

MAKE EUROPE
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HOW DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION WORK?



02

BASIC VERSION

Educational Setting	Classroom (with or without digital tools)
Reference Chapter	Chapter II - HOW DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION WORK? (pp. 14-25)
Educational Objective	To show pupils how the EU functions.
Educational Outcomes	<p>After this lesson, pupils should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and differentiate European institutions • Understand the interaction between the European institutions among each other and with national institutions and can explain it in their own words to others.
Key concepts and terms	European Institutions: Commission, Parliament, European Council, Council of the European Union, Court of Justice
Duration	30-40 minutes
Needed materials	Flipcharts, Markers and pencils (for the online version one can use digital white board applications)
Resources	The infographics and text summaries that explain the different institutions of the European Union (EU & ME – Chapter II, pg. 14-25)

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

WITHOUT DIGITAL TOOLS

Introduction of the topic, lesson objectives and structure - 5 minutes

Activity - 20 minutes

After introducing the lesson topic, the teacher splits the group into five groups, which each cover one of the following topics:

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- European Council
- Council of the European Union
- European Court of Justice

Each group is given access to the relevant part in the EU & ME publication Chapter II as well as the MEGA worksheets, to read up the relevant parts and discuss them among each other. The groups are then tasked with designing a presentation to be held for the others.

Relevant questions for these presentations should be:

What are the key competences of this institution? How is this institution being appointed? How does it interact with the other institutions? What are similar national institutions that have comparable functions and how does the EU version differ?

The groups have about 15 minutes to work on their presentations before they are tasked with presenting them to the others. For this presentation, they can make use of tools like a flipchart or the blackboard, depending on what is available.

Conclusion - 5-10 minutes

After the presentations are over, people are free to ask questions or comment on the content that was presented. Additionally, if not raised by the pupils, the question can be raised as to why there are differences in objectives, interests, activities and opinions between the national and European institutions.

WORKSHEET : EUROPEAN COMMISSION

LOCATED IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM. WEBSITE: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/>

What is the European Commission?

The European Commission forms something like the “government” of the European Union. It is made up of the President of the Commission and one Commissioner per member state. Every Commissioner has a specific agenda for which they are responsible like national ministers. The Commission is responsible for overseeing the executive bureaucracy of the Union and initiating the legislative process.

The European Commission also is responsible for overseeing that the member states properly implement EU law and keep to the treaties. As the guardian of the treaties, it is the duty of the Commission to warn member states who are violating the treaties, and sue them before the Court of Justice of the European Union if they stay in violation.

What are the key competences of the European Commission?

How is this institution appointed?

How does it interact with other institutions?

WORKSHEET : EUROPEAN COUNCIL

LOCATED IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM. WEBSITE: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

What is the European Council?

The European Council represents the different member states of the European Union and gathers at least twice every six months.

The Council acts as somewhat of a collective presidency to the EU and is responsible for several functions similar to national heads of state, such as nominating the commission. Their main purpose however lies in guiding the direction of EU policy especially in areas where the member states have very strong interests such as foreign and security policy.

To this end, the European Council has no ability to propose laws, but if it finds the necessity for a law, it can request the Commission to look into and draft a law. The European Council also is responsible to negotiate on behalf of their member states on any new treaties or amendments to existing ones.

What are the key competences of the European Council ?

How is this institution appointed?

How does it interact with other institutions?

What is the difference between the European Council and the Council of the European Union?

WORKSHEET : COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

LOCATED IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM. WEBSITE: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

What is the Council of the European Union?

The Council of the European Union (or informally Council of Ministers) typically convenes to discuss common policy in an area among the member states. The Council has 10 different configurations, depending on the area.

The Council of Ministers together with the European Parliament is required to approve of bills proposed by the European Commission for them to enter law. Thus, the Council can act as a veto player in this regard.

During votes, the Council typically votes in qualified majority, meaning that for a vote to pass, not just does it need 55% of countries on its side, but also these countries need to represent at least 65% of the population. This is a check on the fact that countries in the Council are represented by one seat, regardless of size.

What are the key competences of the the Council of the European Union ?

How is this institution appointed?

How does it interact with other institutions?

What is the difference between the European Council and the Council of the European Union?

WORKSHEET : EUROPEAN COURT OF JUSTICE

LOCATED IN LUXEMBOURG CITY, LUXEMBOURG, WEBSITE: <https://curia.europa.eu>

What is the European Court of Justice?

The Court of Justice of the European Union, as it is known, is basically the supreme court of the European Union, responsible for ruling on the treaties and cases related to EU law. Typically, cases typically are related to violations of the treaties or failure to comply with EU legislature. In case of an indictment, the Court can order member states to pay fines.

European law has been ruled to be above national law. However, this is implemented typically by national laws adapting to accommodate EU laws. There have been several instances where there were clashes between national and European law despite this, causing conflict between a member state and the European Union.

What are the key competences of the European Court of Justice ?

How is this institution appointed?

How does it interact with other institutions?

WORKSHEET : EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

LOCATED IN STRASBOURG, FRANCE & BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, WEBSITE:
<https://europarl.europa.eu>

What is the European Parliament?

The European Parliament has been created historically as an institution to represent the European citizens. The Parliament has evolved over time from its original form in 1952 as the Common Assembly of being just consultative MPs of national parliaments to a much stronger institution, which today has its own elected members and much farther-reaching powers.

The Parliament, unlike national parliaments is not provided with legal initiative, meaning it is not able to initiate a bill, a right that solely rests with the Commission. The European Parliament however has means to request a bill from the Commission and also is still involved in the regular legislative process as one of the two institutions required to approve a bill for it to enter into law (the other being the Council of the European Union). The European Parliament also has to approve of candidates for the European Commission nominated by the European Council.

The Parliament has quite broad powers compared to its historical predecessor. However, in contrast to national parliaments, the European Parliament still has far less power compared to the European executive, which has led to debates on democratic legitimacy and how to improve it, but also is to a good part due to the special nature of the EU as a supranational organisation, not a federal state.

What are the key competences of the European Parliament ?

How is this institution appointed?

How does it interact with other institutions?

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

Note: The lesson can take place in the same way as in the analogue implementation. The only difference is the usage of different, in this case, digital tools. For the digital implementation the teacher can use: Zoom and its Breakout rooms, for the online research they can refer to Google Search or go directly to the European Union Learning Corner. Zoom allows for presentation mode, therefore, the participants can implement their presentations via PowerPoint.

Introduction of the topic, lesson objectives and structure - 5 minutes

Activity - 20 minutes

After introducing the lesson topic, the teacher splits the group into five groups, which each cover one of the following topics:

- European Commission
- European Parliament
- European Council
- Council of the European Union
- European Court of Justice

Each group is given access to the relevant part in the EU & ME publication Chapter II as well as the MEGA worksheets, to read up the relevant parts and discuss them among each other. The groups are then tasked with designing a presentation to be held for the others.

Relevant questions for these presentations should be:

What are the key competences of this institution? How is this institution being appointed? How does it interact with the other institutions? What are similar national institutions that have comparable functions and how does the EU version differ?

The groups have about 15 minutes to work on their presentations before they are tasked with presenting them to the others. For this presentation, they can make use of tools like a flipchart or the blackboard, depending on what is available.

Conclusion - 5-10 minutes

After the presentations are over, people are free to ask questions or comment on the content that was presented. Additionally, if not raised by the pupils, the question can be raised as to why there are differences in objectives, interests, activities and opinions between the national and European institutions.

02

ADVANCED VERSION

Educational Setting	Classroom (with or without digital tools)
Reference Chapter	Chapter II - HOW DOES THE EUROPEAN UNION WORK? (pp. 14-25)
Educational Objective	To present pupils how the EU functions.
Educational Outcomes	<p>After this lesson pupils should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name and differentiate European institutions and treaties • Understand the interaction between the European institutions among each other and with national institutions and can explain it in their own words to others • List and understand the basics of European legislation • Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the Single Market • Debate about the future development of the European Union • Understand the functioning of elections to the European Parliament and participate in them.
Key concepts and terms	European Institutions: Commission, Parliament, European Council, Council of the European Union, Court of Justice, European Central Bank, European law, EU budget, European elections
Duration	60 minutes
Needed materials	Flipcharts, Markers and pencils (for the online version one can use digital white board applications)
Resources	The infographics and text summaries that explain the different institutions of the European Union (EU & ME – Chapter II)

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

WITHOUT DIGITAL TOOLS

Introduction of the topic, lesson objectives and structure - 5 minutes

Activity - 30-40 minutes

After introducing the lesson topic, the teacher splits the group into four groups, which each cover one of the following topics:

- European Main Institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, European Council, Council of the European Union, Court of Justice)
- How is European Law made? Who decides on laws? Who makes the final decision?
- European Elections, how can you participate in elections in your own country?
- European budget and European Central Bank, how is the European budget decided? What are budget priorities?

Each group is given access to the relevant part in the EU & ME publication Chapter II, to read up the relevant parts and discuss them with each other. The groups are then tasked with designing a presentation to be held for the others. Groups can look at how their area compares to national processes of similar kind and try to highlight differences. If they cannot find too many, this question can also be discussed in the plenum.

The groups have about 30 minutes to work on their presentations before they are tasked with presenting them to the others. For this presentation, they can make use of tools like a flipchart or the blackboard, depending on what is available.

Conclusion - 5-10 minutes

After the presentations are over, people are free to ask questions or comment on the content that was presented.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

Note: The lesson can take place in the same way as in the analogue implementation. The only difference is the usage of different, in this case, digital tools. For the digital implementation the teacher can use: [Zoom and its Breakout rooms](#), for the online research they can refer to Google Search or go directly to the [European Union Learning Corner](#). Zoom allows for presentation mode, therefore, the participants can implement their presentations via PowerPoint.

Introduction of the topic, lesson objectives and structure - 5 minutes

Activity - 30-40 minutes

After introducing the lesson topic, the teacher splits the group into four groups, which each cover one of the following topics:

- European Main Institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, European Council, Council of the European Union, Court of Justice)
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The groups have about 30 minutes to work on their presentations before they are tasked with presenting them to the others. For this presentation, they can make use of tools like a flipchart or the blackboard, depending on what is available.

Conclusion - 5-10 minutes

After the presentations are over, people are free to ask questions or comment on the content that was presented.



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PICK&TEACH: LESSON PLANS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

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