated by Italian schools and 836 proposals from Italian partner schools, enabling schools at all levels to collaborate with European institutions and organise exchanges and mobility for students, teachers, and staff.

**Common values among teachers and trainers:** A shared vision for civic education and EU dimension can focus the work of schools and supports teachers to share beliefs, experiences, and a common language. This is a key factor particularly for cross curricular and transversal teaching effectiveness.



**Shared values and relationship with families:** The effectiveness of teaching also depends on the cohesion of values and on educational alliance between school community, parents, school board and the local learning environment. Involving parents - directly and indirectly - in the experience of discovering what EU means to them, can help to raise awareness and closeness.

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

### *Conclusions*

The main route to teaching students at all levels about the EU is through the subject of Citizenship Education, which incorporates teaching on the Constitution (including the EU through articles 11, 117 and 120). Basic teaching on the constitution was only made compulsory in the school year 2019/2020 and prior to that it did not take place within school and IVET pathways to any considerable extent. As a result of this, there is no extensive and consolidated repertory of methodologies and teaching tools dedicated to the EU.

The implementation of the new Law by schools is critical. The ongoing debate on implementation (starting in September 2020) will be useful to interpret and clarify key points (e.g. combining transversal approaches with the coordinating role assigned to a single teacher) and some resistance to increasing hours for citizenship education is also foreseeable. The Ministry is now organising the first round of training courses for coordinators, focussing on organisational and methodological aspects. Political and social contexts will continue to influence the choices of school communities, and it will be strategically important to reach coordinating teachers in order to raise awareness of the EU dimension.

### *Recommended priorities*

It is necessary to find a shared precise definition of EU (Civic) Education in terms of the meanings and goals, thus supporting schools and IVET institutions, authorities, and every stakeholder in defining their position.

In order to improve civic competences in formal education, more interactive lessons and practical activities using non-formal education methodologies are key factors. Most of the teachers, trainers and educators need to be trained to teach about the EU and EU citizenship education and how to transmit some basic and shared EU values.

There are many additional and complementary initiatives to raise the ability to recognize and distinguish fake news from authoritative information on media and social networks. Since the ongoing debate in Italy against European integration and EU institutions, these types of extra-curricular activities would be useful to generate news and facts about the EU.

There are some EU bodies and institutions which make interventions to enhance teachers and students' competences about EU dimension. Jean Monnet could re-affirm support to a select group of these institutions to improve teaching on the EU.

## Latvia

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Overall, the attitude of Latvian young people towards the EU is very positive. The first feeling that comes to mind to 69 % of Latvian youth aged 15-24 when they think about the EU is 'positive emotions' (EU-27: 58%)<sup>273</sup>. However, this overall approval of the EU is paired with a lack of political engagement.

Enthusiasm for the political processes in the EU is higher among young Latvians with a greater engagement with EU issues. A survey carried out in schools participating in the European Parliament (EP) Ambassador Schools Programme in Latvia showed the following results: 78% of surveyed students aged 14-19 expressed confidence that young people are able to influence political processes in the EU and 72% are optimistic about the ability of young people to influence political processes in Latvia. At the same time, more than half of the respondents indicated that **lack of knowledge** prevents participation (60% about the processes in Latvia and 66% about the processes in the EU)<sup>274</sup>.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The **national curriculum for primary and lower secondary school** defines only one learning outcome linked to Latvia's membership in the EU (under 'Civic and Social Competence'). Moreover, it treats the EU simultaneously with the UN and NATO, as part of 'transnational relations in the global and international environment':

[the 9<sup>th</sup> year graduate is able to...] '3.6 Explain what forms of manifestation of loyalty and patriotism exist in modern (Latvian) society. Discuss the basic duties of a citizen towards the state (including national defence), explain the role and tasks of the Latvian National Armed Forces. Provide the rationale for the views on the benefits and challenges of transnational relations in the global and international environment, in the EU and in the international organizations such as the UN and NATO'<sup>275</sup>.

The **national curriculum for upper secondary school** offers a somewhat deeper approach to the EU. The 'Social and Civic Competence' includes the following learning outcomes<sup>276</sup>:

[the 12<sup>th</sup> year graduate is able to...]: '2.2 analyse the principle of separation of powers in a democratic society as well as the functions of the European Union, of the state and of municipalities; provide the rationale for the need of public

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<sup>273</sup> Flash Eurobarometer (2019). Emotions and political engagement towards the EU (national factsheets). <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/emotions-and-political-engagement-towards-the-eu>

<sup>274</sup> European Parliament Office in Latvia(2020). Aptauja: Latvijas jaunieši spēj ietekmēt kā Latvijas, tā visas ES politiku (Survey: Latvian youth is capable of influencing both Latvian and EU politics) [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/latvia/lv/jauniesiem/ep\\_vestnieku/epas-aptaujaa.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/latvia/lv/jauniesiem/ep_vestnieku/epas-aptaujaa.html)

<sup>275</sup> Cabinet of Ministers (2018). Noteikumi par valsts pamatizglītības standartu un pamatizglītības programmu paraugiem (Regulations on the state basic (i.e. lower secondary) education standard and its sample programmes), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/303768-noteikumi-par-valsts-pamatizglitibas-standartu-un-pamatizglitibas-programmu-paraugiem>

<sup>276</sup> Cabinet of Ministers (2019). Noteikumi par valsts vispārējās vidējās izglītības standartu un vispārējās vidējās izglītības programmu paraugiem (Regulations on the state upper secondary education standard and its sample programmes), <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/309597-noteikumi-par-valsts-visparejas-videjas-izglitibas-standartu-un-visparejas-videjas-izglitibas-programmu-paraugiem>

administration and institutions; explain the importance and functions of media power, linking them to personal experience, evaluate the meaning and impact of freedom of expression; 2.3. Using public administration theories explore the implementation of the functions of the European Union, of the state and of municipalities and offer solutions to the problem of power sharing mechanisms, among them such issues as the functioning of subsidiarity, proportionality and control / balance of power mechanisms; analyse the media as a tool of power and assess its influence on individuals and society’.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

There are many examples of how the EU dimension is embedded in teaching and learning practices in Latvian schools, but most of these are examples of individual approach, rather than a systematic approach at national level. Overall, the national curriculum does not seem to provide a sufficient framework for developing the EU dimension in school education. Much depends on the individual choice of schools and teachers, and while some schools (especially those in the EP Ambassador School Programme) attach great importance to teaching about the EU and the development of a European identity, other schools can manage with a minimum of Europe-related content. Apart from the EP Ambassador Schools, most other examples of an EU dimension within teaching and learning practice in Latvian schools are not part of a wider programme or initiative and are implemented through individual EU-funded projects (e.g. school projects under Erasmus+).

Indirectly, Latvian policy on the use of language in education promotes identification with the EU: the national curriculum for primary and lower secondary education provides for the teaching of some subjects in EU languages (the subjects can be chosen by the school itself)<sup>277</sup>.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

The **European Parliament Ambassador School Programme**<sup>278</sup> is a good practice example since it provides a rather deep engagement with EU-related topics for students and teachers in more than 70 schools in Latvia (constituting around 10% of all Latvian schools). Teachers and students of the EP Ambassadors' schools educate and involve peers and the public in discussions on EU issues important to Latvia, thus strengthening European identity. MEPs elected from Latvia also take an active part in the programme, visiting schools and participating in programme events. Online discussions continued even when face-to-face meetings became impossible due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

During the academic year of 2019/2020, the EP Ambassadors' Schools developed project applications for the International Youth Program Agency (JSPA). Five schools from different cities of Latvia were chosen to implement their own youth dialogue projects<sup>279</sup>, for example, Daugavpils 12<sup>th</sup> Secondary School on 'involvement in policy-making together with decision-makers' and Valka Jānis Cimze Gymnasium on 'politically active young people'.

Participating in the EP Ambassadors' School Programme has a number of benefits: Young people acquire valuable project writing skills at school, develop creativity, collaboration and communication skills, and gain evidence that participation and

<sup>277</sup> Cabinet of Ministers (2018) Noteikumi par valsts pamatizglītības standartu un pamatizglītības programmu paraugiem

<sup>278</sup> European Parliament Office in Latvia (2020) EP Vestnieku skola  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/latvia/lv/jauniesiem/ep\\_vestnieku.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/latvia/lv/jauniesiem/ep_vestnieku.html)

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

initiative can influence political processes. Moreover, there are various support activities and teaching materials offered to the schools involved in the programme.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

Even though the overall attitude of young people towards the EU is quite positive, their knowledge might be more oriented towards statements of facts and less towards understanding and practicing European values. Motivation, support and training of the staff involved remains an ongoing priority, same as constant development of new engaging materials, both for online and offline activities. Erasmus+ projects should be further encouraged, implemented, and popularised. Introduction and popularisation of programmes similar to the European Parliament School Ambassadors is a powerful tool for promoting EU standards and values and orienting youth towards true European integration. The following aspects should be prioritised:

- The integration of the EU dimension in teacher training, learning resources and activities supporting the implementation of the new national curriculum should be further promoted and encouraged. Many teachers and school leaders have expressed uncertainty about the way the new national curriculum will be implemented, including 'Social and Civic Competences'. Many schools expect more comprehensive guidance with ready-made resource materials and teaching plans. This is an opportunity to introduce new materials with a strong EU dimension into the new curriculum to teach topics throughout the new curriculum that would be used in many schools and not just in the EP Ambassador Schools.
- The new materials promoting the EU dimension in teaching and learning should focus on critical knowledge of what the EU stands for and understanding of EU integration. There is a wealth of material, including in Latvian, on EU institutions and history, but materials focusing on the EU dimension and helping students to develop critical knowledge and understand the current needs and challenges of EU integration are relatively scarce.
- There should be a greater focus on digital resources. Despite some difficulties, the Latvian school system has proved resilient during the Covid-19 pandemic in spring 2020 with a rapid transition to distance learning. In the light of this experience and the decision of the Ministry of Education and Science to regularise distance education as a normal part of teaching and learning in schools, many Latvian schools and teachers will look for useful digital resources for teaching the new curriculum next year. Learning resources (informative and engaging) on EU-related topics and offered in digital format will be needed and have a greater chance of being used.
- A separate concern could be to reach the Russian-speaking minority: Russian is not an official language neither in the EU nor in the Republic of Latvia, but it is the mother tongue of 36% of the Latvian population<sup>280</sup>. Gaining their interest and trust may require special attention and tailored strategies. However, this seems very important for several reasons. Firstly, because they could remain under the powerful influence of non-Latvian media broadcasts in Russian language en masse. Secondly, 10.4% remain non-Latvian citizens and their sense of belonging both to the Republic of Latvia and to the EU should be strengthened. Thirdly, the current shift of the school education system to Latvian as the main language of instruction creates a longing for the protection of the national language.

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<sup>280</sup> Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (2017) <https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/search-in-theme/2747-latvian-mother-tongue-608-population-latvia>

## Lithuania

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

The Eurobarometer survey (September 2017) indicates a high degree of positive attitude of Lithuanian citizens towards the EU. However, other surveys show that Lithuanians still do not feel that they are equal/full EU citizens and only 31% think that their vote could influence decisions taken in the EU. This attitude is generally attributed to a lack of knowledge of the EU institutions, how they work and the opportunities that the EU offers. Though pupils hear about the EU's benefits from media, social networks, and parents, they know little how the EU works and what rights they have as EU citizens<sup>281</sup>. Also 70% of teachers participating in a survey in 2017-2018<sup>282</sup> claimed that they have too little knowledge to teach about the EU.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

Although the Government programme<sup>283</sup>, adopted in 2016, pays considerable attention to education and clearly states the need for civic education and citizenship competences, it does not mention the EU values or their reflection in the educational aims. Lithuania's Progress Strategy 'Lithuania 2030', the National Education Strategy 2013-2022 (NES), the Guidelines for Change in General Education approved by Seimas (Parliament) and updated in 2019<sup>284</sup>, and the programme descriptions of primary, general lower and upper-secondary education are the main strategic and operational documents that provide trajectory and requirements for general education. The EU dimension is only explicitly mentioned in the programmes.

In primary, general lower and upper-secondary education programmes the EU issues are taught in history, geography, civic education, and economics programmes<sup>285</sup>. The basic information on the EU is taught in grade 5 (general lower level). The teaching is expanded in grades 7-8 and at upper-secondary level (grades 9-10 and especially 11-12). Information on the EU is integrated into the above-mentioned subjects and the EU related questions are discussed from various perspectives. The **general education programmes are currently being updated** and the **EU dimension** is included into descriptions of civic and cultural competences that have to be developed. In the new guidelines, the basics of civic education is foreseen only for 2 years (grades 9-10). As upper secondary education is not compulsory (although most pupils attend it), EU issues

<sup>281</sup> Karlonaite, G., Euroblog, (18 January 2018). <https://euroblogas.lt/2018/01/18/apie-es-mokykloje-bus-destoma-per-visas-pamokas/>

<sup>282</sup> Delfi, News portal, (25 January, 2018). <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/world/kaip-jaunimas-susipazista-su-europos-sajunga.d?id=76999635>

<sup>283</sup> LR Vyrtausybes programa (Programme of the Government of Republic of Lithuania), No XIII-82, (13 December 2016). <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/886c7282c12811e682539852a4b72dd4?positionInSearchResults=0&searchModelUUID=1363e857-8fa3-478c-b09d-8b4f23b7af2d2.LR>

<sup>284</sup> Education Supply Centre (ESC) (under Ministry of Education and Science), *Bendruju programu atnaujinimo gairės* (Guidelines for renewing general programmes) (2019). <https://www.mokykla2030.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Bendruju-programu-atnaujinimo-gaires.-Projektas-2019-08-21.pdf>

<sup>285</sup> Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, General education programmes: <https://www.smm.lt/web/lt/smm-svietimas/svietimas-vidurinis-ugdymas>

should also be integrated into the lower grades, while the upper grades should provide deeper knowledge and understanding.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The teaching plans allow teachers the freedom in how much time they devote to the subject as long as basic competences are developed. Recommendations and methodological support are available, but they are not mandatory. For the 6<sup>th</sup> grade history students, for example, the theme is the birth of the EU and EU integration. In terms of competences, pupils must be able to assess some of the main achievements and problems of today's Europe and to relate and evaluate the activities of historical figures to specific periods of history. 'Tournament of speakers' and the preparation of a poster are proposed activities.

EU related knowledge and competences are assessed in the maturity exam. For example, two EU related questions were presented in the history maturity exam in 2018, one in the geography exam and one in the written task of the foreign language exam. One question in history and two questions in geography were presented in the maturity exams in 2019.

Moreover, there are a number of non-formal EU education initiatives. Some examples include:

- The Bureau of the European Parliament (EPB)<sup>286</sup> has been running the 'Schools Ambassadors of the European Parliament' (SAEP) project since 2016, which is aimed at **gymnasiums** and vocational schools.
- The European Commission Representation in Lithuania (ECR) has been organising a European Debate Tournament for pupils in general education since 2015; ECR organises the 'European Exam', which is aimed at general education schools, private and public organisations, and individuals, and has published a methodology kit for teachers 'Pažink Europą' (Familiarise yourself with Europe) in 2012.
- The European Information Centre (EIC) provides information and publications on the EU; it organises meetings, debates, competitions, and other activities, including discussions on the opportunities offered by the EU to young people 'Discover EU', the European Solidarity Corps and traineeships; and it organises European Days and European Language Days.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has been running the 'Atgal į mokyklas' (Back to Schools) initiative since 2013, inviting diplomats and civil servants to teach about the EU during the European Days.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

Research<sup>287</sup> has shown that there is plenty of factual and historical information on EU but traditional teaching model is not sufficiently flexible and the transfer of knowledge on EU depends not on the material but on a teacher's competence, devotion and wish. Furthermore, it is important to integrate EU issues more closely in all subjects; this is currently the case with the renewal of the general education programmes<sup>288</sup>.

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<sup>286</sup> European Parliament Bureau: <https://europarl.europa.eu/lithuania>

<sup>287</sup> "Kurk Lietuvai" (Create Lithuania), Portal <http://kurk.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Esamos-situacijos-analiz%C4%97.pdf>

<sup>288</sup> Euroblog , (27 June 2019): <https://euroblogas.lt/2018/01/18/apie-es-mokykloje-bus-destoma-per-visas-pamokas/>

It is quite difficult to identify really good or innovative practices at the level of teaching. However, there are schools which make really good attempts to promote the EU and involve their pupils in the available non-formal activities, in addition to the subjects included in compulsory lessons. One such school is Kulvietis Gymnasium in Vilnius. Its website presents in a simple and attractive way the school's achievements in the project 'Schools - Ambassadors of the European Parliament' (SAEP).

The most comprehensive information on the methodology of integrating EU issues into formal education is available on the portal 'Ugdymo sodas' (Garden of Development)<sup>289</sup> of the National Education Agency (former Education Development Centre). It is accessible to teachers and pupils and promotes the integration of the EU theme in history, geography<sup>290</sup> and civic education programmes. This is a good example of the resources available to teachers, but there is no firm evidence of how far it is used.

The portal also gives a step-by-step recommendation for integrated civics, geography and history lessons for grades 9-10 and 11-12: 'What will the European Union look like in 2025? Reflections and scenarios'. The aim of the lessons is to develop an active and civic-minded attitude in pupils by focusing educational activities on practical solutions and everyday problems. The methodology can be applied both during the standard 45-minute teaching unit and in relation to non-formal education.

### Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

Even though children receive rudimentary information from the media and family members, they do not fully understand what the EU is and how it functions. Although pupils learn about the EU at school, they do not receive sufficient information about its benefits for the individual, its opportunities for young people, human rights or even how the EU institutions work. The non-governmental organisation 'Europos Namai' was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to analyse the integration of EU issues in current education programmes<sup>291</sup>. The recommendations from the analysis are:

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (MESS), together with teacher training centres, should implement a long-term professional development programme for teachers.
- The National Education Agency (NEA) should initiate a network of the organisations that work with EU themes.
- The NEA should publish overviews on the current EU and Lithuanian issues as well as good examples of formal and non-formal education about the EU in the media and portals targeted at education community.
- Together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NEA should initiate the preparation of a regular review of EU and Lithuanian issues for teachers, indicating into which subjects and topics they can be integrated.

<sup>289</sup> National Education Agency, Education portal: [https://sodas.ugdome.lt/?locale=en\\_GB](https://sodas.ugdome.lt/?locale=en_GB)

<sup>290</sup> National Education Agency, suggestions for EU lessons in Geography for grades 7-8: [https://geografija-8.mkp.emokykla.lt/lt/temos/europos\\_sajunga/](https://geografija-8.mkp.emokykla.lt/lt/temos/europos_sajunga/)

<sup>291</sup> Akromienė, J., Varanauskas, A., „ES temų dabartinėse ugdymo programose analizė ir rekomendacijos dėl ES temų įtraukimo į atnaujinamas ugdymo programas“ (Analysis of EU topics in current curricula and recommendations for the inclusion of EU topics in updated curricula), Mano Europa (My Europe), Portal, (2019): <https://www.manoeuropa.lt/es-komunikacija/es-%C5%A1vietimo-metodai-ir-rekomendacijos/es-klausim%C5%B3-integravimo-%C4%AF-ugdymo-programas-rekomendacijos/>

- All three institutions (MESS, NEA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) should fund the development of a set of free electronic tools that can be easily adapted to present and analyse EU issues in the classroom.

## Luxembourg

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Luxembourg is a small multicultural and multilingual country, one of the founding members of the EU and the host of several European institutions. The current level of knowledge and attitudes towards the EU and its values in Luxembourg can be considered quite good. The 2015 Eurobarometer on EU citizenship<sup>292</sup> reported that 88% of Luxembourgers see themselves as Europeans and 78% indicate that migrants contribute significantly to the country's economic developments. The 2020 Eurobarometer on EU Citizenship and Democracy confirms similarly high numbers for Luxembourg<sup>293</sup> on, for example, issues of awareness of EU rights.

There are few Eurosceptic voices, and populism remains marginal in the country politics. Yet the country's diversity also poses some challenges and the (migrant) population when low-skilled is experiencing difficulties in the high-skilled labour market. Unemployment currently stands at 6.4%<sup>294</sup> and youth unemployment at 23.2%. The Eurobarometer surveys also confirm that these student populations will often be less pro-European than the general average, perhaps also related to that they have fewer opportunities for development.

In the 2016 EU Youth Survey (latest version available<sup>295</sup>), 95% of the sampled young people in Luxembourg indicated that learning about the EU was important (compared to 90% as the EU average) and 65% believe that voting in EU elections is important to participate in civic life (compared to an EU average of 50%). Openness to European values, the values associated to democracy and peace is at the core of the country's education and youth policies. Education about the EU is understood as an effort towards promoting positive attitudes towards the European idea, that has provided decades of peace and open-mindedness and the implementation of democratic values in the country. The Ministry of Education and Youth is eager to foster this holistic approach for significant student engagement with the European values<sup>296</sup>.

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<sup>292</sup> Standard Eurobarometer 83 (Spring 2015):

<https://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STAN DARD/surveyKy/2099>

<sup>293</sup> EU citizenship and democracy (July 2020):

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/flash/surveyky/2260>,

<sup>294</sup> Statec, The Government Statistics Agency Service in Luxembourg:

[https://statistiques.public.lu/stat/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=12948&IF\\_Language=eng](https://statistiques.public.lu/stat/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=12948&IF_Language=eng)

<sup>295</sup> European Youth in 2016. Special Eurobarometer of the European Parliament:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2016/eye2016/eb85\\_1\\_eye\\_2016\\_analytical\\_overview\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2016/eye2016/eb85_1_eye_2016_analytical_overview_en.pdf),

<sup>296</sup> Teach#EU Conference. New perspectives on European Education. Documentation: <http://teach-eu.org/files/eurosoc/img/Projects/Teach-EU/Documentation.pdf>



## The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The education legislation<sup>297</sup> does not specifically single out teaching on the EU dimension but the EU, European history and values are explicitly described in the curricular frameworks for the three subjects of history, life and society and citizenship education. Yet the weight given to EU-related subjects can vary between schools as it is more often taught in a transversal manner. In 2009 the government introduced citizenship education for all upper classes in secondary schools as well as in vocational training. Courses include components on the EU (European history, EU institutions, European values) and critical conversations on its achievements and challenges. In 2014 religious education was replaced by a new subject 'Life and Society' (*Vie et Société*) which among others also covers European values, human rights and issues related to multiculturalism.

The course was first introduced in all types of secondary education schools then in primary schools. In lower secondary schools many subjects are fairly similar in classical and general secondary education yet addressed in more depth in the classical education while the general secondary schools focus more on technology and humanities and less on geography or history. There are therefore probably more differences in the knowledge and teaching on the EU between these two types of schools although there is no concrete evidence (at least in the public domain) to support this observation.

A working group<sup>298</sup> was set up at the start of the school year 2018-19 to revise the history courses in the general secondary schools from the first to the least year of school education. It is expected that this will lead to some changes with regards to teaching on the EU; it seems that new programmes were due to start in 2019-2020 for the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> years.

### How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula

Learning about the EU takes place through the acquisition of knowledge on the EU (history, functioning of the EU, current priorities and developments) as well as through the acquisition of skills and attitudes on more transversal issues such as acting as responsible and respectful citizens vis-à-vis others, understanding democratic processes (e.g. national and EU election processes) and developing an analytical and critical mind about national and EU developments.

Learning takes place also through EU projects and initiatives, in and out of the classroom. Some examples include rapid desk research on the participation of secondary schools in EU education projects in the period 2014 to 2020, which shows that around 45% of public secondary schools (classical and general secondary schools) are participating in EU-funded projects in this period, either through mobility or through specific projects<sup>299</sup>. Around 20 schools in Luxembourg are taking part in the European

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<sup>297</sup> Plan général du code de l'éducation nationale: [http://data.legilux.public.lu/file/eli-etat-leg-code-education\\_nationale-20200820-fr-pdf.pdf](http://data.legilux.public.lu/file/eli-etat-leg-code-education_nationale-20200820-fr-pdf.pdf)

<sup>298</sup> In 2011 a law was passed to launch national commissions (working groups) on the various school subjects and curricula : Règlement grand-ducal du 30 juillet 2011 portant institution et organisation des commissions nationales pour les programmes de l'enseignement secondaire, ainsi que du cycle inférieur, du régime préparatoire et du régime technique de l'enseignement secondaire technique: <http://legilux.public.lu/eli/etat/leg/rgd/2011/07/30/n2/jo>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>299</sup> Erasmus+ et corps européen de solidarité: Projets sélectionnés: [https://www.anefore.lu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20200914\\_anefore\\_projets\\_selectionnes\\_2014-2020\\_v04.pdf](https://www.anefore.lu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20200914_anefore_projets_selectionnes_2014-2020_v04.pdf), [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

Parliament Ambassador School initiative<sup>300</sup>. The e-Twinning platform<sup>301</sup> mentions for Luxembourg 358 projects although only two are recorded on the website<sup>302</sup>, 657 teachers and 144 secondary and primary schools.

There is plenty of material available for teachers to use in the classroom for innovative and interactive teaching and learning such as series of videos on issues related to democracy, and they are accompanied by didactic booklets and learning materials for teachers<sup>303</sup>. The House of Representatives in the Luxembourg Parliament was also associated to the production of the video on the EU. Another example is the web-based application called LUCILIN<sup>304</sup> which was produced offering the option of gamification components. Focusing on Luxembourg, it also has on chapter on the EU with the aim to provide a wider picture on the history of Luxembourg.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

A core group of secondary schools seems to be more active when it comes to promoting European exchanges and initiatives on the EU through EU projects and initiatives, most likely building on a more dynamic teaching community established in these schools over many years. Transnational networking and exchanges between schools in different countries clearly acts as a strong stimulus and also school autonomy and parents' involvement in the development of school plans might contribute to the promotion of the EU dimension. Continuing professional developments for teachers and the regular adaptations of the curriculum to meet new realities are no doubt also contributing to adding new elements with regards to the EU dimension in the curriculum. Some (selected) good practice examples include:

- **Bridges for the future**<sup>305</sup>, **Let's teach Europe, Lycée du Nord Wiltz**: focuses on teaching fundamental EU values to young refugees and immigrants.
- **Traces from yesterday today – Rediscovering a Europe without borders (*Spuren von Gestern im Heute - Europa grenzenlos neu entdecken*)**, **Lycée technique de Bonnevoie**: aims at strengthening the European identity of the pupils involved.
- **Supporting European values at the Lycée Hubert Clément Esch-sur-Alzette**: 18 schools in 16 European countries forms a network called 'Education without borders'<sup>306</sup>.

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<sup>300</sup> European Parliament Ambassador Schools in Luxembourg and in the greater region: <http://www.ambassadorschool.eu/luxembourg/>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>301</sup> eTwinning: <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/community/countries/country.cfm?c=442>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>302</sup> eTwinning projects Luxembourg:

<https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/benefits/collaborate/project.cfm?id=36261>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>303</sup> Le Gouvernement du Grand Duché de Luxembourg. Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse: Vie et Société: <https://portal.education.lu/vieso/>; [https://zpb.lu/zpbmedia\\_cpt/politik-fir-jiddereen-die-europaeische-union/](https://zpb.lu/zpbmedia_cpt/politik-fir-jiddereen-die-europaeische-union/); [Accessed: 6.10.2020] ZpB: Cahiers pédagogiques pour enseignants: <https://zpb.lu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Politik-Fir-jiddereen-Union-europeenne.pdf>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>304</sup> LUCILIN: <https://portal.education.lu/multi-script/Online-Material/ArtMID/14119/ArticleID/561010/Lucilin>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>305</sup> Bridges to the future – Option 2015/2016: <https://www.lnw.lu/index.php/documents-pour-eleves/send/8-projets/27-projets-bridges-to-the-future-description>, [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

<sup>306</sup> Lycée Hubert Clément: Le réseau européen "Education sans frontières": <https://www.lhce.lu/le-lycee/le-reseau-europeen-education-sans-frontieres/> and <http://www.europrojectnet.eu/index.html> [Accessed: 6.10.2020]

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

Significant teaching on the EU takes place in (secondary) schools in Luxembourg, embedded in the curriculum and taught directly or transversally in the courses of history, life and society and actions to promote citizenship. However, further action could be taken in the following areas:

- Beyond formal learning on EU-related issues, informal and experiential learning and skills for active European citizenship could be given a more central place in the educational process.
- The excellent initiatives taken by a core group of schools could be scaled up to a larger number of secondary schools. This could be supported by mutual learning activities and dissemination.
- An assessment of the impact achieved over the last five years could be made to identify where specific interventions supported by government policies may be needed in the coming years.

## Malta

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

A snapshot of students' knowledge of and attitudes towards the European Union can be obtained from the results of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) carried out in 2016<sup>307</sup>. One section of the 2016 study focused on the students' European perspective. In terms of attitudes towards the EU, Malta had a mean scale score of 54.4, significantly higher than the average (50). Malta's mean scale score for 'Students' sense of European identity' was 54.1, significantly higher than the average (50). Malta's mean scale score for 'Students' opportunities to learn about Europe at school' was 47.2, lower than the average of 50. The majority of the students (65.8%) stated that they had opportunities to learn about the history of Europe.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The main legislative document which regulates the curriculum in compulsory education (between ages 5-16) in Malta is the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)<sup>308</sup>. It specifically states that by the end of compulsory education, learners should have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes, and values that develop students as individuals and citizens of Malta, of the European Union and of the world.

For **primary education** the NCF highlights the need for children to experience their cultural and natural heritage in order to develop intercultural competences, particularly from a Mediterranean and European dimension. It encourages the participation of children in twinning and mobility projects in the EU. The European dimension is actually

<sup>307</sup> Ministry for Education and Employment. (2016). International Civic and Citizenship Education Survey (ICCS) 2016: National Report, Malta 2016, Malta: Government of Malta, Ministry for Education and Employment,  
[https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/international\\_studies/Documents/ICCS%202016\\_National%20Report.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/international_studies/Documents/ICCS%202016_National%20Report.pdf)

<sup>308</sup> Ministry for Education and Employment. (2012). A National Curriculum Framework for All. Malta: Government of Malta, Ministry for Education and Employment,  
<https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/Resources/The-NCF/Documents/NCF.pdf>

translated into one of education's learning outcomes which refers to '*learners who are engaged citizens who are able to secure social justice in constantly changing local, regional and global realities.*

In **secondary education**, the NCF highlights how different learning areas can promote the European dimension of education, promotes foreign language learning and how twinning projects with European and foreign schools can be part of every student's learning experiences. Students can also opt to study European Studies as a separate subject as part of their secondary education.

In **vocational education**, the National Vocational Education and Training Policy for Malta (MCAST, 2015) refers to the EU 2020 targets in terms of early school leavers, and refers to European cooperation in VET, European Qualification Frameworks, and EQAVET for quality assurance in VET. It promotes the use of Europass and student mobility. It does not make direct reference to promoting learning about the European Union among VET students.

For **higher education**, the Higher Education Strategy for Malta<sup>309</sup> is framed within a European dimension but there is no specific reference to promoting learning about Europe and European principles.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

One of the learning outcomes for **early years** that reflects European values is the principle of solidarity towards others<sup>310</sup>. At level 3<sup>311</sup>, children are expected to develop empathy, respect and acceptance of different points of view. In **primary education**, learning outcomes related to Europe and European principles at primary level can be identified in the subject 'Social Studies'. Social studies at primary level aims to introduce children to their geographic environment, help them understand Maltese society from a Euro-Mediterranean and global perspective, and develop competences and attitudes which help them become responsible citizens. There is no specific reference to the European Union or European values and principles.

In **secondary education**, reference to learning about Europe and the European Union can be identified within the learning areas 'Education for Democracy', which includes the subject of Environmental Studies<sup>312</sup>. This subject considers aspects of scientific knowledge, including the managing of a nation. This part of the curriculum focuses on Malta in the European Union. Students learn about the origins of the European Union (EU) and European institutions.

The examiners' report (MATSEC, 2019a) for Environmental Studies shows that in 2019 there were 1,278 students who sat for the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) exam. This amounts to about one third of the student cohort finishing secondary school, 25% of which were either absent or were graded as unclassified. Students can choose to take

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<sup>309</sup> National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) & Ministry for Education and Employment. (2015). Higher Education Strategy for Malta within the context of the Further and Higher Education Strategy 2020 (NCHE, 2009) and the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2015-2024, Malta: NCFHE and Ministry for Education and Employment.

<https://ncfhe.gov.mt/en/resources/Documents/Strategy%20Documents/Higher%20Education%20Strategy%20for%20Malta.pdf>

<sup>310</sup>

[https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new\\_syllabi/Documents/Early\\_Years/Kinder\\_1\\_and\\_2\\_Levels\\_1\\_and\\_2\\_LOP\\_Sept\\_2018.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new_syllabi/Documents/Early_Years/Kinder_1_and_2_Levels_1_and_2_LOP_Sept_2018.pdf)

<sup>311</sup>

[https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new\\_syllabi/Documents/Early\\_Years/Kinder\\_1\\_and\\_2\\_Level\\_3\\_LOP\\_Sept\\_2018.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new_syllabi/Documents/Early_Years/Kinder_1_and_2_Level_3_LOP_Sept_2018.pdf)

<sup>312</sup> [https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/324132/SEC\\_13ee\\_20.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/324132/SEC_13ee_20.pdf)

the subject 'European Studies' and obtain an SEC qualification. The SEC syllabus for European Studies<sup>313</sup> tackles the meaning of Europe and the European Union in a comprehensive way. The Matsec examiners' report (MATSEC, 2019b) shows that only 120 students sat for this subject's exam.

The current **post-secondary curriculum** in preparation for entry into the University includes the study of the subject area known as 'System of Knowledge'. While the syllabus does not make any specific reference to the European Union or Europe, one can find reference to the values on which the European Union is based.

There are no particular curricular areas in **vocational education** which tackle issues related to the European Union or the values on which it is based and promotes. In **higher education**, the University of Malta houses the **Institute for European Studies** which is a multi-disciplinary teaching and research institute. It runs an evening diploma course, a full-time Bachelor of European Studies, as well as Masters and Doctorate studies. The Institute was granted the status of a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in 2004.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

Effective teaching:

- **National support for learning about the European Union and European principles at legislative and implementation level.** It is first and foremost important that there is political support by the Ministry for Education and Employment in favour of promoting learning about Europe and the EU. This is to a degree present in Malta, with a reference to a European dimension identified in the NCF.
- **Inclusion of a European dimension in pre-service teacher training.** The Master in Teaching and Learning, which is the main pre-service teacher training course in Malta does include some elements of training related to the European Union. At primary level, teachers are generalists, and this means that primary teachers need to have a basic knowledge and background related to the European Union.
- **In-service training for teachers on Europe and European Union:** The Institute for Education<sup>314</sup> offers regular training courses related to European themes, particularly migration, inclusion, and diversity, as well as training in the use of platforms such as eTwinning.
- **Facilitation of European projects through eTwinning:** Malta has offered many opportunities to train teachers in eTwinning through many workshops offered either through the Institute for Education or directly by the Ministry for Education and Employment. This has been successful in getting a good number of teachers involved, with some teachers also winning European prizes<sup>315</sup> for projects.
- **Greater support (educational, logistical and financial) by external European agencies to schools:** There are in Malta a number of organisations such as Meusac (the Malta-EU Steering and Action Committee) and the European Representation in Malta, which either offer financial support, or develop and implement in school programmes about the European Union.

<sup>313</sup> [https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/317757/SEC\\_31.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/317757/SEC_31.pdf)

<sup>314</sup> <https://instituteforeducation.gov.mt>

<sup>315</sup> <https://www.etwinningmalta.net/post/2019/03/01/etwinning-prize>

Good practices:

**Mini European Assembly for post-secondary students.** The National Student Travel Foundation (Malta) (NSTF) led this initiative with the objective of complementing formal education at post-secondary and tertiary level students through debates on relevant European institutional and current affairs. The Mini European Assembly is an educational simulation exercise where teams of students from different post-secondary institutions discuss issues related to European Affairs in a series of Plenaries and Assemblies.

**Learning about the EU during SkolaSajf.** Children at primary level in Malta each summer have the opportunity to attend summer school (Skolasajf), which is run by the Foundation for Educational Services within the Ministry for Education and Employment and it offers a summer school to primary level children for free during the summer months. In 2020 SkolaSajf implemented a programme themed 'My European Union' that was intended to help children familiarise themselves with the European Union and its motto, 'United in Diversity'.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

- Support the streamlining of national curricula to ensure that knowledge, values and attitudes form a continuous aspect of the core curriculum within compulsory education. Ensure that there are opportunities for students to be made aware of the attitudes and values on which Europe is built.
- Encourage the development of education materials about aspects related to the values of European citizenship. There is room to encourage the development of active and context-based activities which highlight real contexts of European citizenship.
- Support the development of content knowledge on topics related to Europe and the European Union for young audiences. Encourage educators and teacher-trainers to engage in the development of content knowledge related to European issues, values and other aspects of how the European Union works for students at the different levels of education.
- Support the production of educational resources related to studies and activities on Europe.
- Support the organisation of international activities (remote and in person) for students. Direct exposure and experience of Europe and European structures has a significant impact on learning.
- Support access to and collaboration with European Institutions for work on school projects.
- Develop initiatives involving teacher-training at pre- and in-service level. Initiatives that involve curriculum development of teacher-training courses will be valuable.
- Support the organisation of peer learning activities, for example the organisation of examples of good practices which enable the sharing of successful approaches to teaching and learning about Europe.

## Netherlands

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

There is little information centrally available on how young Dutch people think and feel about the EU across primary and secondary schools and VET general education and training. From previous research it is known that knowledge about democracy and law, also known as citizenship knowledge, is poorly developed among Dutch young people. However, they did better in a 2016 study than in the 2009 study. The next study of the ICCE is in progress, results are expected for 2022.

Recent research by the Remkes 'state commission', which was assigned to study the current parliamentary system and its functioning as well as democratic innovation, examined attitudes of the electorate - not specifically young people - and identified a so-called 'diploma democracy'. The higher educated people and those with an above-average income are, the more satisfied with the functioning of democracy they are and the more confidence they have in the Parliament than less educated and people with a lower income. However, the functioning of European democracy fell outside the scope of the state commission's study. Another finding of the study with regard to European integration shows that it is precisely the higher educated who see themselves less pursued in policy than the lower educated (22% and 11% respectively).

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

There are no explicit and legally entrenched tasks that schools have with regards to teaching the EU dimension in learning and teaching. Schools in the Netherlands have a considerable degree of freedom and flexibility in how to design the content and method of their teaching<sup>316</sup>. Since 2006, schools have been legally obliged to pay attention to civic education, which is an umbrella term under which European citizenship falls. However, the exact interpretation of the term citizenship or how many hours its study would minimally require was not explicitly articulated in the law<sup>317</sup>. The Ministry is therefore currently sharpening the 2006 law to give schools more clarity on the interpretation of citizenship education.

Education legislation does not explicitly mention the EU dimension. It is more concretely and explicitly addressed in the national curriculum in the form of core objective 36 in primary education, and in core objective 45 in lower secondary (pre-vocational) education<sup>318</sup>.

In **primary education**, the current core objective 36 is relevant for the teaching and learning of the European dimension of citizenship where pupils learn the essentials of the Dutch and European constitution and the role of the citizen<sup>319</sup>.

<sup>316</sup> Aa, van der, R. et al. 2020. *Onderwijstijd: meer of minder? Internationaal vergelijkend onderzoek naar de urennorm en onderwijstijd in het primair onderwijs*. Den Haag: CAOP

<sup>317</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yxugho2f>

<sup>318</sup> Core objectives indicate what students should know and be able to do in a particular part of their training. The core objectives, together with the reference levels for arithmetic and language, are the most important national curriculum frameworks in primary education. It must be noted that they are objectives with plenty of room for individual interpretation by the schools themselves depending on the orientation of the school.

<sup>319</sup> <https://www.slo.nl/sectoren/po/kerndoelen/>

In **lower secondary education**, core objective 45 states that the pupil learns to understand the meaning of European cooperation and the European Union<sup>320</sup>.

Based on a curriculum reform initiated in recent years, substantive proposals have been made for clarifying the content of civic education (as well as the EU dimension in that) while simultaneously a proposal was formulated for a new law on citizenship education as a learning area in the future. The proposals for the new curriculum are currently under review at the Parliament<sup>321</sup>. Similarly, the proposal for a new law on citizenship education has been sent to the Dutch Parliament for voting<sup>322</sup>.

However, the new civic education law still does not impose any obligation on schools regarding the way in which they specifically implement this component of (European) citizenship<sup>323</sup>. Also, the role of the European Union is not more explicitly addressed in the law than before. Being a European citizen is thus not part of the new law on civic education.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

In October 2019, teachers and school leaders submitted their proposals for a curriculum revision. The proposals consist of a vision, nine learning areas and building blocks of which the nine learning areas consist of<sup>324</sup>. Each building block represents a topical focus and can be part of multiple learning areas.

In two out of the nine learning areas, building blocks that explicitly contain learning about Europe, the EU, and the relationship with the Netherlands are explicitly included. These are the learning areas '**Citizenship**' and '**People and Society**'. In the learning area 'Citizenship', five building blocks explicitly address the EU dimension of teaching and learning: '*Freedom and equality*'; '*Power and participation*'; '*Collaboration and conflict*'; '*Digital coexistence*'; '*Globalisation*'<sup>325</sup>. In the learning area 'People & Society', the building block '*Power and authority*' explicitly refers to the EU dimension.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

To support schools in achieving the current core objectives, the SLO<sup>326</sup> has created interim objectives and learning lines (called TULE) for primary education education to show how the content of the curriculum could be divided up in primary education<sup>327</sup>. TULE provides insight into the way in which the contents (knowledge and skills) and activities (of children and teachers) for each core objective can be subdivided into groups 1 to 8 (ISCED 0-1)<sup>328</sup>. TULE provides a description of the possible distribution of the core objectives in educational content over a number of years.

The EU dimension in education is also included via the canon of the Netherlands. One of the lessons that the canon provides is for the canon window 'The European Union'<sup>329</sup>. It is a course suitable for learning areas History, Geography, and Language and targeted to group 7-8 (upper primary education, ISCED 1). More generally, there is a large

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<sup>320</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y5chaba7>

<sup>321</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y378nbc8>

<sup>322</sup> [https://www.tweedekamer.nl/debat\\_en\\_vergadering/commissievergaderingen/details?id=2020A04278](https://www.tweedekamer.nl/debat_en_vergadering/commissievergaderingen/details?id=2020A04278)

<sup>323</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y282bpdb>

<sup>324</sup> <https://www.curriculum.nu/voorstellen/>

<sup>325</sup> <https://www.curriculum.nu/voorstellen/burgerschap/uitwerking-burgerschap/>

<sup>326</sup> Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development.

<sup>327</sup> <https://tule.slo.nl/OrientatieOpJezelfEnWereld/F-L36.html>

<sup>328</sup> <https://tule.slo.nl/Inleiding/F-KDToelichting.html>

<sup>329</sup> <https://www.canonvannederland.nl/nl/europa>



participation of Dutch schools in Erasmus+ projects for which project descriptions and possible results are documented and available<sup>330</sup>.

Several examples of good practice can be identified. For primary schools, the module '**Learning about European norms and values**' consists of a step-by-step plan explaining norms and values and the different ways of thinking of residents of different European countries<sup>331</sup>. In the project '**Sharing our fits; Shaping our future**', the Zijlwijk School in Leiden works together with schools in five other European countries (*ERASMUS+ project*)<sup>332333</sup>.

Upper secondary education students carry out a research assignment to find out how the EU came into being, how the institutions work, which parties there are and which themes are currently hot topics in the EU. The '**EU Back to School**' programme aims to raise awareness of the European Union by discussing current issues. It gives civil servants from all ministries and European institutions the opportunity to give guest lectures about Europe<sup>334</sup>. In the pilot project '**Burger/Mr.**', students of the Master 'European Law' gave presentations at secondary schools last year. In pairs, the students visited secondary schools to teach what European citizenship means and why it is important, for example, to vote in the European parliamentary elections<sup>335</sup>.

### Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

The Dutch curriculum contains the core objective to learn about EU institutions and little about the essential questions pertaining to the European Union<sup>336</sup>. Therefore, it would be beneficial for young people in all educational tracks to learn about the European Union in a more problem-based pedagogical way: starting with a problem and letting the students think about its solution.

Another priority could be to make a national platform for grassroots initiatives in teaching about the EU. The EU should be made more 'visible' to pupils, e.g. by putting up more EU election voting stations at secondary vocational schools and pre-university schools, as suggested in the end report of the 'state commission' on democratic innovation<sup>337</sup>.

In addition, a fund for a 'EyoUth ambassador network' could help with motivating students to learn and disseminate knowledge about the EU. Pupils could be able to sign up for a position as 'ambassador' for the EU at their respective school. With such a network the Commission could identify, inform and activate linking pins in individual schools as well as help foster a national database on knowledge on this topic among pupils and improve or adapt policy in accordance with 'student reviewed' proven practices at individual schools.

Further recommendations are to let initiatives thrive from bottom-up as this has a successful history in the Netherlands, with coordination from the top in place. Financial support is just one aspect of this, more important is knowledge sharing and the dissemination of programme/project information (tips, trick, best practices, other knowledge building) as well as monitoring and evaluation. The Ministry of Education

<sup>330</sup> <https://www.erasmusplus.nl/inspiratie-resultaten>

<sup>331</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3nvwusl>

<sup>332</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yy6hl3f9>

<sup>333</sup> <https://www.hetstreek.nl/taxonomy/term/1?page=9>

<sup>334</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/ycq65kk2>

<sup>335</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yxmlczhe>

<sup>336</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y5mmhh2j>

<sup>337</sup>

[https://www.eerstekamer.nl/overig/20181213/eindrapport\\_van\\_de\\_staatscommissie/f=/vkuh6822ehzh.pdf](https://www.eerstekamer.nl/overig/20181213/eindrapport_van_de_staatscommissie/f=/vkuh6822ehzh.pdf)

would be most suited for this, specifically for the set-up of a digital platform with examples and best practices of teaching and learning the EU dimension in all levels of education.

On a general level, it would be advisable to clearly distinguish between learning about the EU (law, civil rights charters, institutions, regulations) and learning for the EU (including encouragement of and skill building in civic virtues such as tolerance, openness for new ideas, sense of justice and equity - in short, civic education for democratic citizenship).

Both types of learning will be important for raising awareness of and insight in (as well as advocacy for) the EU among young people across Europe. And, both types of learning and teaching require distinctive sets of tools in terms of programmes and initiatives to intentionally, and to successfully foster them.

## **Poland**

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

According to results of the European Social Survey (8<sup>th</sup> round) and European Values Study, the Polish youth is generally more pro-European compared to older age groups. The ESS8 results indicate that youth aged 15 to 19 are assessing the dynamics of the EU integration better than those aged 20 to 25. The share of extreme groups (Eurosceptics and Euro enthusiasts) is lower among those up to age 25 than in the total population.

Young people do not have particular emotions towards the European Union because the EU is not the subject of in-depth reflection for them<sup>338</sup>. For the majority of young people, supporting Poland's membership in the EU is simply a social norm that they have no reason to oppose. Benefits that young people see in the EU are for example that it is seen as a 'political safety net' or that open borders allow labour mobility and higher economic/social life standards.

All in all, in the case of young people, on the one hand, there is a silent majority that largely supports EU membership, and on the other - a determined minority who see the EU as an explanation for many Polish failures. Results of an opinion poll conducted by CBOS<sup>339</sup> survey agency 15 years after the EU accession indicate that young people seem to be more sceptic towards the EU (which is different than the results of the ESS or the EVS). The survey also showed that students more frequently declare themselves as Europeans compared to other social groups. There are no specific surveys that identify the knowledge and attitudes towards the EU among the youth by ISCED levels.

### **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

#### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

The EU dimension is included in the national legislation, namely in the core curricula, which are identified in two decrees by the Minister of National Education. The first one covers the education levels from primary education to first stage vocational schools

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<sup>338</sup> <http://mlodzi2018.pl/files/raport3.pdf>

<sup>339</sup> CBOS. (2019). 15 lat członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej (Komunikat z badań).

(that is up to EQF level 3), but also post-secondary education. The second Decree is on the core curriculum for general education for general secondary schools, technical secondary schools and sector secondary schools (EQF level 4)<sup>340</sup>.

The specific approach to teaching about the EU dimension depends on the teachers' and schools' approach. Teachers select textbooks as well as other teaching materials that can be used during the classes in schools. These need to be approved by the Ministry of National Education and follow the requirements that are stated in the core curricula. Teachers generally receive support in the methodological and didactic aspects of teaching from the Centre for Education Development, that is the public institution subsidiary to the Minister of National Education. The Centre offers training for teachers, however, in recent years, no specific topic related to the EU dimension was undertaken.

Another institution, more active in this area is the Foundation for the Development of the Education System (*FRSE*). FRSE possesses a broad experience in managing education programmes, especially EU programmes. It organises educational events, including competitions aimed at promoting project results. Its flagship initiatives include EDUinspirations, European Language Label and Selfie+. In 2018, FRSE launched the Mobile Education Centre – a state-of-the-art scientific and teaching space, which visits various parts of Poland. The main target group of the Mobile Educational Centre is teaching staff who participate in training on how to use modern technology in their work with students<sup>341</sup>.

Teachers also have access to materials that can support their teaching and learning practices provided by the government, including an electronic platform of the Ministry of National Education<sup>342</sup>. Scenarios of lessons on the European Union (mainly for Social Studies classes) are also available on various Internet platforms that are used by teachers<sup>343</sup>. Another initiative is the **competition for the scenarios of European classes** that was organised by the European Commission representation in cooperation with the Team Europe – the network of experts<sup>344</sup>.

An activity for students of secondary schools that encourages gaining knowledge about the EU is the **competition on the knowledge of Poland and the modern World**<sup>345</sup>. The knowledge about the European Union is among the topics that are covered in the core content of the competition with topics like the '*process of the integration of Poland to the EU*', '*criteria and consequences of the EU membership*' or '*economic, social, cultural and international consequences of the EU membership*'.

Finally, there are **24 Europe Direct** and **two European Union Information Points** that offer proven support instruments, e.g. original European lessons tailored to the age and profile of students' interests. Experts of the Team Europe work with schools under the project "*European Flying University*" and consultants of the Regional Points of Eurodesk Poland conduct Euro-lessons. All aforementioned projects are not very popular, mainly due to the fact that they require additional commitment on the part of teachers who often lack support from school management.

<sup>340</sup> <https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20180000467>

<sup>341</sup> Programme for young people, for people working with the youth and for youth organisations.

<sup>342</sup> See <https://epodreczniki.pl/b/podrecznik-obywatela/PJralnOtw>

<sup>343</sup> See <https://tinyurl.com/yyerdt2z>

<sup>344</sup> Komisja Europejska Przedstawicielstwo w Polsce, 2020.

<sup>345</sup> See <http://www.owpsw.edu.pl/program/>

## How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula

In Poland, learning about the EU is included in the core curricula at various levels of education. In the pre-school and initial education, it is embedded in a general programme. At later stages, the relevant items are covered by the curricula for the courses on 'history', 'geography' and, in secondary schools also on 'social studies'.

## Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

Overall, the construction of the education system in Poland relies very much on the initiative of teachers. While the core curricula provide general guidance on the learning outcomes, their delivery very much depends on the schools and teachers' initiative. Effective teaching about the EU should therefore focus on the teachers. This includes access to teaching materials for supporting teachers in the teaching about the EU and a wider dissemination of these materials, developing teacher and school support networks or inviting teachers to participate in EU projects with the obligation to share their knowledge with other teachers. An important requirement for effective teaching about the EU is also the approach of the Minister of Education and the Centre for Education Development. As indicated before, the education about the EU is not on the priority list and, as a result, teachers do not feel obliged to be more active in this area.

Identified examples of good practices in teaching about the EU come from activities of the "Eurodesk team". The "**Euro Classes**" (Euro-Lekcje) initiative comprises the development of scenarios and the delivery of 9 classes focusing on various aspects of activities of young people in the European Union<sup>346</sup>.

Eurodesk Polska's offers two exciting games for schools: "**Euro chances**" is a board game on various forms of mobility in Europe with activities primarily for secondary school students facing the decision on their future path. "**Time to Move**" is a European-themed card quiz game that can be completed in one lesson intended for younger audiences, i.e. students in the upper classes of primary schools or initial classes of the secondary schools. In the "**Eurodesk Tour**", youth leaders from all over Poland met with young people in different localities to encourage them to be active in international mobility<sup>347</sup>.

## Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

The current state of the teaching and learning on the EU in Poland would benefit from significant changes. Despite the formal inclusion of the EU-related topics in the core curricula, the practices of teaching in formal education show that this topic is not a priority in teaching practice. There is no coherent image of the community values, of cultural and historical (including political and economic) unity where Poland is an integral part of Europe and the EU<sup>348</sup>.

Since 2015, European education in school education has been systematically reduced, resulting in an educational and cognitive void often filled by the media leading to an anti-European socio-political discourse in Poland. The initiatives that promote the EU education are relatively scarce and mainly activated by the European Commission Representation or through the European funding (Erasmus+, European Social Fund etc.).

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<sup>346</sup> <https://www.eurodesk.pl/eurolekcje>

<sup>347</sup> <https://www.eurodesk.pl/filmy/eurodesk-tour>

<sup>348</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/poland/news/200522\\_education\\_pl](https://ec.europa.eu/poland/news/200522_education_pl)

In order to improve the education about the European Union, the following activities are proposed<sup>349</sup>:

- Introduce a 'European education module' in teacher training.
- Enrich the content of school education with a European perspective.
- Promote the internationalisation of schools/supporting teachers participating in internal/European projects.
- Create conditions for pedagogical students to participate in job shadowing (foreign institutions/other form of teaching processes).
- Support teachers in acquiring linguistic competences.
- Return to the idea of European school clubs or other forms of European education support.
- Support teachers in designing and implementing cross-curricular European education standards.
- Introduce educational projects or priorities at EU level to promote/implement the integration of the EU dimension in teacher education.
- Extend the offer of professional development for teachers with courses on European issues.
- Co-finance student mobility by local governments and promote meetings between students and members of the European Parliament.
- Support the participation of secondary school students in the civic dialogue.
- Promote free-of-charge presentations of European films that reflect EU values.
- Support European youth cooperation.
- Provide financial support to NGOs dealing with European education.

## Portugal

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

The Portuguese have a favorable opinion in relation to the EU, with 82% considering that the country benefited from being a member of the community bloc and only 10% having a contrary position. Most of Portuguese people believe their country's position counts in the EU and would not vote in favour of leaving<sup>350</sup>. According to a Eurostat report, about 70% of unemployed young people in Portugal (aged 20 to 34) are more predisposed than any other young person in the EU to move to another city/country to look for a job.

More than three quarters of the Portuguese consider that the country has benefited from being a member of the EU. Erasmus students see Europe as a space of modernity and a kind of 'best friend' of Portugal due to the advantages of the country's development and because they feel embedded in a broader context<sup>351</sup>.

'European Clubs', mobility programmes and other European initiatives are relevant to enhance students' knowledge of European pluralism, the valorisation of cultural diversity

<sup>349</sup> Proposed by Mach and Jurkowicz (2020), see [https://ec.europa.eu/poland/news/200522\\_education\\_pl](https://ec.europa.eu/poland/news/200522_education_pl) and by the author of this report.

<sup>350</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yylgzgu2>

<sup>351</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3luf6n6> and <https://tinyurl.com/y6fe7gnn> and <https://tinyurl.com/y3s54q24>

and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Nevertheless, there is little interest in Portugal in the European elections. Although there is a positive idea about Europe as a culturally and artistically rich space with some opportunities for study and cross-border work, young people remain strongly sceptical about the EU in their way of acting and the daily lives of people. Over the years, different European education initiatives influenced the Portuguese education system, e.g. the 'Eco-Schools Programme' that is recognised as a preferred tool for curricular integration, interdisciplinary work and for the more sustainable management of schools. The Ministries of Education and of the Environment have made efforts for developing and monitoring environmental education projects, there is also an environmental education framework for sustainability<sup>352</sup>.

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

In Portugal, the EU dimension is part of the curriculum of many school subjects and levels with diverse teaching and learning practices. EU topics are discussed, for example, in 'Political Studies', 'History'<sup>353</sup> 'Geography', 'Economics' or 'Citizenship education'. At **primary school level**, the EU dimension appears in the area 'Study of the Environment', at lower secondary level it is mentioned mainly in 'History' and 'Geography'. At upper secondary level several subjects cover EU issues, i.e. 'History', 'Geography', 'Economics', 'Political Studies', 'History of Culture and the Arts' and 'Law'.

Several **VET curricula** refer to the EU dimension as well. There are also complementary initiatives, where young people can develop skills and competences related to the EU dimension, e.g. extracurricular activities like the *European Youth Parliament*<sup>354</sup>, visits to 'Europa Space'<sup>355</sup> or participating in 'European Clubs'<sup>356</sup>.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

At **primary level**, learning about the EU takes place on a more general level, i.e. Portugal in Europe and in the world<sup>357</sup>. At **secondary level**, students in 'History' and 'Geography'<sup>358</sup> learn about, for example, Portugal in relation to other historical/geographical spheres and to the manufacturing of European products<sup>359</sup>. At **upper-secondary level**, the EU is well represented in 'History', 'Geography', 'Economics', 'Political Studies', 'Law', and 'History of Culture and the Arts'.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

European projects are an asset, either through Erasmus+ or, for example, through the European Clubs. Participation in Erasmus+ is highly valued given the return of significant learning and experiences for students and teachers<sup>360</sup>. The results of a

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<sup>352</sup> <https://ecoescolas.abae.pt/> and <https://tinyurl.com/y3s54q24>; <https://tinyurl.com/yx9v2kqh>

<sup>353</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y2hrdmj4> and <https://tinyurl.com/y4jt88y3>

<sup>354</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y5ofakr3>

<sup>355</sup> A place for citizens/schools to get information on EU issues and a space to promote EU knowledge.

<sup>356</sup> An initiative that started in 1986 resulting from Portugal's experience from belonging to the Council of Europe and from joining the European Union, see <https://www.dge.mec.pt/clubes-europeus>

<sup>357</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yxvx7u7t>

<sup>358</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y25w5ba7>

<sup>359</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y6d4h44o>

<sup>360</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yxzbxl4z>

satisfaction survey on this issue show the need to simplify the application forms (in administrative and financial domains)<sup>361</sup>.

As schools are an important vehicle for learning and exercising citizenship, 'European Clubs' have made an important contribution to the training and involvement of students in the European construction project, increasing their participation, reinforcing the protection of their rights and duties, thus strengthening European identity and citizenship values.

The Directorate-General for Education (DGE) is very proactive in this matter, publicising the European Framework dimension of education and providing a variety of useful information like European Citizenship brochures and other initiatives that have been important for schools, e.g. the *European Day of Languages*, the *European Heritage Days Seminar*, or the *European Day of School Sport-Webinar* on Sport and Mental Health in Children and Youth. The activity of the *European Information Center Jacques Delors* (CIEJD) also has to be mentioned, which has developed a set of resources for the educational community. DGE makes available the Newsletter of 'European Clubs' as well as more remarkable events carried out at international level. CIEJD, among other things, also presents curiosities and general data about the EU countries, games<sup>362</sup>, and various presentations on the EU and intercultural dialogue.

As observed in recent research carried out in Portugal about innovative school clusters<sup>363</sup>, the participation in European projects aimed at school actors is an incentive for an effective teaching about the EU and induces innovation and citizenship at schools. Teacher training with European peers and involvement in support networks are a vital strategy for teachers, as well as participation in EU projects to exchange innovative practices. The participation of school actors in **Erasmus+** has promoted the mobility of teachers and principals for the acquisition of new skills linked to schools' needs and innovative teaching. These school actors have also been involved in the **European SchoolNet** which focuses on innovative practices in different domains like STEM areas, professional development, ICT, etc. (e.g., *CoLab*, *Creative Classroom Lab*). The variety and richness of activities by 'European clubs' includes activities such as "*Europe comes to school*".

There are several examples of good practice on teaching about the EU in Portugal, e.g. a Webinar on '**The construction of the Education Strategy for School Citizenship**' in the school cluster of Castelo da Maia<sup>364</sup>, that presents an original way of coordinating and piloting the work of implementing the School Citizenship Education Strategy (EECE). With regards to vocational schools, a good example is the participation of a VET school in Northern Portugal in **EuRoCoopera**<sup>365</sup>.

The Porto School of Commerce did an Erasmus+ project in cooperation with schools in different countries creating 150 international training and exchange opportunities for students/teachers/staff in projects like '**Be My Guest 2.0 and 3.0**' or '**Empowerment in Action**.' In '**A school with attiTude**', a VET school tried to spread European

<sup>361</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y2mutvbb>

<sup>362</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3tazm6g>; <https://tinyurl.com/y6j3p4hu>; <https://tinyurl.com/yxgutbtl>; <https://tinyurl.com/yxgutbtl>; <https://tinyurl.com/yxooeems>; <https://tinyurl.com/yy98wwxm>; <https://tinyurl.com/yynst2f6>; <https://tinyurl.com/y4brvdwz>

<sup>363</sup> Costa & Almeida (2019). 85 interviews have been conducted with teachers, school principals and intermediate leaders, as well as questionnaires were applied to teachers (400), students (2100) and parents (1300).

<sup>364</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y43kf9to>

<sup>365</sup> [https://www.ruizcosta.edu.pt/projeto\\_erasmus.html](https://www.ruizcosta.edu.pt/projeto_erasmus.html)

citizenship and democracy<sup>366</sup>. The Beira Agueira VET school<sup>367</sup> promoted mobility and exchange of students, teachers and non-school staff through an Erasmus+ Programme. Various schools implemented European Development Plans (EDP)<sup>368</sup>. Contests are also an important way to spread the word about the EU as well as **'ambassador schools'**<sup>369</sup>, **"Europe Day celebrations"** or the organisation of **'European weeks'**<sup>370</sup>. The teacher training project **"#aEuropa na Escola"**<sup>371</sup> is a valuable short-term training action.

## **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

In Portugal, 'European Clubs', mobility programmes and other European initiatives prove to be crucial for innovative schools and for getting teachers and students to enhance their knowledge about European pluralism, the valorisation of cultural diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Therefore, greater emphasis should come from the EU to raise the awareness among Portuguese public authorities of the need to induce schools to include the European dimension in their educational projects. When it comes to European themes, school curricula are unevenly focused (until 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the EU dimension is more or less the responsibility of the subjects 'History' and 'Geography' alone).

## **Recommendations for EU action in the national context**

- A budget-reinforced Erasmus+ (less bureaucratic, more accessible, with more autonomous/flexible management) will reach more people.
- Mobility and training are crucial and even more relevant if associated with initiatives of the European Commission that acts as an inducer for the participation of teachers.
- More events bring young citizens closer to their European Representatives (reminding them of the importance of European elections and institutions).
- Mobility and networking between students/teachers/school principals are vital for enhancing European citizenship (as an important strategy for establishing contact with other cultures and empathy with others).
- More exchange projects between different countries/schools and involving universities/public authorities is the key to change people's mindsets (sharing practices/experiences are vital for promoting a more active and involved youth in the EU).

## **Romania**

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

The 2019 Spring Eurobarometer 91<sup>372</sup> indicates that 60% of Romanians have a positive image of the EU and 52% have trust in the EU. More than six out of ten Romanians say that they trust the European Parliament, while 63% trust the European Commission, and 58% trust the European Council. Romanians relate to all European institutions with more confidence than other Europeans. This general trend has an influence on young

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<sup>366</sup> <http://www.porto.pt/noticias/parlamento-europeu-distingue-escola-de-comercio-do-porto->

<sup>367</sup> <http://www.beira-agueira.pt/pt/estagios-internacionais>

<sup>368</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y4tjr37f> and <https://tinyurl.com/y6otd5z9>

<sup>369</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3vvrjz7> or <https://tinyurl.com/y6598ftx>

<sup>370</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/yyt6bh26> and <https://tinyurl.com/y5xgavph>

<sup>371</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3c275xb>

<sup>372</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y42tut9y>



people's attitudes towards the EU as well, as demonstrated by the fact that both young people and adults consider the best achievement of the EU to be free movement of citizens, goods and services<sup>373</sup>.

Romanians have a high awareness of EU citizenship/citizen rights<sup>374</sup>, but compared with other EU countries, they are less aware that EU members can vote for the EU Parliament in Romania. Non-formal and informal contexts go beyond theoretical knowledge and experiments, as many young Romanians are involved in relevant EU networks, projects, and initiatives. They strongly believe in the crucial role of the EU for improving education.

In general, Romania's youth has a positive view of the European Union, but the lack of interest, the lack of financial means, personal reasons and the lack of opportunities are some of the main barriers for not going abroad for learning experiences or for not considering to do so. In education, younger age groups have the lowest participation rates in projects, mobilities or other 'active' forms of exploring the EU compared to older age groups. As in this case the learning through non-formal or informal contexts is limited, the school has a key role in shaping the attitudes towards the EU.

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

In Romania, the EU dimension within teaching/learning practices has not been researched nor documented. However, there are three perspectives that offer some insights: i) the shift to a new, competence-based curriculum, promoting the recommended EU key competences as main learning outcomes in the compulsory education; ii) the approach of the EU dimension in specific subjects from the core curriculum or school-based curriculum (optional courses) and iii) the existing teaching practices in the classroom (hidden curriculum).

A first area of integrating the EU dimension in the current teaching and learning practices is related to the focus on the 8 recommended EU Key Competences in the new curriculum developed and implemented in primary/secondary education. Gradually, these 8 key competences gained recognition and represent the main learning outcomes defined for the compulsory education today. The second area of integration are the learning contexts developed within different subjects.

Current surveys<sup>375</sup> on learning practices highlight the limited success of teachers in developing authentic learning activities to transfer the official provision into classroom practice and to design meaningful learning activities. The hidden curriculum also plays an important part in understanding the limits within teaching/learning practices of the EU dimension.

According to the National Education Law 1/2011, Art. 2 (1), the current regulatory framework is guided by promoting an education based on values, creativity, cognitive capacities, action-based capacities, fundamental knowledge, competences, and skills of direct use in the work field and the society. This Law establishes specific goals for each

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<sup>373</sup> Idem.

<sup>374</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y3zzv3s3>

<sup>375</sup> <https://tinyurl.com/y58xswp6> and <https://tinyurl.com/y3tugnpa>

education level, the pre-university education national curriculum is focused on developing/diversifying the key competences that define the student's training profile.

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning<sup>376</sup> and the 'European graduate profile' for the compulsory education structured in 8 Key Competences are embedded in this law<sup>377</sup>. The principles for curriculum development promoted at system level explicitly address the European dimension. The curricular development principles have direct implications for the structure of the national curriculum (for example, on its design), but also on teaching, learning and assessment activities.

The most important features of the European dimension promoted in the national curriculum concern the focus on the compulsory learning of two foreign languages; learning about the EU, the history of Europe, the geography of Europe; the development of a European identity by learning the role, the rights and responsibilities undertaken as an active European citizen, and the recognition and appreciation of common European values.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

There are various mechanisms of promoting the EU in the curriculum, including: i) integrated topics in different subjects in the core curriculum; ii) optional subjects in the national offer for the school-based curriculum or in the local offer (developed at school level) and iii), the development of extra-curricular activities – i.e. European projects and mobility programmes at school level.

The core curriculum currently represents more than 90% of the total study time on primary and lower secondary level. In primary education, European topics are included in the subjects '*Geography*' and '*Civic Education*', in lower secondary education, the EU is mentioned in '*Geography*', '*History*' and '*Civic Education*'.

In upper secondary education it is included in '*Romanian mother tongue*', '*Geography*' and '*Economics*'. In addition to these core curriculum subjects, students can choose school-based subjects with a focus on the EU. For example, primary level students can study '*Educatie Europeana*' (European Education), an optional course aiming at increasing the knowledge of various elements related to the European Union. In upper secondary education, an optional subject is dedicated to EU institutions<sup>378</sup>. In after-school programmes or other extra-curricular activities, students have the possibility to engage in more applicative/experimental work getting in contact with peers from other EU countries or with relevant learning resources.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

The European Parliament report 'Learning EU in school'<sup>379</sup> identifies various factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and in adopting positive attitudes. These include, for example, a broader understanding of the complex, dynamic and multi-layered nature of learning about the EU at school or the definition of learning outcomes on competences about the EU.

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<sup>376</sup> <http://www.ise.ro/?p=3963>

<sup>377</sup> Communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness, and expression.

<sup>378</sup> <http://programe.ise.ro/>

<sup>379</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0021\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0021_EN.html)

The important role of teaching materials and resources with explicit content on the EU is stressed for school curricula but also active/participative teaching methods and adequate assessment strategies. Furthermore, initial, and in-service professional development opportunities for teachers/educators are suggested in order to incorporate the EU dimension into teaching but also linking the learning on the EU with student and parent participation in school governance. Adapting/correlating formal learning contexts with non-formal and informal learning (including youth work and adult learning) is also considered important.

The following selection of good practices is focused on national policies and EU projects that create learning environments for developing relevant competences on the EU: National initiatives are '**Made for Europe**', a national contest on promoting educational projects funded by the EU<sup>380</sup> and '**European School label**'<sup>381</sup>, supporting European partnerships between VET schools. '**eTwinning school label**' is the European initiative of 'eTwinning Schools' and their effort to recognise the importance/values of eTwinning<sup>382</sup>. European projects of relevance are '**Proud of being European**' which focuses on European values, '**Migrant and refugees**' brings together students from four EU countries and '**The story of 1 EURO coin**'<sup>383</sup> is an award-winning project on cultural awareness and expression.

### Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

For developing attitudes and knowledge about the EU, it is necessary to focus on the competence development of teachers through adequate training (initial and in-service) using a set of specialised, teaching, personal and attitudinal competences. Specialised competences, for example, include abilities for integrating the EU subjects into the knowledge areas learned by students. Teaching competences, among other things, include the ability to use specific methods for identifying students' needs/interests, digital skills, and methods in correlation with learning theories. Personal competences include high levels of self-knowledge, independence, personal reflection, emotional balance and many others. The training/support of education management teams at schools (principals, deputies, school board members) and new mechanisms of exploiting innovative project results/practices is another suggested focus.

The tension between dominant perspectives and the ambiguity of school learning goals and outcomes related to the EU, has a negative impact on teachers and educators '*that often feel trapped between curricular goals (...) and cultural norms of nationalism or lack of practical resources that hinder their ability to actually teach...*'<sup>384</sup>. The 'EU Working Groups' on promoting common values and inclusive education support inclusive education for all learners and foster a European dimension of education and training.

One of the most important tools for making national curricula convergent and promoting a compatible 'learner profile' of a compulsory education graduate are the initiatives on the EU revised Key Competences Framework. The EPAN expert working groups (focused on curriculum, assessment and teacher training) offer a variety of materials that could inspire the further development of Jean Monnet. All member states need to adopt a holistic approach when it comes to EU learning: for example, a clear vision and goals for developing key competences at each educational level, the introduction of EU

<sup>380</sup> [http://ismb.edu.ro/documente/proiecte/2019/Made\\_for\\_europe\\_2019.pdf](http://ismb.edu.ro/documente/proiecte/2019/Made_for_europe_2019.pdf)

<sup>381</sup> <https://www.edu.ro/scoala-europeana>

<sup>382</sup> School partnerships via the Internet, see <https://loveetwinning.blogspot.com>

<sup>383</sup> [http://ismb.edu.ro/documente/proiecte/2019/Made\\_for\\_europe\\_2019.pdf](http://ismb.edu.ro/documente/proiecte/2019/Made_for_europe_2019.pdf)

<sup>384</sup> Goren, H. and Yemini, M. (2017) 'Global citizenship education redefined – a systematic review of empirical studies on global citizenship education'. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 82, 170–83.

learning assessment tools, an assessment of the efficiency of currently applied mechanisms, a clear communication strategy on the importance of EU learning and on how to involve pedagogical experts on a regular basis and finally, an assessment of teachers' needs regarding the EU learning challenges.

At the same time, the funding of school programmes educating children, capacity programmes for parents/guardians and the engagement of children in decision-making at local/municipal level needs to be prioritised and fostered.

## **Slovakia**

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

There is no regular assessment of young people's level of the EU knowledge. Eurobarometer 2019<sup>385</sup> states that the feeling of EU citizenship is higher among young people (85% 15-34 year olds) than in the general public (79%, EU average 70%). One third of respondents valued free movement the most (25% EU). 17% of Slovaks rank the Euro as the most positive EU result (EU 8%), followed by student exchange programmes like Erasmus or social insurance, which are valued more by Slovaks than by EU citizens.

51% of Slovaks trust the European Commission and European Parliament. Trust correlates with the perceived knowledge about the EU - the more people feel they know about the EU, the more they trust it and its institutions. Younger people and people with higher education express higher trust levels. A close relation to the country is felt by 95% of Slovaks, but almost 90% also feel very close or close to Europe<sup>386</sup>. The rate of participation in EP elections is 65%, with young people at around 35%.

In a survey among secondary school students<sup>387</sup>, the most frequent answers to the question 'For somebody to be European' included 'to acquire European culture', and 'be born in Europe' while less important were 'to have European ancestors' and 'be Christian'. Another survey<sup>388</sup> indicates that the knowledge of history and civic education among tested pupils is mediocre. The average score was 4.96 out of 9 possible points. History is taught chronologically, thus European Integration is to be covered towards the end of the school year and it may happen that some topics are simply left out due to time constraints.

### **The EU dimension within teaching and learning practices in school and VET institutions**

#### **The EU dimension within education legislation and national curricula**

Education and training are primarily governed by the Law on Education 245/2008 as amended. The curricula of individual subjects are prescribed in the 'national education programme', which defines the educational standards. The national programme for a

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<sup>385</sup> Standard Eurobarometer 92. National Report Slovakia: <https://tinyurl.com/y4pqhx3t>

<sup>386</sup> <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/>

<sup>387</sup> This was done within project Platform of Ambassadors of the European Democratic Culture, [www.ainova.sk/project/ambedk](http://www.ainova.sk/project/ambedk)

<sup>388</sup> What education factors are related to the attitudes of Slovak secondary school students towards minorities? Research Report. State School Inspection, Institute of Social Communication, and Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences. Bratislava 2017. [https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/Sprava\\_z\\_vyskumu\\_2.pdf](https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/Sprava_z_vyskumu_2.pdf)

certain ISCED level groups individual subjects into education areas and defines so-called cross-cutting topics, e.g. *People and Society* combines the subjects of History, Geography and Civic Education. Cross-cutting topics serve for reflecting current issues<sup>389</sup>. They can be taught as separate courses, projects, blocs or as part of regular subjects.

Each year a guiding document recommends priorities for the year including information and sources. Some school education programmes reflect them explicitly, and plan specific activities, some just follow the prescribed curricula. Foreign language subjects might also include EU issues, and encourage international cooperation, for example through the European Day of Languages and the European Commission initiative on European Language Label, Erasmus+ projects, eTwinning, and the European Week of Sport.

At **primary level**, there is no mention of the EU in the programmes, just Europe as a geographical region. At **lower secondary level**, the EU is mentioned in History - the pupils are expected to know that Slovakia entered the EU and assess the advantages and disadvantages of the free movement of goods and people at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In Geography, pupils should be able to explain the importance of the EU. Civic Education expects pupils to learn about their surroundings – including the EU and EU institutions.

In History class of **secondary grammar schools** (ISCED 3), students should know about the milestones of European integration and about the EEC, EU and free movement. In Geography, the students deal with various regions around the globe, including Europe and EU. Civic Education deals with elections - including the European Parliament elections, as well as EU institutions and labour market. **Secondary vocational schools** have fewer teaching hours for these subjects. History class covers the EU, Geography mentions the EU in connection with migration, but Civic Education does not mention the EU.

Each school adapts the national to a '**school education programme**' with the curricula of individual subjects. They are usually available on schools' web pages, and divided into education areas – e.g. People and Society, People and Nature, People and Values. School curricula differ quite a lot. Some describe the individual subject or groups of subjects in detail, some just refer to national education programmes and describe some specificities of their school. Some schools describe how cross-cutting topics are incorporated into individual subjects. For example, Regional Education (Geography, 8<sup>th</sup> year: project on the EU, applying characteristics typical for Slovakia to European countries).

Apart from compulsory subjects, school leaving exams can be taken also in History, Geography and Civic Education as optional or voluntary subjects<sup>390</sup>. In each of these subjects the EU is present: Civic Education (Economic integration, goals of the EU, advantages and disadvantages of EU membership), Law and Political Science (EP elections, human rights), History (Milestones and processes of European integration).

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<sup>389</sup> The cross-cutting topics include e.g. Personality and Social Development, Environmental Education, Media Education, ...

<sup>390</sup> Requirements for school leaving exams by the National Institute for Education for History, Civic Education and Geography ([https://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/cielove-poziadavky-na-maturitne-skusky/geografia\\_cp.pdf](https://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/cielove-poziadavky-na-maturitne-skusky/geografia_cp.pdf) )

## How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula

Teaching on the EU is done within the regular classes, but the following issues were identified as the main problems regarding the teaching of EU content in practice: insufficient number of teaching hours for the respective subjects, which are also often taught by teachers without appropriate qualification, and a lack of appropriate teaching materials<sup>391</sup>. In a survey of 270 schools<sup>392</sup> half of them reported having a non-qualified teacher for one of the surveyed subjects: Ethics (97 schools), less Civic Education (54) and History (55). The overall attractiveness of the teaching profession in Slovakia is relatively low due to inadequate salaries and low social recognition. Furthermore, continuing professional development of teachers currently does not contain any EU training.

Many secondary schools make use of extracurricular activities, however, offered by the EU institutions or by various NGOs. As a reference, outside the prescribed curricula, 140 out of 270 respondent schools surveyed took part in the national competition 'Young European', 67 schools participated in Euroscola, and 45 in the Ambassador Schools of European Parliament programme (EPAS), and 209 schools took part in an Erasmus+ project. The participation in the competition Human Rights Olympics<sup>393</sup> was mentioned 197 times. This strongly depends on teachers' motivation and a supportive school management. Activities include organising discussions with MEPs, Europe Day with quizzes or competitions, surveys on the use of EU Funds in their town, videos about EU countries. A very popular activity is 'peer education', where older students prepare presentations or a quiz on the EU for younger pupils or for seniors.

## Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

The input from teachers is decisive for the efficiency of the teaching process, but a supportive school management is essential as well: 'The more the school is perceived as open for democracy and participation, the better knowledge the pupils have [about] the EU.'<sup>4</sup> Didactic materials related to EU topics should be designed on the basis of the needs of the target group – the students, preferably with the participation of the teachers themselves.

A good example is '**European Union. A journal for young people**'<sup>394</sup>, an official EU educational booklet for 13-18 year-olds, 'localised' for Slovakia by Slovak experts. Offers organised mainly by European institutions or their local offices include Jan Amos Comenius prize<sup>395</sup>, Europe at school<sup>396</sup>, EPAS, Euroscola, Model European Parliament<sup>397</sup>, European Day of Languages, Erasmus+ and eTwinning projects. Activities by local NGOs include Eustory<sup>398</sup>, Project AmbEDK – simulated elections to the EP, meetings and debates on current EU topics<sup>399</sup>.

<sup>391</sup> <https://www.minedu.sk/ucitelia-diskutovali-o-europskej-dimenzii-vo-vzdelavani-na-slovenskych-skolach/>

<sup>392</sup> Competences for Democratic Culture at Secondary Schools in the Slovak Republic. Analysis of survey, identification of 'blind spots' and proposed measures. Dagmar Horná, Dušana Kurillová, [www.ainova.sk/project/ambedk](http://www.ainova.sk/project/ambedk).

<sup>393</sup> National competition on human rights, which is accompanied by education activities in each of the Slovak regions, [www.olp.sk](http://www.olp.sk)

<sup>394</sup> [https://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/metodicky-portal/metodicke-podnety/publikacia-europa-final\\_paper\\_prn\\_optimize.pdf](https://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/metodicky-portal/metodicke-podnety/publikacia-europa-final_paper_prn_optimize.pdf)

<sup>395</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/jan-amos-comenius-prize-winners-announced\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/jan-amos-comenius-prize-winners-announced_en)

<sup>396</sup> <https://www.iuventu.sk/sk/Olympiady/olympiady/EvS.alej>

<sup>397</sup> <https://www.upjs.sk/filozoficka-fakulta/modelovy-EU-parlament/>

<sup>398</sup> <https://sccd-sk.org/novinky/co-je-to-eustory/>

<sup>399</sup> Project Ambassadors of European Democratic Culture, [www.ainova.sk/project/ambedk](http://www.ainova.sk/project/ambedk)

**The Olympics on the European Union**<sup>400</sup> is a national knowledge competition for secondary school student teams that takes place online in the first round and then the eight best teams from all regions in Slovakia meet in the finals. It is organised by the University of Trnava with the Office of the EP and Representation of the European Commission.

**Young European**<sup>401</sup> is an initiative by the Representation of the EC and Europe Direct. This national competition includes written tests, language competitions and oral quizzes. The main topics are: knowledge about EU history, geography, European programmes and Funds and current topics for each year. The competition starts at regional level, with the winners competing nationally. Approximately 160 schools take part in the regional rounds. There is also a digital competition named **Young Digital European**, where in 2019, 1,259 students participated from 104 secondary schools.

**History through experience** - From totalitarian Czechoslovakia to the freedom in the European Union is an interactive exhibition that deals with Slovak history from 1948 until EU membership. In the form of peer education, students present to their peers. There are 'basic tours' or special topics such as 'Iron Curtain versus Schengen' (including a game), or 'European Union & me'.

### Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context

- Upgrade initial teacher training and CPD courses and include EU modules (including mobility).
- Analysis of education towards democratic values and European awareness as basis for teaching.
- Quality teaching materials adapted to Slovak reality.
- Continue Interrail Pass and DiscoverEU programme (personal experience is the most valuable).

## Slovenia

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

Information on the state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU in Slovenia is scarce. The most recent information is available from the IEA's International Citizenship and Education Study (ICCS) 2016, which included 8<sup>th</sup> grade students (13-14 years old). The study found that Slovenian students express a strong European identity (98%), above the EU average. 95% said they were proud that they live in Europe and 92% were proud that Slovenia is a member of the EU.

85% of Slovenian students agreed that the EU is beneficial to the economies of its members (EU average 82%) and 89% agreed that common legislation presents an advantage. Significantly below the EU average is the level of agreement that because of the EU Europe is a safe place to live (71%, EU average 85%). Slovenian students expressed least trust in the European institutions (63%, EU average: 70%).

<sup>400</sup> <http://www.fsvucm.sk/772/Olympi%C3%A1da%20o%20Eur%C3%B3pskej%20%C3%BAnii>

<sup>401</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/slovakia/events/mlad%C3%BD-eur%C3%B3pan-2020\\_sk](https://ec.europa.eu/slovakia/events/mlad%C3%BD-eur%C3%B3pan-2020_sk),  
<http://www.etest.sk/mlady-digitalny-europan-2019/>

Cooperation between Member States was recognised by students as a fundamental characteristic of the EU. Slovenian students showed strong support for cooperation of EU member states in many fields. 98% think that EU countries should cooperate in environmental protection, 97% in ensuring high employment levels. However, students showed significantly more pessimism regarding the future of the EU than their European peers, especially on the issues of poverty and peace in Europe in the future: 67% believe that poverty and unemployment in Europe will increase (EU average 52%).

Another study, based on essays, was done at the Faculty of Social Sciences in 2018. It included students from grades 7 to 9, from 14 schools previously involved in an Erasmus+ project, who had thus already acquired additional knowledge about the EU: The students were able to recognise the basic and central characteristics of the European integration process. Some of them were able to assess the advantages and challenges of European integration. Advantages mentioned were the Euro, easier travelling and crossing of borders, possibilities for exchange (Erasmus+) and to study and work in the EU, cheaper phone calls, humanitarian aid and cohesion policies.

Students also identified challenges, including environmental issues and migration policy, and risks such as stronger competition and migration of the workforce. In the essays students also replicated misconceptions: high taxes because of the EU, that the EU finances schooling and big infrastructure projects or enables students to study free of charge in all member states.

## **The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice**

### **EU aspects in legislation and national curricula**

During the EU accession period education legislation was harmonised and Slovenia followed all developments in education, for example competence-based education. The EU dimension is not directly mentioned either in legislation or in the curricula. However, the main goals of the education system are based on European values. Educational acts define specific goals for each level (e.g. primary education, secondary education).

In **primary education** EU themes are included in a number of subjects. Starting with the subject *Society* in Grade 5, where the student should know the symbols of Slovenia and the European Union and know the organization of the state of Slovenia and the EU. Besides the ability to orient themselves on the map of Europe and the world, a student learns about the organization of the EU with an emphasis on democracy, the rights of Slovenes as EU citizens and the importance of connecting citizens, economically and politically.

Teaching about EU in upper grades of primary education continues in Geography, History and Patriotic and Civil Culture and Ethics. EU-specific topics in Geography, e.g. in Grade 9, include: *'The student evaluates the importance of Slovenia's accession to the EU in the economic field and policy area'* Or *'The student anticipates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and dangers of Slovenia's involvement in comparison with non-EU countries'*. In History, learning outcomes for Grade 9 curriculum include: *'The student explains the characteristics of EU symbols'* and *'The student uses examples to explain the importance of European institutions dealing with the protection of human rights.'*

In the subject Patriotic and Civil Culture and Ethics in Grade 8 it is expected that, for example: *'The student learns about the impact of Slovenia's membership in the EU on everyday life'*, *'The student describes Slovenia's interest in membership in the European*



Union', *'The student describes the relation-ship between the state of Slovenia and the EU'*, and *'The student learns about decision-making in the EU; its main institutions; [...] gets acquainted with the activity of Slovenian representatives in EU bodies.'*

In **secondary education** EU values and themes are embedded in Geography, History and Sociology, but also informally taught through other subjects, in particular languages. In Sociology *'the student understands the factors that influence the integration of the world: from economic factors to international organizations (EU) and evaluates their impact and significance'* and *'the student acquires special knowledge related to European integration and globalisation; the conditions and consequences of low birth rates and life expectancy in European countries; comparative analysis, migration flows in Europe, [...].'*

General goals for History include: *'The student explains key phenomena and processes from world, European, regional, Slovenian and local history'*, *'The student develops an individual, national and European identity'* and *'Through selected examples from history, students develop worldviews that respect human rights, equality and democracy, and democratic and responsible citizenship.'*

Beside the subject based curricula there is also the interdisciplinary optional subject/course *European studies*, which includes knowledge from various social sciences and humanities. Students gain knowledge about the importance of European integration, human and civil rights, the functioning of European institutions, diversity in Europe, social and cultural issues in European countries. Teachers are asked to encourage students to gradually move from direct social experience to scientifically based knowledge, which should be analysed from different angles. As the objectives of the European Studies subject are complex, a combination of different teaching and assessment methods is recommended.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

Learning about the EU is generally included as part of the national curricula in different subjects. Themes about the EU and its values are mainly taught through general subjects. The EU dimension can also be embedded in extracurricular activities and additional activities (project-based). The extent of teaching additional EU content depends on teachers' interests and subject, to some extent also on their confidence and knowledge of different themes, as well as the policies and projects of their schools.

A large majority of primary schools include EU contents into teaching and learning activities (92% according to research from 2009), especially in the last triad of the primary school (ages 12-14), mostly in history, geography, civil culture and ethics and Slovene and foreign language classes. To a large extent, teaching concerns basic facts about the EU and knowledge about the member states, and to a lesser extent more complex themes such as EU policies and the rights of EU citizens, e.g. Slovenian membership in the EU, the symbols of the EU, languages of the EU or the Euro.

In 2012 the European Studies subject was introduced as an optional subject in secondary schools. However, this subject has not been fully implemented at any high school and a few high schools offer elements of it in their programmes.

In many cases schools also introduce European contents through projects such as Erasmus+ or Jean Monnet activities, local initiatives by Slovene institutions and Europe-wide initiatives. Local initiatives are mostly limited to primary schools, while many secondary schools participate in the European Parliament programmes, such as the Euroscola programme and the European Parliament Ambassador School (EPAS)

programme. In 2019/2020 60 secondary level schools participated in the EPAS programme and 52 of these fulfilled all requirements to receive the title of an EPAS school.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

The key aspect of successful implementation of European content is trained teachers. Their knowledge is a condition for school children to internalise common values and adopt proactive, reflected views on European processes. The key to successful knowledge transfer is in the interdisciplinary orientation of teachers and curricula, all so that students are encouraged to think critically, think independently and constructively. It opens up space for children's imagination, and it takes into account the pedagogical principle of cooperative learning, i.e. learning by participating instead of competing.

Good teaching and learning materials are also important. Many EU projects developed such materials that are used when teaching about the EU and its values.

Within the Jean Monnet project '*Innovative teaching for continuous learning about European integration*' (implemented in 2012) didactic materials for teaching about the EU in schools were developed for primary and secondary school teachers. It included training on knowledge about the EU and innovative educational methods (group research, individual essay writing, quizzes and debates). The second part included an analysis of subject curricula in primary and secondary schools and proposals for the inclusion of EU content.

The project '*Bringing the European Union closer to primary school students: the development of non-formal learning approaches*' took place in 2013/2014. It developed non-formal learning approaches for teaching European topics in primary schools in Slovenia and transferring these practices to Croatia for primary school students from Slovenia and Croatia. Outcomes were a 'mascot of EU citizens', comics on EU themes and board games. Teachers received a full-day seminar on essential facts about the European Union.

The European Union at school was a set of projects on learning about the EU and innovative ways of teaching, implemented in primary and secondary schools between 2010 and 2015. The projects included a variety of research and educational activities, such as curriculum analyses, materials used in teaching and innovative didactic approaches in schools. In 2017, the Primary School Curricula project enriched with content on the European Union - EU4PRIM received the European Commission Award for Success Story and Best Practice. It includes an interactive e-book with 18 lessons for primary schools.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

These areas in teaching and learning about EU in the national context should be priorities for EU actions:

- Teacher training: the success of teaching EU-content depends on the ingenuity and self-initiative of each teacher. European content in initial teacher training has not been given attention so far.
- Interdisciplinary orientation so that students are encouraged to think critically, think independently and discuss constructively and including cooperative learning.

- Strengthen students' knowledge of European content by systematically strengthening those subjects that deal with European content.
- 'Umbrella' of updated material, e.g. EU school handbook, updated in real time (including exercises, quizzes, worksheets and examples of lessons easy for teachers to use)

## Spain

### The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU

The research on young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU<sup>402</sup> shows that Spanish pupils have a low-medium level of knowledge on the impact of the EU in everyday life, the history of the European cooperation process, the exercise of European citizenship and the EU institutions, regardless of the school year, gender or region. Students reached poor results when asked about the European Parliament (members, representatives from Spain), the Euro, and the European Commission.

Although pupils know less about Europe than older age groups, they demand more information on the opportunities offered by the membership of Spain to the EU. The research shows the weaknesses in the teaching learning process on European matters in secondary schools in Spain, especially since the subject Citizenship Education and Fundamental Rights was highly contested; the quarrel led to the cancellation of this subject in secondary education.

Other challenges for the integration of European dimension into the curriculum are the subject timetable in secondary education, the excessive academicism of the curriculum and the lack of coordination between subjects, which limits cross-curricular teaching and learning on the European dimension.

### The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

#### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The current Education Act<sup>403</sup> shows a decided commitment to the educational objectives set by the EU. The most recommended subjects related to key competences that promote an active European citizenship are 'Education for citizenships and fundamental rights'<sup>404</sup>, Social sciences, History, Geography, and Languages.

A Royal Decree 126/2014 regulates the curricula in **primary education**. In particular, the syllabus of Social Science introduces the students to basic elements related the EU: structure and aims of the EU, and benefits of being part of the EU. Students have to learn and localise EU member states on a map, they have to identify the main institutions and government bodies, recognise the symbols of the EU, and differentiate

<sup>402</sup> Santana-Vega, L., and Feliciano-García, L. (2017). 'What do secondary school pupils know about the European Union? Implications for learning'. *Revista electrónica de investigación y evaluación educativa*. Available at: <https://ojs.uv.es/index.php/RELIEVE/article/view/9572/10562>; sample: 750 students and 40 teachers in 4 regions

<sup>403</sup> The current Act on Education can be consulted here: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2006/BOE-A-2006-7899-consolidado.pdf>

<sup>404</sup> In some autonomous regions, Education for citizenships has been maintained despite the rejection of the central government to keep this subject at national level.

the single market and the monetary union. They also have to reflect on the Spanish society, its democratic and pluralistic features, and its belonging to the EU.

Royal Decree 1105/2014 establishes the curriculum for **lower and upper secondary education**. Here, European Union facts and knowledge is mainly included in the syllabus of Geography and History in 4<sup>th</sup> grade of lower secondary education, Contemporary History in 1<sup>st</sup> grade on upper secondary education, and Geography in 2<sup>nd</sup> year upper secondary education.

In 4<sup>th</sup> grade lower secondary education, in the compulsory subject Geography and History students learn *'the path towards the EU: from the economic union to a supranational political union'*. It is evaluated whether students understand the evolution of the EU construction and whether they are able to discuss about the construction and the future of the European Union.

In 1<sup>st</sup> grade upper secondary education, the syllabus of Contemporary History includes the core of the knowledge that Spanish students receive on the EU: *'The construction process of the EU: from the European Communities to the EU'*. Facts and knowledge of the EU are also included in the syllabus of Economics (economic and currency union, and cooperation and integration of economies). Students should be able to reconstruct the time map of the EU, and they must relate all European institutions with the objectives they pursue. Students should be able to summarize the role of the EU as single political actor. This is an important element of the learning process since it involves being able to identify the current political challenges of the EU and mismatches between the interests of the EU and the interests of other States.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade of upper secondary education, the syllabus of Geography includes *'the position of Spain in the EU: regional politics and territorial cohesion'*. Students should identify the regional policies and territorial cohesion policies that affect Spain; as evaluating tool, students are asked to comment on news and essays on the position of Spain the Union. The syllabus of Spanish History secondary education also refers to the position of Spain the EU.

Finally, only **VET** degrees (ISCED 5) on Administration and Management, Director Assistant, Administration and Finance, and Secretary include some knowledge of the EU, namely its structure and the main representative institutions.

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

Although EU knowledge and facts are integrated in the curricula of some subjects there is no EU dimension within current teaching and learning practices. To correct this situation, the project ECLIPSE<sup>405</sup> developed the **'Programme for European Citizenship'**. This Programme aimed at promoting the EU dimension in teaching and learning practices in schools. ECLIPSE involved 7 schools in Spain. The aim was to train teachers and to elaborate good practices in the promotion of European citizenship.

The research team elaborated a programme which includes modules on human rights and responsibilities, social identity and cultural diversity, *'Europe in everyday life'*, *'European citizenship'* (core module), *'Including the EU dimension within teaching and learning practices'*, History of European cooperation, European institutions and Entrepreneurship. All modules were structured according to the following sections: presentation; objectives; key competences; subjects where the programme could be

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<sup>405</sup> ECLIPSE was financed by the European Commission (517815-LLP-1-2011-1-IT-COMENIUS-CMP).

taught; contents, procedures and attitudes; description of activities; materials; chronogram; evaluating criteria; and tools for evaluation.

### Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices

European issues are debated by students of 1<sup>st</sup> grade upper secondary education and VET in the **Model European Parliament** program. It gives young students the opportunity to be a MEP for a few days: the winners of each country gather in Brussels, hold a debate, and reach resolutions that are sent to the European Parliament. The objectives of the program are to achieve a European awareness in young people, and to learn about the functioning of the Parliament and the governing bodies of the European Union.

Perhaps one of the most innovative and effective tools in teaching is **Flipped Schools** because it enables education projects based on the use of inductive methodologies, such as cooperative learning and project-based learning, fundamentally linked to the use of technology in the classroom<sup>406</sup>. Adapting teaching about the EU to the sociocultural context of the school also increases the interest and involvement of students that do not see European issues as far away from their background. An effective way of achieving this is including stories of migrant students into the narrative of the EU dimension.

By participating in the **eTwinning** community, teachers can communicate, collaborate and develop projects with schools in participating European countries, enriching their teaching practice and allowing both their school and their students to feel part of the European educational community.

The European Documentation Centre and Europe Direct of the Community of Madrid offer free training sessions for teachers in the Madrid region<sup>407</sup>. It is a module that can be included in various courses and from different perspectives in the curricular project. It could lead to a new free-choice subject on EU for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades of lower secondary education.

The autonomous community of **Madrid** organizes a contest called '*What do you know about Europe*' in which students from 6<sup>th</sup> grade primary education and 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade lower secondary education participate. Normally, more than 300 students are involved from 40 schools. They also organize a contest of posters on the EU which takes place on May 9<sup>th</sup>, and an online game for all students of Madrid.

The most innovative initiative adopted by Madrid is the **contest #EuropaEnCasa** (#EuropeAtHome) using Instagram. Students must answer questions on politics, environment, rights, etc. There are two questions at 11:00 and at 19:00 every day for 10 days. The first prize is a trip to Brussels for four people.

Procomún gathers all materials and **Open Access Resources** elaborated by teachers across Spain, e.g. pedagogical units to teach the content of the syllabus related to the EU<sup>408</sup>. The units propose exercises and self-evaluating tools, with reading material. There are also resources to foster the internationalisation of students by describing the InterRail, eTwinning, or the Day of Europe. The Webinar Europeana helps teachers to

<sup>406</sup> Good practice: <https://intef.es/recursos-educativos/experiencias-educativas-inspiradoras/detalle-experiencias/?id=13050>

<sup>407</sup> <https://www.comunidad.madrid/servicios/madrid-mundo/cursos-sesiones-formativas-union-europea>

<sup>408</sup> Website of the Institute for Education Technologies and Training and Innovation in Education (INTEF) E.g. <http://procomun.educalab.es/es/ode/view/1478607786160>

connect the classroom to Europeana by discussing educational possibilities it offers in schools<sup>409</sup>.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

It would be important for schools to give pupils the opportunity to actively experience citizenship and offer them the possibility to study and discuss the meaning of being a European citizen, e.g. through promoting Erasmus+ or eTwinning. The most remarkable quality of eTwinning is its versatility since it promotes an active sense of being European in all possible subjects.

Topics on European citizenship need to be given greater emphasis in the secondary education curriculum. Programmes such as ECLIPSE propose an alternative model of education for citizenship based on transversal contents and could act as an alternative to the prevailing academicism in secondary school subjects.

## **Sweden**

### **The current state of young peoples' knowledge and attitudes towards the EU**

A study in 2011<sup>410</sup> pointed out that all EU education in Sweden was framed more as foreign policy politics rather than as part of domestic politics. A government inquiry of 2016<sup>411</sup> also observed that there is a "*widespread lack of knowledge in society about the relationship between the Swedish democratic system and the EU*" – also among teachers: "*In schools, teachers say that they steer clear of the EU in connection with democracy lessons due to their own inadequate knowledge. Not even university lecturers in political science feel familiar with the EU*" (p. 18).

Swedes' attitudes towards the EU are continuously measured by the Swedish Institute for European Studies (SIEPS) and the SOM-Institute. A study in 2019 shows that the proportion of Swedes who support EU membership is at a high level with 58 percent. The proportion who are opposed to a membership has continuously fallen since the end of the 1990s and is today at 16 percent. SIEPS also shows that differences in attitudes to the EU between different social groups have decreased<sup>412</sup>.

However, the positive EU-attitude increases with the education level<sup>413</sup>, there is a clear trend that metropolitan populations are more EU-positive than those in rural areas and young people have become increasingly positive towards the EU<sup>414</sup>. Swedes' attitude towards the EU has thus shifted towards an increasingly positive attitude over time and today there is not a strong criticism of the EU even among the supporters of the nationalist party in the Parliament (which is the only party in the Parliament that advocates that Sweden should leave the union).

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<sup>409</sup> <http://procomun.educalab.es/es/ode/view/1549358534196>

<sup>410</sup> Wall, P., 2011. *EU-undervisning. En jämförelse av undervisning om politik på nationell och europeisk nivå* (EU education. A comparison of policy teaching at national and European level). Licentiate thesis. Studier i de samhällsvetenskapliga ämnenas didaktik nr 11. Karlstad: Karlstad Uuniveristet. <http://kau.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:399052/FULLTEXT01>

<sup>411</sup> SOU 2016:10, 2016. *EU på hemmaplan* (EU at home). Betänkande av Utredningen om delaktighet i EU SOU 2016:10. Stockholm. Statens offentliga utredningar. <https://www.regeringen.se/48fba1/contentassets/e14fa0ed28d34271b3ea94da154b7968/eu-pa-hemmaplan-sou-201610.pdf>

<sup>412</sup> Weissenbilder, M & Andersson, U., 2020.

<sup>413</sup> <https://www.ekonomifakta.se/Artiklar/2019/februari/eu-opinionen-i-sverige/>

<sup>414</sup> Weissenbilder, M & Andersson, U., 2020.

## The EU dimension within teaching and learning in school and VET institutions: legislation and national curricula and practice

### EU aspects in legislation and national curricula

The Swedish school is governed by a hierarchy documents which include: 1. The Education Act, 2. School ordinances (for different school forms), 3. Curricula, and 4. Course or subject plans for different subjects. Overall, the European dimension is rather weakly represented in Swedish school's governing documents.

The Education Act mentions the EU dimension only in Chapter 1, Section 5 in connection with the organization of school elections, and it regulates which parties a principal can invite to the school to provide political information. The School Ordinances: The School Ordinance (Skolförordning 2011:185) and the Upper Secondary School Ordinance (Gymnasieförordning 2010:2039) do not mention the EU at all.

**In the curriculum for upper secondary school,** the European dimension is mentioned in the following way: *"The school must contribute to students gaining an identity that can be related to not only the specifically Swedish but also the Nordic, the European and ultimately the global. International contacts and exchange of education with other countries must be promoted"*<sup>415</sup>.

Reference is also made to the EU: *"The teaching of various subjects will provide students with knowledge about the European Union and its significance for Sweden and prepare students for a society with ever closer contacts across national and cultural borders"*<sup>416</sup>.

The European dimension is not mentioned in the overall governing document for the program in upper secondary schools but mentioned as content of individual courses, such as the basic course for all vocational education (Social Studies 1a1): *"Democracy and political systems at local, national and EU level. International and Nordic co-operation"*.

Citizens' opportunities to influence political decisions at the various levels. There is a distribution of power and opportunities for influence in different systems, and at different levels, based on different models of democracy and the possibilities of digital technology. Digitization and media content as well as news evaluation when it comes to issues of democracy and politics<sup>417</sup>. The EU is also mentioned in advanced courses in certain study preparation programs, such as in the course International Economics: *"The economic integration process within the EU and the continued development towards common markets"*<sup>418</sup>.

The EU is mentioned several times in the overall curriculum for **adult education**: *"The teaching will provide students with knowledge about the European Union (EU) and its*

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<sup>415</sup> <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/laroplan-gy11-for-gymnasieskolan>

<sup>416</sup> <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/laroplan-gy11-for-gymnasieskolan>

<sup>417</sup> <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/gymnasieprogrammen/amne?url=1530314731%2Fsyllabuscw%2Fjsp%2Fsubject.htm%3FsubjectCode%3DSAM%26lang%3Dsv%26tos%3Dgy%26p%3Dp&sv.url=12.5dfce44715d35a5cdfa92a3>

<sup>418</sup> [https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/gymnasieprogrammen/amne?url=1530314731%2Fsyllabuscw%2Fjsp%2Fsubject.htm%3FsubjectCode%3DSAM%26courseCode%3DSAMSAM01a1%26tos%3Dgy&sv.url=12.5dfce44715d35a5cdfa92a3#anchor\\_SAMSAM01a1](https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/gymnasieskolan/laroplan-program-och-amnen-i-gymnasieskolan/gymnasieprogrammen/amne?url=1530314731%2Fsyllabuscw%2Fjsp%2Fsubject.htm%3FsubjectCode%3DSAM%26courseCode%3DSAMSAM01a1%26tos%3Dgy&sv.url=12.5dfce44715d35a5cdfa92a3#anchor_SAMSAM01a1)

*significance for Sweden and prepare them for a society with ever closer contacts across national and cultural borders”.*

Also, reference is made to the the EU key competences: *“What education should lead to is also expressed in the EU’s key competences for lifelong learning, where competences are expressed as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that an individual may need to be able to use their full potential and actively participate in society and working life”.*

The European perspective is included in yet another place: *“...has knowledge of international cooperation and global connections and can assess events from a Swedish, Nordic, European and global perspective”<sup>419</sup>.*

### **How learning about the EU actually takes place within the curricula**

The EU dimension is still rather weak in the Swedish school curriculum. But the teaching reality can be quite different. It is up to individual teachers how they cover EU content, and this will depend on what they think they have time for with all the other requirements. There are signals that many teachers spend reasonable time teaching about the EU, more than the curriculum prescribes. For example, a survey of 2011 indicates that teachers had already taught as much about the EU as what was stated in the new curriculum, where the EU had a more prominent role than before.

There are also observations that EU issues are more likely to be dealt with in study preparation programmes than in vocational preparation, but also that EU teaching time increased in all programmes between 2007 and 2011 - a trend that has probably continued since<sup>420</sup>.

### **Factors that result in effective teaching about the EU and good practices**

Two main good practice initiatives can be identified:

**‘EU handshakes’<sup>421</sup>** is the biggest initiative taken to improve the situation with knowledge about the EU in the Swedish society and which was a government reaction to SOU 206:10. Through this initiative (starting in 2016), the government invited the social partners, municipalities, regions, youth movements, universities and colleges, and more, to contribute to the work of strengthening participation, knowledge and commitment to EU-related issues in Sweden.

**‘School Ambassador for the EU’<sup>422</sup>** is a long-term project run by the Swedish Council for Higher Education for supporting teachers in teaching about the EU. The program consists of a free professional development and the idea is that participating teachers will inspire and support their colleagues in relation to teaching about the EU and Europe. The training consists of nine days and a study trip to Brussels. 59 teachers participated in the program in 2019<sup>423</sup>. The training seems to be much appreciated among the

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<sup>419</sup> <https://www.skolverket.se/undervisning/vuxenutbildningen/komvux-grundlaggande/laroplan-for-vux-och-kursplaner-for-komvux-grundlaggande/laroplan-lvux12-for-vuxenutbildningen>

<sup>420</sup> Hylén, J., 2011. *EU-undervisningen i gymnasieskolan 2011. En uppföljning av Skolverkets undersökning 2007* (EU teaching in upper secondary school 2011. A follow-up of the National Agency for Education's survey in 2007). Stockholm. Skolverket.

<sup>421</sup> <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/okad-delaktighet-i-eu/om-eu-handslaget/>

<sup>422</sup> <https://www.utbyten.se/program/skolambassador-for-eu/>

<sup>423</sup> <https://www.uhr.se/om-uhr/nyheter/2019/59-larare-nya-ambassadorer-for-eu/>



participants. The Swedish Council for Higher Education also has a webpage with resources for EU teaching<sup>424</sup>.

The European Parliament also has an 'ambassadorship program' based on a slightly different model from the one mentioned above. Here, teachers are appointed as senior ambassadors, who in turn appoint students as junior ambassadors. They then perform various activities on the Day of Europe in May<sup>425</sup>. The Swedish Parliament has an EU information office that produces material about the EU<sup>426</sup> to be used in schools, both information material but also teacher guides and study material that can be found on the Parliament's website for teaching resources<sup>427</sup>.

### **Conclusions and recommended priorities for EU action in the national context**

The European dimension in general, and in particular, is relatively absent in political discussions in Sweden. More recent studies on integrating the EU dimension in teaching in Swedish schools are also rare and in-service teacher training about the EU does not take place on a larger scale within the school system, and what is done in this respect is provided by external actors. However, the positive attitude of Swedes towards the EU has strengthened in recent years.

The EU's role as a political and legislative arena and as an integral part of Swedish society's decision-making processes should definitely be emphasized more clearly in Swedish schools and the ongoing continuing education for teachers in EU-related subjects should be further strengthened. However, for all reform processes it needs to be considered that Sweden has a very decentralized, and also marketized, school system.

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<sup>424</sup> <https://www.utbyten.se/program/skolambassador-for-eu/undervisningsmaterial-om-eu/>

<sup>425</sup> <https://europarl.europa.eu/sweden/sv/forlarareochskolor/europaparlamentets-ambassadorsskoleprogram.html>

<sup>426</sup> <http://eu.riksdagen.se>

<sup>427</sup> <https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/bestall-och-ladda-ned/studiematerial/>

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study did not set out to categorise Member States by activities – for example producing tables that itemise whether ‘theme x’ is in a national curriculum, or the extent to which ‘European citizenship’ is an explicit teaching and learning theme or subject.

Instead, the intention was to use the in-depth knowledge of national experts to explore their teaching and learning landscapes, to look at practice, to discover activity, to identify good practice, and to consider how action at the EU level in the future can overcome unevenness of practice across Member States. They also looked at levels of engagement with all the stakeholders across schools and VET. And, they undertook this work at a time of enormous challenges to education systems during the global Covid-19 pandemic.

The 28 country profiles detail a rich landscape of activity. They show that even if EU issues are formally embedded into a national curriculum, there is no guarantee that they will be taught and learned consistently. They show that in education systems where there is considerable teacher autonomy, that can result in very innovative developments, but that such developments will be uneven across the system.

There is some discussion in the country profiles about the potential politicisation of the concept of ‘European citizenship’, and this is clearly contested in the context of rising populism across some countries. As a result, there may need to be a clearer differentiation for teachers and learners, about ‘becoming European’ (identity), ‘being a European citizen’ (democracy and participation in the institutions of democracy), ‘what Europe does for me’ (policies etc.), and ‘my European role’ (collaborating across cultures, boundaries, etc.).

For example, the European Parliament schemes clearly focus on the institutions of the European Union. The European Commission schemes are well-focussed on areas such as innovative teaching and learning, building resources and good practice, and on maximising equity and inclusiveness (for example multi-lingual resources). The country profiles show how much of the richness of practice is taking place outside of the formal curriculum and classroom.

What does emerge from the country profiles is the strong combination of learning styles, where formal teaching and learning is extensively enhanced by information, non-formal, and experiential learning. Furthermore, much of this is now supported by digital tools, with innovative activities such as games, simulations, escape rooms, and quizzes. Digital learning is both a core DG EAC focus, and it is a core requirement for learning as the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to restrict physical mobility for the foreseeable future.

### The EU issues in schools

Although the landscape of the EU in the curricula is uneven across Member States, it is clear that there has been significant progress both at the curriculum level, and at the teacher and school levels.

At the curriculum and school level examples such as Belgium (Flanders) set a clear requirement in the G)-schools for pupils to describe in their own words what the EU is, and to illustrate with examples how decisions made by the authorities affect their lives. In Bulgaria, the Pre-School and School Education Act of 2016 clearly defines the acquisition of knowledge and understanding about the European Union as an objective. In Cyprus, the “Euroscola” (Youth Parliament) brings together young people aged 16-18 to exchange views on experiences and problems and express expectations and plans

for the European structure. In Spain the national curriculum clearly articulate EU issues as being important.

In Denmark, DEO has developed a range of educational materials and specialises in educational games (debates), which typically include up to 100 students and last for 3-5 hours: DEO consultants also offer visits to facilitate debate. In Estonia, an educational simulation game European Parliament is organised in Estonian schools as a collaboration between the European Parliament Office in Estonia and Targa Töö Ühing NGO.

Such examples show how the EU can be a curriculum focus across the formal teaching, and to the extra-curricular levels.

At the teacher and school levels the role of EU mobility programmes and prizes has clearly generated activity and innovation in the teaching and learning of EU issues. European Parliament Ambassador Schools, eTwinning, the Jean Monnet prizes, the Jan Amos Comenius prizes, the DG EAC Digital Hackathon, and others are clear examples of how the EU can use its reputational leverage to incentivise teachers and learners to participate in activities that focus on EU issues.

There are some specific gaps that could be addressed in the future.

The first gap is the lack of consistent sharing of the tangible outputs of prizes and activities in a way that provides a 'one-stop-shop' resource for teachers. The successful initiative of DG EAC in the area of adult learning, with the EPALE<sup>428</sup> platform, shows how a community of practice can be supported and developed across the EU.

The second gap has emerged where the clearer articulation of EU issues at lower school (especially primary) levels is as widely reflected at upper schools and VET. There are strong examples of the EU dimension. For example, in Bulgaria curricula across 7-11 grades, for many upper schools the diversity of subjects and subject specialisation makes it difficult to be specific about EU issues of relevance.

In Malta, the National Curriculum Framework for primary education highlights the need for children to experience their cultural and natural heritage in order to develop intercultural competences, particularly from a Mediterranean and European dimension. It encourages the participation of teachers and children in twinning and mobility projects in the EU.

These are many examples of curriculum and in-subject linkage to EU issues, and the country profiles show a wide range of focus; it is less that there is not enough good practice, but more a challenge of 'discovery' and sharing of such good practice both within countries, and across borders. To further support the wider and deeper embedding of EU issues in teaching and learning practice, new Commission objectives do provide an over-arching set of issues that can be developed through the OMC, resources, and competitions.

There is much less evidence of EU issues in VET (with some reference, for example, in the Bulgaria VET curricula), and it is welcome that the enhanced Jean Monnet programme will have a specific VET component. However, actions such as the European Solidarity Corps have relevance to this sector, but as yet there is limited evidence of structured curricula themes and materials.

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<sup>428</sup> <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en>

A third gap exists in the need for the professional development of teachers and education leaders in bringing EU issues into their practice and their institutions. While the country profiles show extensive activities, there is still a long way to go before EU issues are systemically taught and learned across the education levels. Teachers and leaders need to be incentivised, supported (by training and also by well-designed and updated resources that can be easily re-purposed into their practice), and acknowledged (through certification such as digital badges and micro-credits, or through competitions and awards). The extension of the Jean Monnet programme is a positive development.

Gaps can be filled by opportunities, and since the 2012 survey the digital education landscape has developed dramatically, and they have been extensively addressed by Commission Communications. The promotion of innovative digital teaching and learning methods, the ET 2020 Working Groups, the diverse use of social media, the ability to construct communities of practice online through effective communication tools, and the role of European Schoolnet in working through Ministries of Education to build teacher resources and training, all have contributed to addressing the gaps such as those identified in the 2012 Survey and the 2017 Eurydice report.

## Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the information gathered and are presented here for consideration by the European Commission. They respect the principle of subsidiarity in education, and while the country profiles also contain a wealth of suggestions for improvement and priorities for the national context, these are included in the country sections as indicative advice from the country experts.

The following recommendations focus on the actions that could occur at the EU level, and they are grouped into the following areas:

- Curriculum development.
- Materials and resources.
- Teacher education and training.
- Training of school principals.
- Networking and cooperation.
- Support or funding activities and programmes.
- Research, evaluation and impact analysis.
- Publicity/dissemination activities.

In all the areas mentioned below, particular attention should be paid to accessibility in terms of geography and locality (e.g. small and remote regions), social background (e.g. in relation to disadvantages) and diversity (e.g. in relation to those involved in formal and informal education). In addition, special attention should be paid to reaching out to minorities and migrants - to increase their understanding, awareness, and sense of belonging to the EU.

Curriculum development:

- Emphasise the **EU contribution** to national decision-making processes in the educational context and in particular to curriculum development.
- Particular attention should be paid to involving and supporting institutions engaged in and responsible for **curricula development in vocational education. Awareness raising** is still necessary, especially in this area.

- Curricula should clearly **distinguish** between **learning about the EU** (law, civil rights charters, institutions, regulations) and **learning for the EU** (including encouragement of and skill building in civic virtues such as tolerance, openness for new ideas, sense of justice and equity - in short, civic education for democratic citizenship).

Learning methods, materials, and resources:

- Provide a clear **multi-lingual platform** of teaching and learning resources, built by all stakeholders and not just teachers. This needs to be updated regularly (including exercises, quizzes, worksheets, and examples of lessons easy for teachers to use).
- Support the development of content knowledge on topics related to Europe and the European Union for learning for the EU young audiences, with a **clear progression from pre-school to adult learning**. Supporting material should also be constructed for teachers in order to use the cross-curricular approach efficiently.
- Make more use of **social media, games, simulations**, and online tools to promote Europe in youngsters. For example, the well elaborated simulations of EU meetings and decision-making offered by EU institutions should be better used. Virtual tools could be used to ensure simultaneous participation by young people living in different countries and virtual and interactive visits to the EU institutions could be more frequently offered.
- Provide **problem-related teaching and learning** that enhances critical awareness, through active and context-based activities which highlight real contexts of European citizenship, rather than prescriptive factual material.
- Support the **organisation of international activities** (remote and in person) for students. Direct exposure and experience of Europe and European structures has a significant impact on learning.

Teacher education and training

- **Support mainstreaming the EU dimension in initial teacher education programmes** (for example, by introducing a 'European education module' in teacher training; by creating conditions for students in teacher training or for teachers as CPD to participate in job shadowing – in foreign institutions (other form of teaching processes). Enhance (initial and further) **teacher training opportunities** in EU-related themes at the grassroots levels. Supporting teacher's professional networks and their sustainability should receive more attention. Here we recommend linking with European Schoolnet in the context of both teacher professional development, and in building co-created and multi-lingual curriculum resources.
- Develop a modular **micro-credential** for training teachers in compulsory education and upper secondary education as part of an outreach strategy.
- Introduction of a special **Jean Monnet Chair dedicated to teacher training** – providing training at different levels and having as their PhD students-teachers in various subjects.
- Provide **European scholarships for students in teacher training**, such as *European Teacher Doctoral Schemes* providing scholarships for best teachers and PhD students, or a period of moderate support for research and implementation of good practices in schools.

#### Training of school principals

- **Strengthen the awareness** of the school principals and members of the educational management and **provide appropriate training** for them. They are the ones who have a significant influence on the school climate and the activities of the school. They can encourage committed teachers and motivate other teachers to become more involved in EU-related activities.

#### Networking and cooperation

- Continue with **networking and knowledge sharing** opportunities via the OMC. Support the organisation of peer learning activities, for example the organisation of examples of good practices which enable the sharing of successful approaches to teaching and learning about Europe.
- Prioritise institutions which have demonstrated quality as well as their ability to act as **multipliers**. More experienced and active institutions could also act as 'buddies' to less experienced ones in their national context.
- Support **collaboration and networking between schools and NGOs and other institutions and organisations** to develop and deliver relevant educational programmes and school projects based on a combination of formal and non-formal learning (including extra-curricular activities).

#### Publicity/dissemination activities

- Ensure **consistent publicity** of all programmes at the EU level that focus on the core issues of Jean Monnet.
- Make achievements, good practices, and experiences more **visible** to facilitate the exploitation of results.

#### Research, evaluation, and impact analysis

- Undertake European **comparative analysis to assess drivers and barriers** to a European dimension in education across sub-sectors, at system and institutional level; longitudinal study of mobility projects to gain insights into uptake, diffusion, barriers, and incentives to scaling.
- **Evaluate impact** of various activities (such as participation in European projects) as well as their **sustainability** to identify further needs and priorities.
- Support schools to **self-assess** their activities and achievements related to the EU dimension in teaching and learning.



