

# Teachers' guide to Europe at Work

The purpose of Europe Alive is to make the EU curriculum accessible and relatable for the students. We want to open a door that is so wide and inviting that most students will find the EU understandable. But we want to go further yet: The EU should be something that students can relate to – not just something they need to learn.

Europe Alive is especially relevant for the Social Sciences at the secondary school level, but may also be relevant at other levels.

The teaching course is divided into three parts

In **part one**, 'Lawmaking in the EU', the basic questions and concepts are introduced, all adding to the understanding of the EU lawmaking process as well as the current rules on the rights of labour migrants. The basis for this part of the teaching package is formed by two four-sided factsheets which can be downloaded as pdf's.

In **part two** and at the centre of Europe Alive is the educational role playing game Europe at Work, where students are tasked with reaching a compromise on a directive. The directive is a simplified version of the EU rules on the free movement of labour. Europe at Work is a digital simulation of an EU negotiation where EU member states, the European Parliament, lobbyists, and media all act to influence the rules for EU citizens who work in another country. All students receive a role in the negotiations and in this way get an impression of the dilemmas and conflicts that can arise in the EU cooperation.

The teachers act as advisory capacities bringing their general knowledge, but are not expected to watch over all student activity..

**Part three** is a final phase spent reflecting on the challenges the students have faced during the game. Here, the students can discuss central themes from the game and re-activate concepts from part one. It is also where the students will explore the difference on one hand between EU-regulation and national legislation, and on the other hand the difference between EU-regulation and traditional intergovernmental cooperation

We recommend that parts 1 and 3 are made parts of the regular classes. As an alternative, they can also take the form of homework and/or as written assignments.

**Have fun!**

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## Part 1 – Lawmaking in the EU

Up to four lessons

**Resources:** Factsheets and suggestions for tasks and further reading.

Teaching in part one can be based on the two factsheets. The purpose of part 1 is to give a

basic understanding of the EU legislative process using the example of labour migrants. The lessons of part 1 can take place by having the students go through one or both the factsheets which deal with, respectively, the legislative process and the freedom of movement rules. In the guides for each of the two sheets, you will find assignment suggestions and relevant points of discussion

## Factsheet 1

**Factsheet 1**, 'Making Laws in the EU', deals with the efficiency and legitimacy of the decision-making process and its implementation. Three central institutions – the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of Ministers – are introduced and given their places in the lawmaking process, which is also described.

The decision-making mechanisms involved in the qualified majority are explained. We suggest that the students prepare themselves by using the two work sheets dealing with the EU legislative process as well as the current rules on the rights of labour migrants.

Factsheet 1 can be used in the following way:

- Ask the students to read the Factsheet before class.
- Let them watch the video below to repeat the basics
- Go over the three institutions of the legislative procedure and a proposal's journey through this procedure, for instance by following the progress of a specific legal act by using the diagram.

### [Video made by the European Parliament – How it works: European laws](#)

We recommend discussing the following questions/topics:

- Why do member states accept joint EU legislation instead of negotiating "ordinary" bilateral agreements?
- The principle of supremacy, the EU Court and the Commission's means of monitoring member states as important examples of how EU legislation becomes effective.
- What is democratic legitimacy? What does it mean in general, and what does it mean in the context of the EU?

## Factsheet 2

The text about the freedom of movement of the labour force is an example of EU legislation. It describes one of the most important freedoms of the EU which millions of people use, and which contributes to the Single Market, and the economy of the EU. At the same time, the principle of freedom of movement opens up for a

number of conflicts of interest about immigration and emigration, competition over jobs, and discrimination of various kinds. Expressions like 'social dumping' and 'welfare tourism', which are often used in the political debate, are introduced and explained in the factsheet.

First, it is specified that the rights apply for workers (while other categories of people in many ways have other rights). Second, the text mentions the areas, where the rules apply. Third, it is explained that the rights concern treatment equal to the host country's citizens on these areas - not material rights. As these are statutory rights, they may however be asserted in a court of justice..

Ask the students to read Factsheet 2 before class, then choose one of these directions:

1. Start by asking: Why is this kind of legislation necessary? What reasons (economic, business, immigration) can there be to afford other rights to workers than e.g. pensioners?

2. Ask the students to list those, who have an interest in this legislation besides the migrating workers. Discuss which interests are at stake. E.g. the host country's workers and consumers, authorities who have to manage immigration/emigration, the countries/areas that many emigrate from, trade unions, employers ...

3. Let the students work through these tasks either in class or as a home assignment:

**Assignment 1:** Find a job in Europe. The purpose of this task is to give the students a concrete idea about how to investigate job opportunities in the EU/EEA area. This is done through the site for the common agency on the area, Eures, which helps citizens and companies make the most of their rights.

**Assignment 2:** Residence as a worker in other EU countries. The purpose of this task is to investigate workers' rights regarding residence through the site 'Your Europe'. Research should take approximately 20 minutes. Do migrant workers have a right to receive child support? The task shows that EU worker rights puts workers from other EU states on a level with the citizens of a member state, and thus is primarily a function of the principle of non-discrimination.

**Assignment 3:** Equal rights with whom? Which rights does a Swedish employee in Spain have vs. a Spanish employee in Sweden?

The answer to Assignment 3 is that the Swedish nurse in Spain is not entitled to child support due to the limit on income, which is on about half of the nurse's salary, while the Spanish nurse in Sweden is on the other hand entitled to child support since there is not income limit in Sweden.

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## Part 2 – Europe at Work

**Don't forget to remind the students to bring a tablet or computer for the game!**

In Europe at Work, the European Parliament, the Commission, and the member states in the Council of Ministers try to adopt a directive regarding the rules for workers, who work in another EU-country. The media cover the negotiations and frame those who sell out or manipulate. During the game, a full-blown crisis occurs, so there is no guarantee that the directive will be passed in the end.

The game universe reflects EU institutions and the fundamental principles of the legislative procedure. The students gradually oversee the process and the dynamic between the institutions – as well as some underlying conflicts.

The Commission and the Labour Market Committee are only slightly simplified. The other actors are fictitious in order to exemplify typical interests and problems in the labour market legislation.

The member states have a lot at stake, but their interests vary a lot. Each has its own traditions, economic problems, and national particularities. The party groups in the Parliament struggle over ideology and ally with the game's lobbyists. Most negotiation parties do believe that common rules are necessary. Therefore, they need to find a majority in the Parliament and a qualified majority in the Council in order to adopt a directive

The game runs in three rounds. Each round begins with the Commission sending out a new draft of the directive and thereby restarting the negotiations.

The students play in teams. Every student has a special job function in their team. Many jobs are equivalent to jobs in other teams, even if they are

called different things. There is always a political leader (minister, commissioner, spokesperson) and always leading officials (chief of staffs, chief secretaries). Many have specialised advisory tasks: they must either understand the contents of the directive or the situation of their countries, the other negotiation parties or the media interplay, and they need to make sure that their team benefits from their knowledge.

The game is guided by the digital platform which opens an individual workstation for each student. The platform tells the students where to go and it helps them along the way. At the beginning of the day each student is assigned a job. Tasks and explanations appear on the screen. It is important that the students pay attention to the screen and look for answers to their questions there.

Two key terms in Europe at Work are **Priorities** and **InfluencePoints**. Priorities determine what a team needs to achieve in the negotiations. They correspond to particular articles in the directive that is negotiated. The directive articles reflect important concerns – e.g. maximum economic growth, protection against social dumping, minimal EU regulation. Each team needs to consider at what level they want the rules on each article to be settled. InfluencePoints (IP) reflect that the teams have more means of power besides votes to get their way in the negotiations. Every team has a pool of IP from the start that they can trade with and transfer to other teams. They can also place IP behind a Priority on the platform to mark that they will work to have it increased in the next draft from the Commission. If they succeed, they get an IP-bonus. The team that increases their IP the most in relation to the starting point wins the game. The Media Houses get IP when their readers respond positively to their articles on the platform.

### The teacher's role in Europe at Work

The computer does most of the work with organising the students' academic and playful activities, but involvement from the teachers is crucial if they are to get the highest learning outcome. An important task is to introduce the students to the game in the morning. The teachers will receive a PowerPoint a few days before the game, which guides to a short and focused introduction. The most important role for the teacher is to support and motivate the students during the game. Some students thrive naturally in a roleplay while others can be a little

intimidated by the unknown universe and tasks. Teacher support is also needed in organising the big meetings in e.g. the Council of Ministers.

The game provider invites teachers to an online crash course before the game, where you'll get a clearer idea of the game day as well as a chance to ask questions.

The game day begins with a briefing from the gamemaster to all teachers, which takes place 30 minutes before the game start for students.

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## Part 3 – Classroom post-processing

### 1 – 3 lessons

Resources: Worksheets

The third and perhaps most important part of the package is post-processing in the classroom. Here, the point is to get the students to recall challenges they met in the game and reflect on them – in light of the terms they learnt in Part 1.

**Part 3 – Classroom post-processing** contains suggestions for assignments that can be part of or make up a lesson. The assignments aim to connect themes and events from the game Europe at Work to the real-world EU and to social science terms. The worksheets can be downloaded as a pdf.

We have developed 6 tasks of different lengths and work-forms which rehearse different themes of Europe Alive. Here, you receive the necessary information to facilitate the tasks. The students are instructed by the worksheet that belongs to each task.

#### Task 1: Realistic – unrealistic. 45 minutes

**Learning goal:** The students recall their experiences in Europe at Work and discuss how much they resemble real-world EU.

**Type of work:** Groups of 2-4 students assess the realism of elements of the game and place them on a scale from the least to the most realistic. You can add more elements to expand the task. Finish with a shared recollection that can take

place with the students discussing how to place the elements on a shared scale, drawn on the blackboard.

**Learning process:** Comparing background knowledge about the EU and experiences from the game along with critical reflection about the game's fictitious, yet real- world-like elements.

**Materials:** Sheet 1 Realistic – Unrealistic

#### Task 2: Take one out. 30 minutes

**Learning goal:** The students get a clearer idea about the function of the Commission, Parliament, Council, media and lobbyists of the EU legislation process.

**Type of work:** The students are divided into five groups; each assigned a task-sheet. The groups have to come up with arguments to simplify the process. After approximately 15 minutes the arguments are presented in the classroom and challenged by the others.

**Learning process:** The students rehearse main elements of the EU institutions and consider the rationale behind the design of the legislation process.

**Materials:** Sheet 2 Take one out

**Task 3: When the majority becomes qualified. 20 minutes**

**Learning goal:** The students rehearse the rule about a qualified majority and gain an understanding of what this type of majority means for the form of negotiations and results in the Council.

**Type of work:** The students are divided into groups of 2-4. Distribute the material to the groups and consider a shared sum-up after 20 minutes.

**Learning process:** Recalling situations in the game and shared reflection over them.

**Materials:** Sheet 3 When the majority becomes qualified

**Task 4: When are European laws best? 45 minutes**

**Learning goal:** To sharpen the students' understanding of how centralisation in the EU can be reasoned with societal interests versus the interests of specific industries or societal groups.

**Type of work:** Groups of 4 -6 students develop a SWOT-analysis. They fill out the fields in the figure and end up with a recommendation of whether the rules about social dumping should be settled on a national or European level. On every sheet an actor is mentioned who is the starting point of the discussion, e.g. a truckdriver from Lithuania or the owner of a French vineyard. After approximately 25 minutes the recommendations are presented. Round off by asking the class what the consequence would be if the rules about e.g. social dumping are very different.

**Learning process:** Practising apolitical analytical tools like SWOT. Presentation and putting conclusions into perspective.

**Materials:** Sheet 4 When are European laws best?

**Task 5: Rights and obligations in international cooperation. 20 minutes**

**Learning goal:** Understanding advantages and disadvantages with less obligating forms of international cooperation versus the EU-method.

**Type of work:** Groups of 2-4 students find examples of advantages and disadvantages with more or less obligating international cooperation.

**Learning process:** The students recall international problems that are solved in different ways in the current institutional settings.

**Materials:** Sheet 5 Rights and obligations in international cooperation.

**Task 6: The minister and the union representative. Homework**

**Learning goal:** The students work with disadvantages and benefits on shared EU-regulation of the free movement of the workforce.

**Type of work:** The students write a brief as a starting point of a speech. You can let some of the students give their speech in the class.

**Learning process:** Repetition of main points in Europe Alive.

**Materials:** Sheet 6 The Minister and the union representative.