



TOOLKIT

Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe

*Tools and methods for
extracurricular settings with
Young Europeans*

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INTRODUCTION

This tool-kit was created as part of the "Visible Past" project between February and April 2025. The project aims to contribute to the promotion of basic democratic values and to the communication of European politics. A special focus is set on the history of democracy and dictatorships in different European countries and common fundamental European values of democracy and human rights. More information about the project "Visible Past" can be found on the webpage <http://visiblepast.eu/>.

How to use the tool-kit

In the first part of the tool-kit you will find some background information on the topic of European citizenship education and different fundamental European values. In the second part of this brochure, we have collected practical educational methods that are suitable for working on different topics of the values mentioned with students and young adults (starting from the age of 16). This "practical part" is divided into 5 modules. Each module lasts about half a day (3 to 4 teaching units) and is dedicated to various topics relevant for understanding and fostering democratic values. The last module is intended as a kind of train-the-trainer module. In this module, young people learn skills to help them run their own training courses or educational events on democracy and civic education. All methods have been tried and tested in real-world practice and can, of course, be adapted to suit your needs.

PART 1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Challenges in educational practices

Do you know who is responsible for the subject of global trade in the European Union? As we write this handout, the position mentioned is particularly relevant because U.S. President Donald Trump has decided on extensive tariffs against most countries in the world. The answer to the question is: It's the EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic from Slovakia. So, be honest: Did you ever hear that name before?

Even we, as professionals who deal full-time with politics and civic education, had to look this info up to be sure. Most public debates in EU countries are still conducted primarily nationally and not collectively at European level. In addition, there are no specific media or media channels (on radio, television or via online formats) that operate in all EU countries, nor are there any popular European media formats, that are primarily dedicated to European-relevant topics.

When we talk about politics and democracy, we usually do so while using a national or regional perspective, although major political challenges can no longer be solved nationally, but on a European or global level only. Many important decisions are nowadays made at the EU level (for example in the area of economic, environmental or migration policy), not (only) by national politicians.

The political mechanisms that lead to these European decisions are usually based on an interplay of national and European politics. In every important decision, the 27 national EU governments play an important role, because all member states have central rights of co-determination or decision-making in European institutions, for example in the regular European Council (= meeting of all EU heads of state and government), the EU Council of Ministers (= meeting and common law-making of ministers of the member states) or by the national parliamentarians of the EU Parliament. Institutional interconnectedness makes European political processes more complex, lengthy and more difficult for many people to understand – and this is particularly challenging for teaching these subjects in different pedagogical settings.

European politics and democracy

Fundamental civic and human rights play a special role in all European political institutions. This also has to do with the fact that the emergence of most institutions is directly related to European history and this history is particularly shaped by the experiences of the authoritarian and totalitarian political systems before and during the Second World War. The teaching of basic democratic values, the value of human rights and the knowledge of European history is an important pillar for the understanding of European politics in general. In the sense of teaching democratic values, a focus should be placed on concretizing complex European decision-making processes and human rights. They may sound abstract at first glance, but connecting the effects of European politics on one's own everyday life will help. For example, many national laws are based on EU directives or EU regulations, such as the legal protection against discrimination in the workplace or the specific design of other national laws. In the best case, European institutions can therefore also offer us better protection against unequal treatment and they can be a motor for the continuous progress of fundamental rights and civic freedoms.

Tips for practice

Dealing with European politics in and out of classrooms is therefore highly complex and highly important in terms of understanding democratic principles at the same time. In our experience, the following didactic tips have proven to be helpful in practice:

- Explain the emergence of European Institutions in the context of Post-World War II peacekeeping
- Reflect European policy on the basis of concrete, also nationally relevant examples
- Keep the focus away from the explanation of complex institutional European frameworks and put the spotlight on concrete results of EU policy for different people or social groups
- Openly address the shortcomings of European decision-making mechanisms and allow criticism of European political decisions.
- Promote understanding of the complexity of political decisions and their impact of these politics on different countries and different social groups
- Strengthen the idea that European political decisions are usually not made without, but always in cooperation with, the different national governments in the EU-member-states
- Present politics and political institutions as something "human" or as something man-made and thus also as something that can and must change constantly due to different social developments

Sources:

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<https://www.bpb.de/kurz-knapp/lexika/das-europalexikon/177197/politische-bildung-und-europa/>

PART 2: METHOD AND TOOLS FOR PRACTICE

MODULE 1: POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY

In this module, we have collected a number of methods and educational suggestions for the extracurricular sector, which deal with various aspects of politics and democracy.

Possible **learning objectives** of this module are:

- Knowledge of the importance of political decisions for your everyday life
- Basic understanding of the term democracy
- Recognizing the connection between democracy and human rights and minority rights
- Reflection on the importance of human rights and minority rights for your everyday life on the basis of concrete examples
- Reflecting different aspects of politics, democracy and participation

METHOD "WHAT IS APOLITICAL?"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Knowledge of the importance of political decisions for your everyday life

- Time required: 30 to 40 minutes

- Material: Flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard or whiteboard), moderation cards.

- Instructions (step by step):

- 1) The exercise starts in the plenary (large group). You start it by writing "What is apolitical" on the blackboard or the flipchart.
- 2) The participants are now given the task of brainstorming this question in the plenary session or optionally in small groups. They should search for or name as many things as possible that they think have nothing to do with politics. The things found can be objects (e.g. pen, car, backpack, make-up...) as well as activities (swimming, skiing, listening to music...).
- 3) Now write down all the things found by the participants on the board or the flipchart until you have at least 10 different things written down there.

Tip 1: Perhaps there is already contradiction with some of the terms mentioned by individual participants, who already find cross-connections to politics in the examples mentioned. In this case, ask the participants to save their comments for the next part of the exercise.

- 4) Once the terms have been mentioned by the participants, start the second part of the brainstorming with the following question:

"Are there contradictions regarding the flipchart? Are there things on it, that may have something to do with politics when you look at them closely?"

The participants may now name cross-connections between the things written down on the flipchart and the field of politics. If you find at least 2 cross-connections for one of the terms, you can cross it out. Go on finding connections word by word (term by term).

If the participants have problems finding cross-connections at the beginning, give them tips to bring them on the right track.

Tip 2: This part of the exercise requires some experience on the part of the trainers, so that you can guide the group to the appropriate cross-connections if necessary.

We have collected a number of frequently mentioned terms here. You can practice with these terms in advance. For each of the terms, think in advance about the specific connections to politics and explain them as simply or precisely, so that they are also understandable for your target group:

Work – Sleep – Sports – Party – Smoking – Drink alcohol – Shopping – Food – Drink – Music – Smartphone – Netflix – Family – Friends – School

5) At the end, when you crossed out all or almost all of the terms mentioned, ask the participants why there are so many connections to politics with so many different things and whether anyone can now think of an explanation of the word politics.

Tip 3: A simple explanation of politics can be: "Politics is the way we regulate our coexistence. Because almost everything is regulated politically, we find politics in almost everything. That's why you can say "I'm not interested in politics. But I can't say that politics doesn't affect me."

METHOD "THE ISLAND"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Getting to know politics and different forms of politics (democracy, dictatorship...), decision-making in a group

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: Flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard or whiteboard), worksheet "The island"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) The participants should come together in small groups (3-4 people).

2) Then the following short story will be read out to all small group participants in the plenary:

"It's one day before the summer holidays and you're looking forward to nine weeks of vacation! When you wake up the first day, you find a letter in the mail: You have won a competition and you can therefore go take a two-week free vacation in Hawaii! Full of joy you start packing your things. You are supposed to start with the plane on the same day. So, you get on the plane on the way to Hawaii. Since it is already evening, you all fall asleep to arrive rested on the island. After a few hours of sleep - you are just over the middle of the Atlantic - there is severe turbulence and your plane crashes.

When you wake up, you are lying on the beach of a desert island. Next to you are other people (those from your small group) as well as a few things from the plane. Fortunately, no one is injured. You must survive together now, because you don't know when you might be saved."

3) Now output the "The Island" worksheet to the groups. The small groups have the task of putting together a kind of "island constitution" based on the questions on the worksheet (15-20 minutes time).

4) The groups get to present their “island constitutions” at the end.

5) When all presentations are finished a discussion in the plenary on the basis of the following key questions can take place:

- What does this exercise have to do with politics and democracy?
- Do the tasks and problems on the island also exist in real life? (in real politics)
- Who takes on these tasks in real lives (in real politics)?
- How do we come to decisions in politics and how do we deal with people who do not adhere to the agreed rules?
- What works better or worse in real life (in politics) than on an island and why?

WORKSHEET “THE ISLAND”

Task 1: Your plane has crashed and you land on a desert island. There you are now supposed to survive as a group and think about rules for your life together. Write down these rules and tasks on a piece of paper.

The following rules have to be established:

1. How do we come to common rules?

a) How are decisions made? b) Who makes which decisions?

2. How do we want to live together/what should life on the island look like?

a) What tasks are necessary? b) Who takes on which tasks? c) How is the food used and distributed?

3. What happens if someone does not follow the rules?

Task 2: Apart from you, there are still some things on the island and some other things have also been washed onto the island by the plane. Decide what to do with these things:

Available on the island:

Some fruit trees - A water source on a mountain that is very high - A small forest

Things still usable from the plane:

- A box of Coke (24 pieces) - Three 5-kilo bags of rice (=15 kilos) - Four packs of vegetable seeds - A hardcover bible edition - A CD with classical music

Copyright: This exercise was created according to an idea of the [Austrian Society for Civic Education](#) and was adapted by Sapere Aude

METHOD “DEMOCRACY CHECK”

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Recognizing the characteristics and different aspects of democracy, testing ideals of democracy and the meaning of minority rights on the basis of concrete examples.

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: Flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard or whiteboard), worksheet or reading template "Democracy check"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Announce to the participants that you will soon read out two or three stories on the topic of democracy in the plenary. To get to this topic, you start a short brainstorming in the plenary with the whole group. Write centrally on the board "Democratic is..."

The participants are now asked to name characteristics of an ideal democracy by shouting them out in the plenary session. Write down the characteristics mentioned by the participants.

Tip 1: In any case, make sure that two terms are mentioned in any case: 1. minority protection or human rights and 2. common good (or decisions for the benefit of all). These two terms show important aspects of the concept of democracy and are often forgotten by groups that believe that democracy is above all the rule of the majority.

2) Once the brainstorming is complete, start reading one of the stories from the "Democracy Check" reading template. As soon as you have finished reading the story, the participants are asked to use their thumbs (up, down, or in the middle, intermediate gradations possible) to indicate how democratic the actions of certain people in the story are in one's personal opinions.

3) After each story and after the participants have raised or lowered their thumbs, ask individual people in the group what they think about the story and why they raised or lowered their thumbs.

Tip 2: It is quite normal for the participants to make different assessments of one and the same story and to have different positions here. The stories are also intended to show how difficult it is to come to a political solution sometimes and that often it is not possible to satisfy all needs and demands from all the different groups or people involved.

Tip 3: In none of the cases there is a clear "solution" or answer intended, if the case is clearly democratic or anti-democratic. This decision depends on one's personal understanding of democracy, or on the aspect of democracy that is more important for oneself personally (rule of law, common good, minority rights, majority decisions).

READING TEMPLATE "DEMOCRACY CHECK"

Task: After each of the stories, decide how democratic the actions of certain people were in the story. Thumbs up means very democratic, giving the thumbs down means that you find the procedure totally antidemocratic. Everything in between is also possible.

Story 1: Drug Advisory Service

An advisory center for drug addicts is to be set up near a school in a small town called "Special City". Here, addicts can receive medical and psychological care. Many young people in town do have drug problems. In the entire district, there is still no other facility for young addicts. Advisory centers from the same provider are successful in other cities, and the number of drug addicts there has demonstrably decreased. There are also fewer deaths after drug use. An inquiry among the local neighborhood has shown that the majority of the neighbors are clearly against the advisory center. Therefore, the local council then decides not to set up the advisory center.

Question: How democratic is the decision of the local council?

Possible points of discussion: Dealing with minorities in a city – When is local political participation legitimate? Who is allowed to vote? When do politicians have to make decisions themselves and when can decisions be left directly to the citizens?

Story 2: Homelessness

In a small town called "Special City" housing prices have rapidly increased within the last years. At the same time, the number of homeless people has risen sharply. As a result, a citizens' initiative founded by a private association called "Apartment for All" has been founded. It organizes information events and has recently occupied an empty house that belongs to the city. There the association provides accommodation and food for the homeless people. The association "Apartment for All" is completely financed by donations. The association refuses to pay rent for the occupied house, to the city administration.

Question: How democratic is the behavior of the association "Apartment for All"?

Possible points of discussion: How do you deal with squatting? In which situations is house squatting justified? What role do associations and civil society play in a democracy? When is protest and resistance against laws or the violation of laws allowed?

Story 3: Nuclear power plant

According to local government plans, the first nuclear power plant in the country is to be put into operation in a small town called "Special City". There is massive resistance among the local population and several large demonstrations against the power plant with 1000 of people are organized. But the construction of the power plant begins. Again, there are demonstrations and some demonstrators try to occupy the construction site. While doing so, a female construction worker is injured: She gets hit by a stone thrown by one of the demonstrators. The woman gets seriously injured and is taken to hospital. There she dies.

As a result, the local police, in consultation with the responsible municipal council, prohibits all demonstrations in the immediate vicinity of the power plant until the construction works are finished.

Question: How democratic is the behavior of the municipal council?

Possible points of discussion: How do politicians deal with protests? How is the right to demonstrate structured? When is it okay to ban public demonstrations?

METHOD: BAROMETER "POLITICS, DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Reflecting different aspects of politics, democracy and participation introduction to the topic

- Time required: 30 to 40 minutes

- Material: Adhesive tape, moderation cards, pens, reading template "Opinion barometer"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Stick a long strip of tape on the floor. Now write "0 percent" on one moderation card and "100 percent" on a second one. Now place the labeled cards at one end of each adhesive tape. This is how the "opinion barometer" for this exercise is created.

Tip 1: Make sure that the barometer is long enough so that the participants do not have to hustle for the barometer. If you don't have enough space in the room, you can also do the exercise in the hallway or outdoors.

2) Now explain to the participants that you will read out various statements about politics and democracy to them. Each and every one of the participants should start to move quietly around in the room now and after each round and statement as well.

3) You now read out a statement from the "Opinion Barometer Reading Template" one after the other. The participants are asked to position themselves according to their agreement with the statement on the barometer: If they move to "0 percent" on the barometer, it means they do not agree. If someone stands next to "100 percent", then the person completely agrees with the statement read aloud. However, the participants can also position themselves at any other place on the barometer-strip, depending on their approval.

4) After all participants have found their position on the statements, ask individual participants where they stand and why. At this point, also say that you can change your position during the exercise if you hear about other arguments that make you rethink.

Tip 2: For each of the statements from the template, ask different participants (different positions) on the barometer for their statements. In this way, the group hears different points of view and a discussion can arise.

5) Follow the same procedure with 2-3 different statements from the template.

READING TEMPLATE: BAROMETER "POLITICS, DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION"

Possible statements:

- I have the impression that I can make a real change in society.
- If you don't vote, you don't have to complain.
- Those who are not well informed about politics should not be allowed to vote.
- I am satisfied with the politics in my country.
- I am satisfied with the politics in my country when I compare it with other countries.
- The world is a fairer place today than it used to be before.
- You don't have to abide by laws that are unjust.
- If there were more young politicians, more young people would be interested.
- I can imagine going into politics myself.
- At 16, you're still too young to vote.
- At 14, you are still too young to vote.
- At 85, you're already too old to vote.

MODULE 2: HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY AND DICTATORSHIP

In this module, we have collected a number of methods and teaching suggestions for the school and the extracurricular sector, which deal with various historical aspects of democratic and authoritarian regimes.

Possible **learning objectives** of this module are:

- Fostering basic knowledge of the history of democracy
- Identify distinguishing features between democracy and dictatorships
- Recognizing and naming warning signs of authoritarian developments
- Dealing with authoritarian language

METHOD "MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Fostering basic knowledge about the history of democracy, identifying distinguishing features between democracy and dictatorships

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: Notes, pens, internet access, factsheet "Milestones of Democracy" (Austria)

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Divide the participants into small groups and hand out the factsheet "Milestones of Democracy" (Austria) plus a few blank pieces of paper and pens for every group. The small groups are told to read through the worksheet.

2) Afterwards, the small groups get the following task: They are asked to create "milestones of democracy" for their own country, similar to the factsheet they got. Give the groups enough time (15 to 20 minutes). It is also allowed or desired for the groups to use the smartphone or the Internet.

3) Once all groups are finished, they resent their results or milestones in a plenary session.

4) The exercise can be extended with some of the following reflection questions:

- How will the milestones of democracy in your country proceed What do you think will change for the better in the future?
- Where are there still deficits, what things or developments necessary for democracy have not yet been achieved?
- Is our country more democratic or less democratic today than it used to be 20 to 30 years ago?

Tip 1: Democracy is not a fixed term, but democracies are constantly changing. Whereas in the 1960s or 1970s a country in Europe was considered democratic in which women did not yet have full legal capacity or full suffrage, today this is unthinkable in most countries and would be a sign of strong discrimination.

5) Finally, you can do a short brainstorming session or a mind map with "Characteristics of Democracies" in the plenary.

INFO-SHEET "MILESTONES OF DEMOCRACY IN AUSTRIA"

Factsheet: Milestones of Democracy and Equality (Austria)

- 1897:** Women are allowed to attend certain courses at the universities for the first time.
- 1909:** Men are allowed to vote in Austria, regardless of income (= universal suffrage for men)
- 1918:** Women are allowed to vote in Austria, regardless of income (= universal suffrage for women)
- 1948:** Zenzi Hölzl becomes the first woman in Austria to be elected mayor
- 1970:** Vienna's tram company employ a woman as a driver for the first time.
- 1971:** Introduction of free travel for schoolchildren.
- 1971:** Homosexuality is decriminalized.
- 1978:** Opening of the first Austrian women's shelter. There women find protection from violent men.
- 1989:** Children born outside marriage are given equal rights in inheritance law.
- 1989:** Rape and sexual coercion in marriage or in a cohabitation becomes punishable.
- 1989:** Parents are no longer allowed to use violence against their children.
- 1991:** For the first time, Austria has an independent Ministry of Women's Affairs (Ministry of Women's Affairs) and a Minister of Women's Affairs (Johanna Dohnal).
- 1991:** Men are given the opportunity to take parental leave.
- 1993:** The Equal Treatment Act comes into force: Discrimination in working life on the basis of gender, age, religion or sexual orientation is prohibited.
- 1993:** 300,000 people visit the "Sea of Lights" in Vienna. It was the largest demonstration in Austria at the time and was directed as a protest against a referendum that demanded a stop to immigration and fewer rights for "foreigners".
- 1995:** Austria's accession to the European Union: Austrians are given the freedom to live and work in any other EU country.
- 1995:** Men are allowed to complete training as midwives.
- 2005:** Adoption of the Disability Equality Act: People with disabilities must not be discriminated against in daily life. Barrier-free access to public offices, information and services will be facilitated.
- 2011:** Solution to the "town sign dispute": Installation of 164 bilingual town signs for the Slovenian minority in Carinthia.
- 2019:** Homosexual couples are also allowed to marry.
- 2020:** Brigitte Bierlein (independent) becomes Austria's first female chancellor.
- 2022:** Homosexual people are allowed to donate blood.

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METHOD "STEP BY STEP"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Knowledge of distinguishing features between democracies and dictatorships, recognizing warning signs of authoritarian developments.

- Time required: 30 to 60 minutes

- Material: Cut out floor and reading template "Step by step to a dictatorship", possibly notes and pens.

- Instructions (step by step):

- 1) Start the exercise by declaring in plenary that you now want to start an exercise on the topic of democracy, by reading out a story.
- 2) This story will have a special feature: It will be telling the story of a country that at the beginning is a democracy with functioning institutions, but at the end of history the country has step-by-step "transformed" into a dictatorship. You will read out loud the country's path from democracy to dictatorship with the participants step by step.
- 3) To do so, read out the steps of the state from the reading template "Step by Step to a dictatorship" slowly. The task of the participants is to listen carefully to you. You will also place those single steps to a dictatorship on the floor of the room as soon as you have read them aloud.
- 4) The participants should consider for themselves at what point in story this country is no longer a democracy according to their personal sense of democracy. Once the participants have found the corresponding point on the floor-template for themselves, they should get up and go to the corresponding point (corresponding floor-template).
- 5) If you read out the complete story and placed all of the floor-templates on the ground and everybody found position, ask the participants individually where they stand and why.
- 6) You can now ask the participants to sit down again. Then you can lift the secret, that this was not an invented story, but a real one, namely that of Austria between the 1st and 2nd World War, before Adolf Hitler marched from Germany into Austria and annexed the country to Germany.

Additional Info: Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, who was actually democratically elected at the time, took advantage of a dispute between the elected parties in the Austrian parliament (1933) to carry out a coup d'état and to rule the country authoritarian from then on. The period of his authoritarian rule is also known as "Austrofascism". Dollfuss justifies the necessity of his seizure of power by saying that only a "strong leader" can protect Austria from Hitler's seizure of power. Engelbert Dollfuss dies shortly

after in 1934, only about 1 year after his seizure of power in an assassination attempt by National Socialists, whom he had actually banned like all other parties before.

7) You can now deepen the exercise with the following reflection questions:

- How would an authoritarian take-over of power or the abolition of democracy proceed today?
- What lessons can we learn from this history?
- How have dictatorships developed in your countries or in other countries? What are the similarities or differences?

8) Alternatively, you can continue the exercise here and form small groups. The task of the small groups is to write down the development of another country (e.g. their own country) into an authoritarian system, similar to the land template. At the end, the small groups can present their stories to each other and discuss similar questions as the ones above for the stories of the other countries.

READING TEMPLATE "STEP BY STEP TO A DICTATORSHIP"

Your task: This is the story of a country on the way from democracy to dictatorship. Read the steps on the way to dictatorship carefully. Then decide at what point in the story you would say that the country is no longer a democracy, but a dictatorship.

Step 1: Some prominent political parties start supporting armed associations.

Step 2: Food prices increase by 70%.

Step 3: Unemployment rises to over 25%.

Step 4: Most laws no longer go through parliament, but are passed by the Federal Chancellor by decree.

Step 5: Some judges of the Constitutional Court resign.

Step 6: The Constitutional Court is no longer allowed to work.

Step 7: Persons who "endanger public safety" can now be detained without trial.

Step 8: The second most important party in the country is banned after clashes with the police.

Step 9: There is only one party you can vote for.

Sources:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Engelbert_Dollfuß#Tod_w%C3%A4hrend_des_Juliputsches

<https://www.demokratiezentrum.org/bildung/ressourcen/timelines/politische-entwicklung-in-oesterreich-1918-1938/>

METHOD "AUTHORITARIAN LANGUAGE"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with authoritarian language

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard and chalk), cut-out reading template "populist quotes"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Divide the participants into small groups (2-4 people). The small groups then receive one or more quotes from the "populist quotes" template. The task of the group is now to answer the following questions for their selected quote:

- Is this statement okay or is it problematic to say something like that in a democratic country?
- If it's problematic, why do you think so?

2) The small groups have about 10 minutes to work on their own quotes.

3) Afterwards, the small groups present their quotes and findings to each other.

4) At the end, you can conclude the exercise with a brainstorming session on the topic of "Characteristics of authoritarian language" (characteristics of populism) in plenary.

Tip 1: In the specialist literature, the following characteristics of authoritarian (populist language) are mentioned regularly.

- Idea of a homogeneous opinion (will of the people): The idea that there is an only one opinion of regarding a certain topic. It is quite normal and also logical that in a society there are different opinions on even very simple questions ("Should you be allowed to smoke in restaurants?"). These different opinions are often denied by populists, or there are ideas that dissent opinions pose a danger.

- Us against the others (good against evil): In authoritarian rhetoric, politics is often described as a fight "good" against "evil" ("us against the others"). People who think differently politically are often referred to as "enemies" or "enemies of the people".

- Dehumanization of certain groups: This logic often continues in the dehumanization of certain social groups (migrants, political opposition, homosexuals, rich or poor people). Certain groups are rhetorically equated with natural disasters ("migrant waves") or with animals or diseases ("rats", "vermin"...).

- Incitement or toleration of violence: In authoritarian rhetoric, politicians often call for or at least tolerate violence. An example of this, from the recent past, is Donald Trump's rhetoric around the riots in the U.S. Capitol on January 6 ("We will go there and I will be with you.... We will stop the theft.").

- Delegitimization of democratic institutions: Democratic institutions are often directly attacked rhetorically or their public value is questioned. These include, for example, creating doubts about election processes, the recognition of other political parties, court decisions or even fundamental civil rights, such as freedom of expression and freedom of the press.

5) You can deepen the exercise further if you wish. One idea would be by letting the participants research new quotes for themselves, which you then discuss together the same way you did before with the ones from the reading template.

Sources:

<https://www.mimikama.org/populismus-und-extremismus/>

<https://www.lpb-bw.de/populismus#c69664>

<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/wir-werden-dort-hingehen-und-ich-werde-bei-euch-sein-895584003475>

READING TEMPLATE "AUTHORITARIAN LANGUAGE"

Your task: Read through quotes below. Then discuss the following questions in your group about the quotes:

- Which politician do you think this quote stems from?
- Is the quote okay, or is it problematic to say something like that in a democratic country?

- If it's problematic, why do you think so?

Quote 1: "Of course, we have to depollute this kind of people."

(Peter Bystrom, Member of the German Parliament (AFD) on the Integration Commissioner of the Federal Government, whose family comes from Turkey.)

Quote 2: "We must speak out, that a democracy no longer has to be liberal. It only has to protect Christian freedom."

(Viktor Orban, Prime Minister of Hungary, during a speech at a Hungarian summer university in 2014)

Quote 3: "This country is our country. It is not there for everyone and cannot be there for everyone."

(Milos Zeman, former president of the Czech Republic in 2015 during a Christmas speech about Syrian refugees, whom he recommends to travel home and fight Islamists)

Quote 4: "We are the new Jews."

(Heinz Christian Strache, former politician (FPÖ) and Austrian Vice-Chancellor in 2012 on the treatment of his party, against which there are fierce protests at that time)

Quote 5: "It is not a crime if you beat up a gypsy who steals something. Are you on my side?"

(Matteo Salvini, Italian politician (Lega) and Minister of Infrastructure 2015)

Sources:

<https://correctiv.org/faktencheck/politik/2020/02/05/die-meisten-dieser-zitate-stammen-von-afd-politikern-einige-sind-aber-unbelegt/>

<https://www.diepresse.com/5879182/der-giftige-reiz-der-illiberalen-demokratie>

<https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2015-12/migration-tschechien-praesident-zeman-fluechtlinge>

<https://www.derstandard.at/story/1326504047903/standard-bericht-strache-auf-wkr-ball-wir-sind-die-neuen-juden>

MODULE 3: MEDIA, FAKE NEWS AND CONSPIRACY NARRATIVES

In this module, we have collected a number of methods and educational suggestions for the school and extracurricular sector, which deal with various elements of the topics of politics and media, fake news and conspiracy narratives.

Possible **learning objectives** of this module are:

- Recognizing the central functioning of different media and information flows
- Dealing with fake news
- Promotion of media literacy
- Examination characteristics of fake news and conspiracy narratives
- Dealing with media and press freedom

METHOD "HEADLINES MEMORY"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Recognizing the central functioning of different media and information flows

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes of teaching time plus preparation time for trainers (teachers: 20 to 30 minutes)

- Material: Notes, pens, self-made reading template "Headline Memory"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) This is the only exercise in this handout that requires a dedicated preparation time before the start of the lesson (training) from you. To do this, you need to complete this assignment in advance:

Assignment 1: Search for 20 media headlines and write them in the headline memory reading template.

Tip 1: Use different media (online newspapers). Feel free to mix trustworthy sources with less trustworthy sources (e.g. free newspapers or tabloid media)

Tip 2: A careful reading of the individual articles is not necessary if it is serious media.

Tip 3: You can also intersperse single headlines from digital fake news portals into the self-designed reading template "Headline Memory". Only in this case should you also research the corresponding fake news correction. Use appropriate fact-checker programs or websites on the Internet for this purpose.

Link to fact-checking websites:

<https://eufactcheck.eu/>

<https://factcheck.afp.com/European-Union>

2) Once you have created the corresponding template "headline memory", print it out in participant strength and start with the exercise in class (in training).

3) Announce to the participants that they will now do an individual work. For this, the participants need slips of paper and pens.

4) Once all participants are ready, hand out to each person the reading template "Headline Memory" that they have prepared in advance.

5) Once all participants have received a template, now give the order that the participants read all the headlines on the template carefully.

Tip 4: It is important here that you do not announce what will happen in the next step with the template.

6) Once all participants have read the template carefully, you go collect the template again.

7) The task of the participants is now to make a short memory in individual work: You tell them to write down which of the headlines on the template they have memorized, by using pens and papers. Give the participants about 3 to 5 minutes to do this.

8) Once all participants have finished, slowly read out all the headlines from the headline memory in the plenary session. The participants are asked to check how many or which headlines they have memorized.

Tip 5: If you have included individual headlines that contain fake news, point them out at this point or add necessary corrections.

9) Then ask the following reflection questions:

- Which or how many headlines did you remember?
- Why do certain headlines or information stay in mind and why don't others?
- How do you think this template came about. When, where and from which sources do the headlines originate?
- If we would do the exercise with other groups, would something change, or would the result remain the same?
- What do you think are the three biggest challenges in dealing with media nowadays?

10) At the end, you can add a short "homework" to your participants. Give them the task of writing down all the headlines on a piece of paper in a certain time window (duration: 20 to 30 minutes) that they encounter intentionally or unintentionally in their everyday life. Of course, this can be digital headlines via mobile phone or social media, but it can also be headlines from the analogue world, for example from newspapers or advertising posters.

Once the participants have collected these headlines, they can compare the collection with each other at the next opportunity and reflect on the results together as well.

READING TEMPLATE "HEADLINES MEMORY"

Task: Read the headlines below carefully.

Headline 1:

Headline 2:

Headline 3:

Headline 4:

Headline 5:

Headline 6:

Headline 7:

Headline 8:

Headline 9:

Headline 10:

Headline 11:

Headline 12:

Headline 13:

Headline 14:

Headline 15:

Headline 16:

Headline 17:

Headline 18:

Headline 19:

Headline 20:

Info for Educators: Prepare all headlines yourself **before the start of the training**

METHOD "HISTORICAL FAKE NEWS"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with fake news, promoting media literacy

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: Internet access, Printed images from the Padlet "Historical Fake News", Padlet "Resolution of Historical Fake News", Background Information "Historical Fake News"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Divide the participants into small groups (2 to 4 people). Each group now receives a printed image from the "historical fake news" padlet. The participants are asked to guess how this picture is linked to the issue of fake news. The small groups are allowed to use the Internet for their research.

2) Let the small groups present their results and, if necessary, give the groups assistance and necessary additional information, using the background information "historical fake news".

3) Now bring together the information you have said and do a brainstorming session entitled "Why do people create or spread fake news?". Also refer to the examples of the fotos and stories discussed earlier.

4) Finally, deal with the question of how to detect fake news. You can do this again in the form of a brainstorming session or a mind map.

Tip: In any case, point out different fact-checking websites at this point. Without help, it is often impossible for a single person to detect different fake news.

Link to the padlet "Historical Fake News": <https://padlet.com/sapereaudeat/historical-fake-news-english-tool-kit-visible-past-kq685xpckapb2te5>

Link to the Padlet Solution "Historical Fake News": <https://padlet.com/sapereaudeat/solution-historical-fake-news-tool-kit-visible-past-english-g8oz8et6yhjpk0za>

BACKGROUND INFOS "HISTORICAL FAKE NEWS"

Image 1: Monster (1934)

Background information: For a long time, there has been a rumor that a water monster lives in a Scottish lake (Loch Ness). A famous photo showing an alleged water monster is one of the main reasons that justifies the hype around "Nessie". But the photo is fake: The photo was taken and spread publicly by the well-known British doctor Robert Wilson. Many people believed in the authenticity of the image for years. But in fact, Wilson had told his stepson, a model builder, to build a "mini monster" with a toy submarine as a base before he photographed it. The history of the forgery did not come to light until the 1990s.

Sources:

<https://www.photoscala.de/2007/10/03/wie-das-beruehmteste-nessie-foto-gefaelscht-wurde>

<https://www.welt.de/kmpkt/article246571294/Loch-Ness-Theorie-widerlegt-warum-Nessie-doch-kein-Aal-sein-koennte.html>

Image 2: Moon (1835)

Background information: In the 19th century, there was a great enthusiasm for science in the USA. The American newspaper "The New York Sun" reported in 1835 that the astronomer John Herschel had discovered a new species, the so-called "bat people", through a new type of telescope on the moon. The newspaper illustrated the discovery with the drawings shown. With the "bat people"-story, the circulation of the newspaper then went through the roof and "bat people living on the moon" were on everyone's lips. It was not until days later that the newspaper announced that the story was a fake. This scam got down in fake news history as the "Great Moon Hoax".

Sources:

<https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/der-great-moon-hoax-geburtsstunde-der-fake-news-100.html>

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Moon_Hoax

Image 3: President 2 (1865)

Background information: Abraham Lincoln was one of the most important presidents of the United States (1861-1865). His term of office was during the American Civil War. A well-known portrait photo of him was manipulated: A photographer placed Lincoln's head on the body of John Calhoun, another politician at that time. The manipulated photo was published after Lincoln's assassination, also because there were few "presidential" and formal photos of the late President Lincoln at the time.

Sources:

<https://www.pocket-lint.com/de-de/software/news/adobe/140252-30-beruhmte-photoshop-und-bearbeitete-bilder-aus-allen-epochen/>
<https://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2010/04/24/lincoln-calhoun-composite/>

Image 4: President 1 (2002)

Background information: This picture shows the then U.S. President George W. Bush Jr. visiting a school, the day 9/11 happened. However, the picture was edited: The president was actually holding the book correctly in his hands. The edited image was often used as evidence to show that the president was not particularly intelligent.

Sources:

<https://www.pocket-lint.com/de-de/software/news/adobe/140252-30-beruhmte-photoshop-und-bearbeitete-bilder-aus-allen-epochen/>
<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/students/pop/articles/11imag.html>

Image 5: Flag (1945)

Background information: The picture shows soldiers of the United States of America hoisting a U.S. flag in Japan at the end of World War II. It is intended to symbolize the victory of the United States over war opponents in Japan. However, the photo has been recreated by the photographer. At the time the photo was taken, the U.S.A. had already been there for 3 hours and had already defeated their opponents. However, the photographer felt that the hoisted original flag was too small and had a much larger one erected.

Sources:

<https://www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/manipulierte-bilder-fotostrecke-107186.html>
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raising_the_Flag_on_Iwo_Jima

Image 6: President 3 (2023)

Background information: This picture shows a picture of then-U.S. President Joe Biden. The photo really exists. Biden fell down at an airport in the summer of 2023. With the help of artificial intelligence, however, diaper pants were manipulated into the picture. The manipulated image was widely shared and commented on as supposed evidence of Joe Biden's physical frailty.

Sources:

<https://www.watson.ch/digital/spass/322844798-diese-ki-fotos-haben-uns-2023-schockiert-und-verbluefft-alles-fake>

METHOD "DEVELOPING CONSPIRACY THEORIES"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Examination characteristics of fake news and conspiracy narratives

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: Notes, pens, blackboard, whiteboard, Reading Template "Conspiracy bingo"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Start the exercise with a brainstorming session on the topic of "Characteristics of conspiracy theories". Make notes on a whiteboard or the blackboard.

Tip 1: Make sure that at least the following elements are mentioned during the brainstorming session:

- Good and evil: Conspiracy theories divide strongly into good and evil. The bad guys are usually those who supposedly make secret agreements in the background and have very evil intentions (money, do damage to society.).

- Distrust: The distrust of official declarations, state institutions and processes such as political parties, elections, courts, etc... is usually high among people who believe in conspiracy narratives.

- Freedom from facts/insistence on one's own opinion: A factual discussion with people who believe in conspiracy narratives is often difficult or impossible at all. Facts are denied ("it's all manipulated") or you get personally attacked ("you're in cahoots with them").

- No coincidences: People who believe in conspiracy theories often deny the existence of coincidences and suspect a secret plan behind all the small and large events in the world.

- Overlapping with extremism-populism-antisemitic narratives: Conspiracy theories often overlap with populist and extremist ideologies. Those narratives all divide the world and other people into a good-evil- or friend-foe schemes. Very often there are also elements of antisemitism in conspiracy theories. Many conspiracy theories are based on a supposed "Jewish world conspiracy" that must be fought.

Tip 2: The term "conspiracy theories" has recently been criticized in literature because the term "theory" actually comes from science, where logic and falsifiability of statements play an elementary role. Therefore, there has been more and more talk of "conspiracy narrative", rather than "conspiracy theories".

2) Now divide the participants into pairs or small groups. Each group needs pieces of paper and pens. The groups are now given the task of writing 10 code words on a piece of paper, which often occur in conspiracy theories or fake news.

3) Once the groups are ready, read out selected words from the "Conspiracy Lotto" template. The group is asked to mark those terms that you have read aloud in the plenary session and are also on their paper of their own small group. The group that first guessed five or marked five of the words correctly on their paper is the winner and is allowed to shout out "Bingo" aloud.

4) The small groups are now given a new task: They are asked to craft their own conspiracy narrative by answering the following questions:

- Who is the group of conspirators?
- What is the evil intent of the conspirators?
- What old images, prejudices or codes is your narrative based on?
- What absurd evidence is there for your conspiracy narrative?

5) The small groups have about 10 to 15 minutes to develop a corresponding conspiracy narrative.

6) The conspiracy theories developed are now presented in the plenary session by the different groups.

7) Conclude the method with a brainstorming session on the question: "Why do people believe in conspiracy theories?"

READING TEMPLATE "CONSPIRACY BINGO"

These terms often appear in conspiracy theories:

Chemtrails – Mainstream Media – Lying Press – Elite – HAARP – Remigration – Flat Earth – Lizards – Mind Control – New World Order (NWO) – Illuminati – Freemasons – Rothschilds – Rockefeller – Gates – Globalists – 9/11 – Conspiracy – Biological Weapons – Intelligence – Jews – World Domination – Conspiracy – Apocalypse – Puppets – Vaccination – Microchips – Deep State – Adenochrome – Satan – WWG1WGA

METHOD "ELEMENTS OF MEDIA AND PRESS FREEDOM"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with media and press freedom

- Time required: 40 to 60 minutes

-Material: Notes, pens, blackboard, worksheet "Recognizing reliable Information", Internet access.

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Start a short word rap on the topic of media and press freedom. In the plenary, each of the participants is asked to briefly name the first word that comes to mind when they think of freedom of the media and the press. You collect this first association of the participants on a blackboard or a flipchart.

2) The participants are now to divide themselves into small groups (2 to 4 people). They are each to choose one person from a given pool who is connected to the topic of press freedom. By means of internet research, the groups should then answer the following 2 questions:

- How is the person connected to the topic of freedom of opinion and freedom of the press?
- What important element of freedom of opinion and freedom of the press does this person's story point to us?

Tip 1: Below you will find a list of suitable people for the topic. Of course, you can also select other suitable biographies.

Possible people for research: Silvio Berlusconi – Max Schrems – Jan Kuciak – Jeff Bezos – Ilaria Alpi – Kostas Vaxevanis – Evangelos Marinakis – Elon Musk...

3) The small groups then present their research results on the different people (people's biographies) in the plenary.

Tip 2: In particular, the principle of freedom of opinion has often been misunderstood in recent years. Freedom of opinion does not mean a right to one's own facts and also no right not to receive contradiction to one's own opinion. Originally, it was introduced as a protective right of citizens against state repression. In a nutshell, there is the quote: "Democracy thrives on freedom of opinion, but breaks down with freedom of facts."

4) In the second part of the exercise, the participants can form new small groups. The groups are supposed to think briefly of "5 criteria of reliable information". The small groups write these criteria on a piece of paper (5 to 10 minutes).

5) Now you collect the results of all small groups on a blackboard or a flipchart.

6) The same small groups should now choose one or two media articles of their choice using their mobile phone or laptop. If they have found corresponding articles, they should rate these articles on the basis of their own "criteria for serious information", which they defined before. The participants should do this preferably on the basis of a point system (0 to 10 points).

Tip 3: Alternatively, you can prepare suitable media articles (1-2 per small group) yourself, which you will then hand out to the participants and let them rate them.

7) Afterwards, the small groups present their selected articles and their evaluation of the articles based on their criteria.

WORKSHEET "RECOGNIZING RELIABLE INFORMATION"

Task 1: Think about how to distinguish serious from non-serious information. Write down at least five characteristics of serious news here

Criteria 1:

Criteria 2:

Criteria 3:

Criteria 4:

Criteria 5:

Task 2: Now choose two articles from different media. Then rate them on the basis of the criteria above with a score from 0 to 10 (=10 very serious, 0= totally dubious).

MODULE 4: EUROPE AND EUROPEAN VALUES

In this module we have compiled a series of methods and educational suggestions for the school and extracurricular sector, which deal with different aspects of the European Union, European politics and the reflection of fundamental European values.

Possible **learning objectives** of this module are:

- Dealing with European history and European politics
- Dealing with events in European history
- Dealing with fundamental European values
- Dealing with different European policy areas

METHOD "EUROPEAN TIME TRAVEL"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with European history and European politics

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

- Material: Notes, pens, worksheet "European Time Travel", mobile phone or internet access, Info sheet "Milestones for Europe"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Divide the participants into groups of 2 to 4 people. Each group gets two or more pieces of paper plus pens and a cut-out template "European Time Travel".

Tip 1: Cut the worksheet into 3 parts and output only the first part of questions in the first round, then the second part in the second, etc.

Tip 2: If you want to spend less time on this exercise, you can also output only one or two parts of the worksheet and work on them afterwards.

2) Have the participants answer the questions on the worksheet "European Time Travel" in rounds and give the small groups enough time to work on them in the respective rounds (5 to 15 minutes, depending on the dynamics and group).

3) Once all small groups have completed their worksheets, you can work out key findings in the plenary session using the following guiding questions:

- How have the political challenges in Europe changed over the last few years?
- What can we learn from the past? What challenges has Europe (the EU) successfully mastered and how did it happen?

Tip 3: If the groups find it difficult to write things down, or alternatively as preparation for this exercise, you can hand out the worksheet "Milestones for Europe" in plenary.

WORKSHEET "EUROPEAN TIME TRAVEL"

Task 1: We are now taking a little journey through time. Please answer the following questions:

- What year were your grandparents born? Please write down the years of birth here:
- What has Europe looked like this year(s)?
- What challenges, problems or fears for the future did your grandparents have to deal with in their youth or many other people at that time? Write down the 2 to 3 most important challenges here.
- How have the challenges or fears developed over time? Have there been solutions for this? If so, write them down briefly (you can also do some research on the Internet).

Task 2: Now we travel further in time. Please answer the next questions:

- What year were your parents born? Please write down the years of birth here:
- What has Europe looked like this year(s)?
- What challenges, problems or fears for the future did your grandparents have to deal with in their youth or many other people at that time? Write down the 2 to 3 most important challenges here.
- How have the challenges or fears developed over time? Have there been solutions for this? If so, write them down briefly (you can also do some research on the Internet).

Task 3: Now we come to the last round of our time travel. Please answer the following questions

- Please write down your own years of birth here.
- What challenges, problems or fears for the future do you have to deal with yourself? list the 2 to 3 most important challenges here.
- Make a trip about 10 to 20 years into the future. Please imagine that the problems and challenges you described earlier are suddenly solved. Think about what happened for it, or what the world around you look like in which your fears for the future are solved.

INFORMATION SHEET "MILESTONES FOR EUROPE" (SELECTION)

-1945: Germany surrenders on May 8. In September 1945, the first two atomic bombs are dropped in Japan. 60 to 80 million people lost their lives in the war. This makes the Second World War the war with the greatest number of victims in the history of mankind.

-1946: British Prime Minister Winston Churchill calls for the founding of a United States of Europe.

-1951: The European Coal and Steel Community is founded by Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in order to jointly regulate this important area for the war economy.

-1957: "Treaties of Rome": Two new organizations are created in the treaties: The European Economic Community (EEC) is created with the aim of organizing a common market among the member countries. The EURATOM organization is founded for the joint peaceful use of nuclear energy and for joint scientific research into nuclear power.

-1968: Abolition of all internal tariffs between the countries of the EEC.

-1973: Enlargement of the EEC with the accession of the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark. The number of member countries increases from six to nine. Norway rejects accession in a referendum.

-1979: Members of the European Parliament are directly elected for the first time in June 1979

-1981: Greece joins the European Community on January 1, 1981. Since the fall of the military dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in 1974, it fulfills the accession criteria.

-1986: In January Spain and Portugal join the European Community. From now on, people talk about the “Europe of the Twelve”.

-1989: “Fall of the Berlin Wall”: Peaceful protests gradually abolish the separation of East and West Germany. The so-called “Iron Curtain”, i.e. the strict political separation of Eastern and Western Europe, comes to an end.

-1992: Treaty of Maastricht: There are now uniform regulations on EU citizenship, the desire to create a common currency and a common European foreign and security policy.

-1995: Finland, Austria and Sweden join the EU. The European Union now comprises 15 members. The “Schengen Agreement” comes into force. Visa controls are abolished and free movement of people within the EU is made possible.

-2002: The EURO is introduced as common currency in 12 EU countries

-2004: Accession of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Cyprus. The EU now has 25 member states.

-2007: Bulgaria and Romania join the EU. The Union now has 27 member states.

-2010: “Euro crisis” following the 2008 financial crisis. Aid packages and austerity measures mainly affect countries such as Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

-2013: Croatia joins the European Union.

-2015: “Asylum crisis” in the EU. Over 2 million migrants arrive in the European Union in 2015 and 2016, significantly more than in previous years.

-2016: Brexit vote: In June 2016, the majority of UK citizens (51%) vote to leave the European Union.

- 2020: The United Kingdom has left the European Union.

-2022: Russia attacks Ukraine militarily. Ukraine applies to join the EU a few days after the start of the Russian war of aggression.

-2023: Croatia becomes the 20th country to adopt the euro.

Sources:

https://learning-corner.learning.europa.eu/eu-timeline_de#/years/1901

<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/de/landerinformationen/europa/deutschland/neuigkeiten/article/handschlag-zwischen-francois-mitterrand-und-helmut-kohl-die-kulissen-eines>

<https://www.strasbourg-europe.eu/die-wichtigsten-etappen-des-aufbaus-der-europaeischen-union/>

METHOD “EU-QUIZ”

- Topics and pedagogical objectives: Playful examination of the topic of Europe

- Time required: 10 to 20 minutes

- Material: Red and green cards, Reading Template EU Quiz

Instructions (step by step):

1) Take a quiz with the group on the topic of the European Union in plenary. To do this, divide into teams of 2 or 3 people each. Each team receives a red and a green card.

2) Now read out some statements from the "EU Quiz Template". The groups are asked to guess whether the statement is true (green card) or false (red card). If necessary, you can provide background information on the respective statement.

READING TEMPLATE "EU-QUIZ"

Statement: The flag of the EU has 27 stars.

Solution: False.

Explanation: The flag has 12 stars. The number of stars has nothing to do with the number of EU member states. They are supposed to represent European values such as unity, solidarity and harmony, which is why the stars were arranged in a circle.

Sources:

https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/flag_de

Statement: Austria was the first country in Europe where 16- and 17-year-olds were allowed to vote.

Solution: Correct.

Explanation: Since 2008, 16 and 17-year-olds have also been allowed to vote in Austria. This option is otherwise only available for under 18-year-olds in Greece and Malta within the EU. In Greece at the age of 17, in Malta already at the age of 16. In Greece, Belgium and Austria, 16-year-olds are allowed to vote in the elections to the EU Parliament. At the regional level, other countries also have the right to vote partly at the age of 16.

Sources:

https://youth.europa.eu/get-involved/democratic-participation/what-age-should-one-be-able-vote-elections_de

<https://taz.de/Parlamentswahl-in-Griechenland!/5931994/>

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Griechisches_Parlament#Wahlsystem

Statement: The Vatican cannot join the EU because it is not a democratic state.

Solution: Correct.

Explanation: The Pope rules absolutely in the Vatican, so he can determine all laws alone and execute them. The Vatican is not part of the EU. Although it has its own euro coins, it cannot join the EU because it does not meet the criteria for the rule of law. In the Vatican, citizens have no right to vote. However, democracy and the rule of law are imperative prerequisite for an EU accession ("Copenhagen criteria").

Sources:

<https://osteuropa.lpb-bw.de/kopenhagener-kriterien>

Statement: If I vote invalidly during the EU elections, I harm the other elected parliamentary parties.

Solution: False.

Explanation: Your vote then has a positive effect on voter turnout. However, it has no effect on the final result, because the seats to be allocated are only determined by the valid votes cast. So, the election result remains the same.

Sources:

www.derstandard.at/1242317026211/wenn-waehler-weiss-waehlen

Statement: All EU citizens are allowed to travel through their own country without ID.

Solution: False.

Explanation: As an EU citizen, you are free to travel to and stay in the different EU countries. However, whether you have to carry an ID card with you is decided by the laws of the different EU-countries.

Sources:

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/eu-citizen/index_de.htm

Statement: The EU Parliament has its seat in Brussels.

Solution: False.

Explanation: The European Parliament has its seat in Strasbourg (France). The approximately 700 members of parliament work there. Other important EU institutions such as the European Council, the EU Commission or the European Court of Justice meet and work in Brussels. That is why Brussels is repeatedly referred to as the EU capital.

Sources:

https://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/travel/entry-exit/eu-citizen/index_de.htm

Statement: THE EU employs about 500,000 civil servants.

Solution: False.

Explanation: The European Union employs between 30,000 and 50,000 people. In comparison, this is significantly less than f.e. civil servants in Austria (=150,000 civil servants, 9 million inhabitants). In Austria and many other countries, civil servants also include teachers in public schools, police officers or health workers.

Sources:

<https://www.diepresse.com/592250/mythos-5-wien-hat-mehr-beamte-als-die-eu-in-bruessel>

Statement: Foods containing insects are allowed in the European Union.

Solution: Correct.

Explanation: Currently, 4 insect species are approved as food: mealworms, house crickets, migratory locusts and the so-called buffalo beetle. Food producers, whether they want to sell insects or other new foods in supermarkets and stores, can apply for EU-approval. If the food authorities consider the food to be harmless to health, it will be admitted to the market. If a product contains insects, it must be marked (as of February 2025).

Sources:

https://germany.representation.ec.europa.eu/news/insekten-lebensmitteln-die-fakten-2023-01-19_de
<https://www.ages.at/mensch/ernaehrung-lebensmittel/lebensmittelinformationen/insekten-in-lebensmitteln>

Statement: Brussels is the largest city in the EU.

Solution: False.

Explanation: The largest city in the EU is Berlin with about 3.8 million inhabitants, ahead of Madrid and Rome. Brussels has only about 200,000 inhabitants

Sources:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_gr%C3%B6%C3%9Ften_St%C3%A4dte_der_Europ%C3%A4ischen_Union

Statement: Berlin is the largest city in Europe.

Solution: False.

Explanation: Istanbul has about 15 million inhabitants, with part of the city geographically located on the Asian side of Istanbul. Moscow and London are located exclusively on European soil and have significantly more inhabitants than Berlin.

Sources:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_der_gr%C3%B6%C3%9Ften_St%C3%A4dte_Europas

Statement: There are 5 official languages in the EU.

Solution: False.

Explanation: There are 24 official languages in the European Union. They offer the citizens of a country the right to contact state authorities in these languages, for example to submit applications, make inquiries or receive documents in this language from the state.

Sources:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amtssprachen_der_Europ%C3%A4ischen_Union

Statement: Luxembourg is the only country in the EU where women earn more than men.

Solution: Correct.

Explanation: On average in the EU, the pay gap between women and men narrowed from 16% to 13% between 2015 and 2022. In Luxembourg, women earn an average of 2 percent more than men. In all other countries, women earn less (when working in the same industry and with the same qualifications).

Sources:

<https://www.destatis.de/Europa/DE/Thema/Bevoelkerung-Arbeit-Soziales/Arbeitsmarkt/GenderPayGap.html>

Statement: The EU organizes the European Football Championships every four years.

Solution: False.

Explanation: The European Football Championships are organized by UEFA. UEFA is a not-for-profit association made up of members of the national football associations

Sources:

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/UEFA#Geschichte>

METHOD "POSTCARDS FROM EUROPE"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with events in European history, reflecting on fundamental European values

- Time required: 30 to 40 minutes

-Material: Mobile phone or internet access or printed pictures "Postcards from Europe", flipchart and pens (or blackboard and chalk or whiteboard), notes and pens, Padlet-Link "Postcards from Europe"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Divide small groups of 2 to 4 people. The small groups receive pens and papers. On the piece of paper, you tell them to complete the following sentence: "That's what Europe means for me..." The small groups can name one or more things that Europe means to you.

2) Afterwards, the small group should look at a series of printed templates "Postcards from Europe" and reflect together on whether one of the postcards selected symbolizes "typically European" things or values for groups.

Tip 1: You can either print out the postcards for the small groups or present them to the groups digitally.

Tip 2: A digital version of all postcards can be found in the Padlet program via the following link:

<https://padlet.com/sapereauadeat/postcards-from-europa-english-tool-kit-visible-past-trxzvroo1m7xabfd>

3) Now you can collect the results of the small groups in plenary. To do this, let the small groups present their findings. Afterwards, you can create a mind map entitled "European Values" together with the participants, which summarizes their findings.

4) You can extend the exercise by finally giving the small groups the task of looking for their own picture that symbolizes typical European values and share them with the group.

ADDITIONAL PADLET "POSTCARD FROM EUROPE"

Info: Possible pictures for the exercise can be found via the padlet link here:

<https://padlet.com/sapereaudeat/postcards-from-europa-english-tool-kit-visible-past-txrzvoo1m7xabfd>

Note Copyright: Wikimedia and Pixabay (all images).

METHOD "EUROPEAN ISSUES" (PROS AND CONS-DEBATE)

- Topics and pedagogical objectives: Dealing with different European policy areas

- Time required: 30 to 50 minutes

-Material: Papers, pens, template "European issues", Internet access

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Create a pro and con debate on various European policy topics. To do this, divide the group into two or more small groups, depending on the number of participants. Afterwards select one or more decisive questions for the debate from the template "Issues for Europe".

2) The small groups are divided into a "pro" and a "contra" group for each of the Issues. The groups then have about 10 to 20 minutes to find as many arguments as possible for (pro group) or against (contra group) a selected issue. Each arguments needs to be written on an extra piece of paper. The groups can also use the Internet to research the arguments.

3) Then two small groups (one pro and one contra group each on the same issue) start the discussion. All the groups that are not currently in turn observe the discussion as an objective audience. One group (pro or contra) is allowed to start and present one of its arguments. The arguments always be clearly visible to the audience. The second group now has the task of reacting to the argument put forward by finding a counter-argument and then bringing another argument, to which the other group is now supposed to react with a counter-argument etc. etc. The debate comes to an end when both groups have exchanged all arguments.

4) You can conclude the exercise with the following guiding questions:

- Which group objectively had the better arguments?
- Which argument worked best on the pro side and which on the con side?
- What discussion techniques have been used by the groups?
- What could a compromise between the pro and con group look like, (=A political solution that takes into account the different arguments)?

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE "EUROPEAN ISSUES"

Issue 1: Should the EU work with authoritarian countries to limit migration to Europe? (Yes/No)

Issue 2: Should there be a common European army? (Yes/No)

Issue 3: Should the principle of unanimity in European decisions be abolished? (Yes/No)

Issue 4: Should the EU permanently ban digital platforms that regularly spread false information and hate online? (Yes/No)

Issue 5: Should the police or intelligence services be allowed to monitor messenger services such as WhatsApp or Telegram in the event of a risk of serious crime? (Yes/No)

Issue 6: Should young people from the age of 16 be allowed to vote in all EU states? (Yes/No)

Issue 7: Should there be a Europe-wide ban on the use of nuclear power? (Yes/No)

Issue 8: Should there be a Europe-wide compulsory military service (civilian service) for young men and women? (Yes/No)

MODULE 5: TRAIN-THE-TRAINER: EXERCISES FOR MULTIPLIERS

TRAINER SKILLS

In this part of our tool-kit, we have collected some ideas on how you can promote and practice trainer skills relevant to civic education and to teach fundamental European values with different multipliers of educational work (young people, adults).

METHOD “MY DUTIES AS A TRAINER”

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with one's own role and tasks as a trainer

- Time required: 20 to 30 minutes

- Material: Flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard or whiteboard), printed information "What is civic education?", worksheet "My tasks as a trainer"

- Instructions (step by step):

1) Start with giving the worksheet "What is Civic Education?" to the participants. This worksheet reflects the most important role characteristics and the attitude towards professional civic educators (Beutelsbach Consensus).

Tip 1: Two questions often come up here: The first one, is whether you as a trainer for civic education are allowed to express your own opinion in front of your target group. The second question refers to how you can practically ensure different opinions, as required in the “Beutelsbach Consensus”. Regarding the first question, it can be said that if trainers want to share their own political views with others, it must be clear that the trainer’s opinion is only one of many and not "the right one".

Tip 2: You can ensure diversity of opinions in the classroom in a variety of ways, for example by asking different people in the room or by raising new points of view as a trainer. However, it should be clear that these are not necessarily really one's own opinions, but that they are only brought into the classroom in order to ensure diverse and controversial debates.

Sometimes people do not express their opinion but want to spread hate or moan about other people. There you can draw a line, because it is about sharing opinions and not about spreading hate.

2) In the next step, invite the (future) trainers to think about the role and tasks of a trainer for civic education in a joint brainstorming session in the plenary session on a flipchart.

Tip 3: Before doing a joint brainstorming, you can let the participants build small groups and tell them to fill out the worksheet “my tasks as a trainer”.

3) Write down all ideas concerning the trainers’ roles and tasks mentioned by the participants and add important tasks or details about the role as a trainer, if some relevant is missing.

4) Once the brainstorming session is completed, you have created a kind of "task catalog for trainers". This is why should then document the notes on the flipcharts or the blackboard by taking a picture of it or create a written version, which you make available to the participants afterwards

Tip 4: Here we have collected a number of relevant tasks that should be found on the worksheet "My role and tasks as a trainer.

- Tasks before the training: Preparing the room - Organizing necessary material - Going through the moderation agenda - Visualizing the pedagogical goals of the training again - Stripping off your own bad mood...

- Tasks during training: Showing/maintaining a professional "attitude" (see "Worksheet "What is Civic Education") - Ensuring diversity of opinions/asking questions - Precisely instruct methods for the participants - Take care of time management - Pay attention to the group - Ask questions - Involve different participants - Obtain participant feedback

- Tasks after the training: Restoring the room - Briefly reflecting the training-session alone or in a group - Writing down or document feedback by participants

INFOSHEET 1 "WHAT IS CIVIC EDUCATION?"

Civic education is about learning about politics and the society in which you live or in which you want to live in. Civic education allows you to understand how we live together as human beings and what opportunities we have in order to participate in this society and change it according to our interests and ideals.

Anyone who teaches civic education should follow 3 rules:

1) No indoctrination: No matter how convinced you are about your own opinion; you can still be wrong and there are always different views and opinions in a democracy. Your task is to foster critical thinking in participants and you don't want everybody in the room, to share your own personal views and values, when you teach civic education in a professional way.

So generally, everyone is allowed to think about things for themselves and decide which opinions and ideas they find better. A democracy is dependent on different views and opinions, that are discussed and arguments to find a common ground on the base of different opinions

2) Ensure different opinions: In a democracy, there are many different opinions and there is not just one everlasting truth. Everyone is allowed to speak out what he or she thinks. At the same time, it is important to let people hear different and dissenting opinions, because only if you hear about different ideas and values, you are able to develop reflected views and opinions yourself.

That's also why it's also your job as a trainer is to make sure that there are always different opinions expressed in a classroom or in a training-session.

3) Teach participants what is important to them: Civic education aims to ensure that all people do have relevant knowledge and skills to make a good and decent living. People should know and be reflective about life and society, but you don't want all of them to become political scientists. You think of teaching them stuff that is relevant for their everyday and future life. For example, if you know that almost your participants are finishing school soon and they want to start working in different jobs afterwards, then start discussing topics such as labor law, vacation law, minimum wages or collective agreements with the participants.

Source:

<http://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/51310/beutelsbacher-konsens>

WORKSHEET 2 "MY TASKS AS A TRAINER"

1) These tasks must be completed before training:

2) These tasks must be completed during the training:

3) These tasks are to be completed after the training

METHOD "DOS AND DON'TS" AS A TRAINER

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Discussion about behavior of the group is appropriate/inappropriate or advantageous/unfavorable

- Time required: 15 to 20 minutes

- Material: Copies of the worksheet "Trainers Dos and Don'ts, pens, flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard or whiteboard)

- Instructions (step by step):

1) The participants are divided into pairs or small groups and work out a list of dos and don'ts on how to behave as a trainer in a group setting. Therefore, they should use and fill out the worksheet "Dos and Don'ts"

2) The groups have about 10 minutes to work that out.

3) This is followed by a presentation in the plenary, where one small group starts to presents its results from the work sheet and all other participants or groups are only supposed to add things that have not yet been mentioned.

Tip 1: Here are some suggestions for possible dos and don'ts:

Possible dos: Explain exercises and work assignments in an understandable way - Be punctual - Be a good role model for the group - Let participants finish speaking - Speak loudly and clear - Treat all participants fairly - Actively involve all participants - Ask different participants for their opinion - Pay attention to your speed of speaking - Ensure different opinions...

Possible don'ts: Chewing gum - Staring at your smartphone - Insulting participants personally - Living out a bad mood in front of the group - Being late for training or out of the break - Only talk to certain participants - Exclude some people from discussion - try to take advantage of your authority as a trainer...

4) The results are noted on a flipchart (blackboard/whiteboard) for all to see. The results can then be documented and made available to the participants.

WORKSHEET "TRAINERS DOS AND DON'TS"

1) This is how a trainer should best behave in front of participants (Dos):

2) This is how a trainer should not behave in front of participants (don'ts):

METHOD "MY IDEAL SELF AS A TRAINER"

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Visualization exercise to fight nervousness and to foster for self-confident appearance before the start of a training

- Time required: 10 to 15 minutes

- Material: Worksheet "My ideal self as a trainer", pens, possibly provide relaxing background music, for example with smartphone and speakers

- Instructions (step by step):

1) First of all, briefly explain the goal of the exercise to the participants. The method is about visualizing their own ideal role or their ideal trainer me in their future workshops.

2) Now present the worksheet "My ideal trainer me" and explain give the following explanation to the participants:

Each participant should reflect on their ideal role as a trainer or their ideal me in a workshop or other teaching settings. This role should be described on the worksheet only by using positives adjectives.

3) The participants have 5 to 10 minutes to fill out the worksheet on their own.

Tip 1: For this part, you can have soft and relaxing music playing in the background if you want.

4) Once all participants have filled out the worksheet, the method is over. Participants are invited to save this newly designed inner image of their ideal trainer self – like an unforgettable holiday memory – and to recall themselves before the start of their training or to take a quick look at the completed worksheet before the start of a training session as a sort of cheat sheet.

WORKSHEET "MY IDEAL SELF AS A TRAINER"

Your task:

Use only positive adjectives to describe your ideal self as a trainer.

Imagine you are standing in front of your participants: How do you stand/sit? How do you talk to the group? In what way do you introduce methods and the exercises? How do you react to situations – such as difficulties and conflicts in the group? How do you work together with other coaches? How do you feel in training?

Which adjectives best describe you best when you are a trainer?

My characteristics as a trainer:

When you're done: Imagine yourself being equipped with all these qualities described before. Store this "ideal image" internally and use it to go to training or class. If you become insecure or nervous then, imagine your "ideal trainer me" intensively again for 1 or 2 minutes.

METHOD "DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS" (MY WORST NIGHTMARE)

- Topics and pedagogical goals: Dealing with difficult training situations

- Time required: 50 minutes

- Material: Copied and cut out worksheets "Dealing with difficult situations", envelopes, moderation cards, flipchart and pens (alternatively blackboard or whiteboard)

- Instructions (step by step):

1) The participants form small groups (2 to 3 people). Each group receive envelope with several "difficult situations", as well as another envelope with possible "interventions", which you have to cut out in advance from the template of the worksheet in the section "Intervention options".

2) The small groups are given the task of assigning "possible interventions" to each one of the difficult situations.

Tip 1: Participants can also find new ways to react that are not yet on the work sheet.

Tip 2: At some point, it can be helpful if the small groups think about what aim they want to pursue in a certain difficult situation (= What is the desired target state?).

Tip 3: There is always more than one intervention option for difficult situations and at the same time there is never a guarantee that one intervention is the best and only right one. The exercise serves as preparation for precisely this circumstance. This is why it is also possible for one and the same intervention to be used in two different situations. So, there are more possible solutions for the difficult situations mentioned on the worksheet.

3) When the small groups are finished, the plenary session will briefly reflect on the exercise. Ask the group which of the situations was the easiest and which was the most difficult for you to solve. If necessary, give additional tips here or ask other groups how they would solve the situations mentioned.

4) In a next and last step, the (future) trainers should work on all those situations that have not yet been addressed and still cause them "nightmares":

The participants form up again in pairs or small groups again. They now have the opportunity to describe such a concrete nightmare-situation. Each "nightmare" should be written on a moderation card.

- Tip 4: Frequently mentioned situations are: I don't know what to do anymore - I'm too nervous - A fight starts - Someone in the group faints or has an accident - A participant talks all the time - Discriminatory statements in a discussion...

5) If all the nightmares have been written on cards, collect them, shuffle them and randomly distributed them to the groups.

6) Afterwards, the small groups have a time to work with the "nightmare situations" assigned to them. The get the task is to think about possible goals in the nightmare-situations (= description of a target state that is to be achieved) and corresponding options for action (intervention) for each situation so that the desired target state is achieved. The results are to be written down by the small groups by the groups

7) Finally, the results of the small groups will be collected and presented in the plenary. Necessary additions or inquiries are welcome.

8) Make sure that you document each of the described "difficult situations" or the proposed goals and intervention ideas well and make them available to the participants, either in the plenary session by taking detailed notes on a flipchart or a blackboard, or by collecting and writing down the notes of the individual small groups after the end of this exercise.

WORKSHEET "DEALING WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS" (MY WORST NIGHTMARE)

Your task:

Here are some specific questions about **difficult situations**, that can come up during a training or teaching session:

- What to do if you are directly attacked?
- What to do if you can't answer a question from the participants?
- What to do if some participants do not participate at all?

- What to do if a person takes over the discussion and talks all the time?
- What do you do when only one point of view appears in a discussion?
- What to do if no discussion gets going?
- What to do if people tattle?

Here are some possible **intervention options** for the situations mentioned above:

- I'll repeat what I said - I'll try a second time
- I take three deep breaths (I stay relaxed)
- I don't relate any of what's happening to me personally
- I give myself and the group time (I wait in peace)
- I ask another coach for support
- I address the participant directly (I ask him/her to ... clearly name behavioral change)
- I ask another person for support
- I refer to previously agreed workshop rules
- I react ... (e.g. humorous)
- I wait (e.g. until it gets quiet again)
- I quickly try to find out the group mood or opinion (for example by letting the group raise their hands about an idea or an opinion).
- I try to solve the situation in private, outside the training room (during the break or during the workshop)

Your task: Think about whether or which forms of interventions are suitable for the various difficult situations and assign them.