



INFOPACK

EUNITE! EU Citizens Unite and Promote the European Project



Co-funded by
the European Union

What is the project EUNITE! EU Citizens Unite and Promote the European Project?

The EUNITE project aims to promote, encourage and support the European civil society democratic and civic participation at local, national and transnational level in Italy, France, Croatia, Belgium and Greece. By promoting an exchange between EU citizens, and gathering them to activities linked to EU policies, the project will stimulate reflections and debates among participants through the implementation of a series of workshops, debates and encounters. Through its activities, the project will bring citizens closer to EU institutions, enhancing their knowledge about EU opportunities and policies, and making citizens responsible for their active participation in European democratic political life.

About EUNITE workshops and its infopack on “EU institutions and opportunities it offers to its citizens”

This short guidance is a small introductory overview on the history of the EU, its institutions and the opportunities the EU offers to its citizens. It also offers a practical guide on the events carried out for trainers and educators inspired by EUNITE to deliver workshops on these themes within their own training initiatives. New events and meetings on specific topics will be organized from November 2023 to October 2024.

The EUNITE! workshops, organized in the partner countries from January 2023 until October 2024, aim to empower citizens and support them in developing their civic knowledge, in particular on the role of the European institutions, and on the importance of the European Parliament elections. The workshops aim to stimulate the civic skills of the participants, their critical thinking, knowledge about the role of media and information, so that citizens can be aware and have the ability to critically analyze complex political issues.

The first stage of these training courses included an introduction to the European institutions, the history of the EU from its foundation to nowadays, and the opportunities it offers to its citizens aged 18 and over.

While a number of different methods have been applied, the EUNITE! approach can be described as “democracy experience at small scale”, which is reflected in the principles of participation, participant-centeredness and self-determination.

Furthermore, the democratic and civic competences can best have acquired through “learning by doing”, i.e. by actively experiencing first-hand democratic processes such as dialogue, communicative exchange and opinion-building, debating and finding compromises in a group with dissenting opinions.



THE EUROPEAN UNION

Timeline

1950

The 1950 **Schuman Declaration** is the first step in the European integration process. Issued by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman on May 9, 1950, the Declaration proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), whose members would share the production of these two resources. Since then, May 9 is celebrated every year in all EU countries as Europe Day.

1951

Thanks to Treaty of Paris, signed by six countries, the **ECSC** is born, the European Coal and Steel Community.

1957

After the Treaty of Rome, the **EEC**, the European Economic Community, and the **EURATOM**, an agreement on the atomic energy, are instituted by Italy, Belgium, Germany, France, Luxemburg and Netherlands.

1993

Maastricht Treaty. The European community changes its name in order to enforce and get closer the European people. From this moment its name will be European Union.

1995

Schengen Agreement. European citizens now can move freely through different countries.

2000

Treaty of Nizza. Solemn proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, main expression of principles of democracy and rule of law in which European Union is founded.

2004

On May 1st, **Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus** join the European Union.

2013

Croatia joins the European Union.

1. European numbers

Here's some number for figuring the EU's impact to the world and to our lives.

- An extension of 4 million km²
- 447,7 million of habitants
- More than 70 years of peace between the member countries
- 341 million of people use euros everyday for their purchases, in 20 countries.
- Around the 15% of world trades in goods
- 54,51% of development assistance to countries in difficulty provided in 2020 by the EU. It is the first donor in the world.
- 120 million of people receiving every year humanitarian funding from European Union.



2. What does the EU consist of?

The EU is a unique case in the world, is not a federal state nor a simple multilateral agreement nor an alliance between states. It is a political entity build on respect and tolerance of differences and on mutual help, it is a tool with which even a small state can make its voice heard and participate in the world's great challenges.



The European Parliament

The European Parliament is the elected body that represents the citizens of EU member countries, exercises control over EU activities, and produces EU legislation together with the Council. The members of the European parliament are elected by universal suffrage every five years and meets monthly in Strasbourg. The Parliament has a say in the appointment of the President of the European Commission and must also approve the whole team of Commissioners.



The European Council

The European Council is composed of the presidents of all member states, plus the president of the European Commission. It normally meets four times a year, in Brussels, and is responsible for setting EU goals and deciding how to achieve them. It defines the general political guidelines and priorities of the EU, generally by adopting conclusions. It does not intervene in the negotiation or adoption of EU legislation.



The Council of the European Union

The Council of the European Union is the body composed of the ministers of the EU national governments. Each of its meetings is participated by one minister from each member state, the one who is competent depending on the issue to be discussed: agriculture, education, environment, etc. Like the Parliament, the Council's power is legislative, meaning it has to approve EU legislation.



The European Commission

The European Commission has executive power in the EU. To be clear, it is the equivalent of the government of a state, its president is similar to the figure of the prime minister, the commissioners to the ministers of a government. The Commission receives guidelines and decisions from the European Council and proposes legislation that will pass through the two legislative bodies.



Court of Justice of the European Union

The Court of Justice of the European Union is an independent body composed of one judge from each member state and eleven lawyers appointed by agreement among the member states.



The European Central Bank

The ECB is responsible for the monetary policy of the EU and so the euro. It is based in Frankfurt and is headed by a Governing Council. Its function is to keep prices stable and to monitor national banks.



The Court of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors is responsible for monitoring the proper management of the economic budget, therefore the consistency of expenses and income.



The European Ombudsman

This is an office designated by the European Parliament and is responsible for investigating cases of mismanagement in the European institutions and collecting complaints about them.



European Agencies

European agencies number more than 30 and are located throughout the member countries. They serve as the link between the EU and national governments through the specialized expertise they bring together and contribute to the implementation of EU strategies.



3. Participating in Europe

The European Union, before being an agreement between states, is a union of people based on the values of democracy and inclusion. Every European citizen can say his or her opinion and contribute to the improvement of the community! There are many ways to contribute, let's look the two most important of them!

European Elections

Every five years, European citizens are called to renew the European Parliament; this is the largest transnational exercise in democracy in the world. The Parliament then elects President of the European Commission and approves the entire team of commissioners, so our vote is crucial to designing the Europe we want! Every citizen of legal age can vote and run for the European Parliament.

European Citizens' Initiative

This tool available to all citizens is used to propose initiatives, legislative acts or to bring new issues to the attention of European authorities. There is also a dedicated Forum, where you can get information and practical advice on the European citizens' right of initiative and discuss your opportunities.

Take a look at the website www.europa.eu/citizens-initiative-forum

4. Opportunity for mobility and learning

European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps is one of the most important opportunities for young people who want to experience international outreach and help the community in depth. It is funded by the Erasmus + program and allows young people under 30 to get work and volunteer experience in European countries and beyond, from 2 to 12 months. For the period 2021-2027, 270 thousand opportunities will be offered in the three key actions: volunteer projects, solidarity projects and volunteer operations in humanitarian aid. To learn more go to www.youth.europa.eu/solidarity.

Erasmus +

With the Erasmus and Erasmus + programs, the EU allows young people, workers and citizens of all ages to have fantastic experiences, explore new cultures and improve their skills through travel and exchanges with other countries. In particular, Key Action 1 of Erasmus + is dedicated to the areas of adult education, vocational education and training, and school education.

According to the latest official report, in 2021, thanks to Erasmus +, 19 thousand projects were completed, 71 thousand organizations were involved and almost 649 thousand participants were reached in transnational mobility activities, numbers that are expected to increase in the coming years.

These are not just temporary experiences; in fact, it is estimated that as many as 17 million European citizens live or work in another EU country! Find more information at www.erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu.

Not only young people, projects for all ages

Adult education is one of the priority education themes for the 2021-2030 period. The EU aims exactly to support the career development, at all stages, of people of all ages, both through employment opportunities and lifelong learning pathways. In particular, digital skills are identified as crucial for pathways that target adults, so as to bridge the generation gap and increase employment opportunities.

According to EU targets, at least 60 % of adults will participate in annual training and further education pathways by 2030. You can find more info at this site www.education.ec.europa.eu.



Partners



Coordinator

CESIE

Italy

cesie.org



Out of The Box – OTB

Belgium

outofthebox-international.org



Forum Za Slobodu Odgoja-FSO

Croatia

fso.hr

pistes solidaires

Pistes Solidaires

France

www.pistes-solidaires.fr



VIVES University of Applied Sciences

Belgium

www.vives.be/en/vives-international



Regional Development Fund

Greece

pta.gov.gr

eUnite!

EU Citizens Unite and Promote the European Project

eunite4citizens.eu



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

CERV 101081388