

9. Making Decisions in the EU



Your aim

The aim of this lesson is for the students to learn about to how laws are passed in the EU so that they will have an understanding of how decisions are made that will affect their daily lives.



Learning Outcome

By the end of the lesson, students will have a basic understanding of the role of the different EU institutions in the decision making process.



Time

Double class period



Materials or Sources required

» Role play documents from the 'Decide for Europe' webpage



Preparation

» Photocopy role play documents



Potential Partner Activity

Ideas for partner activities given below

Introduction

This activity relies on the use of the decision-making role play found on the 'Decide for Europe' website: <http://decide4europe.eun.org>.

This resource was originally created for the 'Spring Day for Europe' in 2005, when schools from all over Europe participated in the role play. Spring Day for Europe is an annual event that aims to encourage young people to debate, reflect, learn and make their voices heard on European issues.

Whole Class Work – Role play instructions

Through the role play the students will act as the different EU decision-making institutions, the Commission, the European Council and the European Parliament. They will create a proposal for an EU law and follow the process from the first Commission draft to the final decision document.

Instructions for the activity and all the necessary resources can be found under the 'toolbox' section of the 'Decide for Europe' website. By registering her/his school on the website the teacher can access further resources and will also be able to upload the students' final decision and see it online, together with decisions from other schools in Europe.

Before beginning the role play a specific issue for the debate must be chosen. This could be done by the teacher before class or together with the students. In the role play instructions there are 30 themes to choose from, e.g. Environment, Immigration, Drugs, Children's Rights etc.

Useful Suggestions

The teacher could point out that this is a simplified version of the decision making process and that in reality there are plenty of other actors that are involved. (E.g. lobby groups from NGO, private and public companies, local and regional governments.)

Depending on the amount of knowledge the students have on the subject chosen, prior research by the class may be needed. Alternatively, the students could research the issue acting as the different EU institutions during the role play.

If the size of the class is small there might be a need to adapt some of the instructions for the role play, e.g. the appointment of a minister from each member country (27) in the European Council (in this case it might be suitable to limit the number of countries included).