



Benefits of membership in the European Union

WIDE - Wider and Deeper EU
Proj. Ref. Num. 101176547
Jean Monnet Teacher Training





Objectives of the training

Main objective

Raising teachers' awareness of the benefits stemming from Poland's membership in the European Union, with a particular focus on education, the economy, society, and regional development.

Specific objectives

- Acquiring knowledge of the basic principles of how the European Union functions and the support mechanisms available for education
- Understanding the impact of EU membership on the development of education, the labor market, the economy, and society
- Acquiring knowledge of the EU programmes available for education
- Raising awareness of the social and civic benefits resulting from European integration
- Acquiring the skills to provide students with accurate knowledge about the EU and its role in everyday life



Training Program

Module 1: Introduction to the EU

- 1.1. History of the EU
- 1.2. Principles of EU Functioning
- 1.3. EU Values
- 1.4. EU Competences
- 1.5. EU Institutions

Module 2: Benefits of EU Membership

- 2.1. Impact of the EU on the economy, education, and society
- 2.2. The EU in everyday life: freedom of movement, civil rights, the Schengen Area
- 2.3. European Citizens' Initiative

Module 3: EU Educational Programmes

- 3.1. Erasmus+
- 3.2. eTwinning
- 3.3. Structural Funds: European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Regional Programmes
- 3.4. How to Apply for Funding for Educational Projects?

Module 4: How to Teach About the EU? – Workshop

- 4.1. The EU – Mission (Im)possible? – Association Map
- 4.2. What Challenges Do Teachers Encounter When Teaching About the EU? – Discussion
- 4.3. Four Paths to Teaching About the EU – Group Work
- 4.4. Sample Methods and Teaching Tools for EU Education



Module 1

Introduction to European Union





Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.1. History of EU

1945 - 1959

Beginning of cooperation

- 8 May 1945 – End of World War II in Europe
- 4 April 1949 – Establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – Washington Treaty
- 5 May 1949 – Founding of the Council of Europe (9 Member States)
- 3 September 1953 – Entry into force of the European Convention on Human Rights
- 9 May 1950 – Proposal for a new political cooperation in Europe (Schuman Plan)
- Since 9 May 1950 – Celebrated in the European Union as Europe Day (anniversary of the Schuman Declaration)
- 18 April 1951 – Creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (Treaty of Paris): based on the Schuman Plan, six countries (Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg) sign a treaty for the joint management of heavy industry (coal and steel production)
- 18 April 1951 – On the basis of the Treaty of Paris, the European Coal and Steel Community officially comes into being
- 25 March 1957 – Treaties of Rome: expansion of cooperation into other economic areas; two treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)
- 1 January 1958 – Entry into force of the Treaties of Rome

1960 - 1969

economic growth

- 3 May 1960 – Establishment of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) to support free trade and economic integration among certain non-EEC countries: Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom
- 30 July 1962 – Adoption of the first Common Agricultural Policy
- 20 July 1963 – The EEC signs its first major international agreement (the Yaoundé Convention) to promote cooperation and trade with 18 former African colonies
- 8 April 1965 – Signing of the Treaty establishing a single Council and a single Commission of the European Communities. This merger treaty, combining the executive bodies of the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Economic Community, and Euratom, was signed in Brussels and came into force on 1 July 1967 (from that date, the European Communities have operated with one administrative body—the Commission—and one executive body—the Council)
- 1 July 1968 – Launch of the customs union among the six EEC member states, eliminating customs duties on goods imported between them and, for the first time, enabling free international trade within the Community

1970 - 1979

first new members

- 1970s – Environmental protection appears on the agenda
- 1 January 1973 – The six-member Community expands to nine as Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom formally join the European Communities
- 10 December 1974 – Reducing regional disparities through the creation of a key new fund under European regional policy: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), aimed at transferring money from wealthy to poorer regions
- June 1979 – First direct elections to the European Parliament

1980 - 1989

fall of communism

- August 1980 – Strikes at the Gdańsk Shipyard for workers' rights: employees strike to win greater rights, and in September "Solidarity" is founded as an independent trade union
- December 1981 – Martial law in Poland
- 1 January 1981 – Greece becomes the tenth member state of the EU
- 1984 – First European research programme ("Esprit") for research and innovation at the European level
- 1 January 1986 – Two new members join: Spain and Portugal
- February 1986 – Single European Act launches a broad six-year programme aimed at creating a single market (the Act enters into force on 1 July 1987)
- 13 June 1987 – Launch of the Erasmus Programme to fund students wishing to study in another European country
- 9 November 1989 – German reunification (East Germany joins the European Community in October 1990)



Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.1. History of EU

1990 - 1999

Europa without borders

- 7 February 1992 – Maastricht Treaty, which establishes the rules for the future single currency as well as foreign and security policy and closer cooperation on justice and home affairs. The European Union is officially created by this treaty, which enters into force on 1 November 1993.
- 1 January 1993 – Launch of the single market and establishment of the four freedoms: free movement of persons, goods, services, and capital.
- 1 January 1994 – Creation of the European Economic Area (EEA) and extension of the single market to the EFTA countries.
- 1 January 1995 – New member states: Austria, Finland, and Sweden.
- 26 March 1995 – Removal of internal border controls in seven EU countries; the Schengen Agreement enters into force, allowing travelers to move between these countries without passport checks.
- 2 October 1997 – Treaty of Amsterdam, which enters into force on 1 May 1999.
- 1 January 1999 – The euro is introduced for commercial and financial transactions in 11 countries.

2000 - 2009

further growth

- 26 February 2001 – Treaty of Nice, aimed at reforming EU institutions so that the Union could function effectively as a 25-member bloc and prepare for the next large wave of enlargement (the treaty enters into force on 1 February 2003)
- 1 January 2002 – Euro banknotes and coins introduced into circulation in 12 EU Member States
- 1 May 2004 – Ten new countries join: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary
- 29 May – 1 June 2005 – EU Constitution (rejected by voters in some Member States)
- 1 January 2007 – Bulgaria and Romania accede to the EU
- 13 December 2007 – Treaty of Lisbon (“Lisbon reform”) establishing the “new Union” (ratified by all Member States before entering into force on 1 December 2009)
- September 2008 – Global economic crisis

2010 - 2019

global economic crisis

- 2010 – Europe struggles with the financial crisis
- 10 December 2012 – The EU is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
- 1 July 2013 – Croatia becomes the 28th member of the EU
- From November 2015 – Terrorist attacks hit Europe: cities including Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin, London, and Barcelona become targets; the EU takes measures to address all aspects of the terrorist threat
- 12 December 2015 – Paris Agreement on climate change adopted at the UN Conference in Paris (195 countries agree on a new climate treaty)
- December 2015 – Over one million people apply for asylum in Europe (the “herzlich willkommen” policy)
- 23 June 2016 – The United Kingdom votes to leave the EU (52% in favor of Brexit)
- December 2019 – The new Commission sets a goal for Europe to become climate-neutral by 2050, backed by a new growth strategy – the European Green Deal

2020 - dziś

...

- January 2020 – COVID-19 pandemic
- 31 January 2020 – The United Kingdom leaves the EU after 47 years of membership
- April 2021 – Launch of the Conference on the Future of Europe: a forum embodying participatory democracy and giving EU citizens the opportunity to voice their opinions on key issues and help shape the Union’s future
- February 2022 – Russia invades Ukraine



👆 Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.1. History of EU

EU Members

1958	Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, the FRG (since 1990 – Germany), Italy	European Economic Community
1973	Denmark, Ireland, Great Britain	European Community
1981	Greece	
1986	Spain, Portugal	
1995	Austria, Finland, Sweden	European Union
2004	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary	
2007	Bulgaria, Romania	
2013	Croatia	



Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.1. History of UE

EU countries (EU 27) - list of member states and their accession dates to the EU, Schengen area and the euro zone

 **AUSTRIA** - UE since 1995
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1997

 **BELGIUM** - UE since 1958; euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **BULGARIA** - UE since 2007
Schengen zone since 2024

 **CROATIA** - UE since 2013
euro zone/ Schengen zone od 2023

 **CYPRUS** - UE since 2004
euro zone since 2008

 **CZECH REPUBLIC** - UE since 2004
Schengen zone since 2007


 **DENMARK** - UE since 1973
Schengen zone since 2001

 **ESTONIA** - UE since 2004
euro zone since 2011/Schengen zone since 2007

 **FINLAND** - UE since 1995
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 2001

 **FRANCE** - UE since 1958; euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **GREECE** - UE since 1981
euro zone since 2001/Schengen zone since 2000

 **SPAIN** - UE since 1986
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **HOLLAND** - UE since 1958
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **IRLAND** - UE since 1973
euro zone since 1999

 **LITUANIA** - UE since 2004
euro zone since 2011/Schengen zone since 2007

 **LUXEMBOURG** - UE since 1958
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **LATVIA** - UE since 2004
euro zone since 2011/Schengen zone since 2007

 **MALTA** UE since 2004
euro zone since 2011/Schengen zone since 2007

 **GERMANY** - UE since 1958
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **POLAND** - UE since 2004
Schengen zone since 2007

 **PORTUGAL** - UE since 1986; euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1995

 **ROMANIA** - UE since 2004
Schengen zone since 2007

 **SLOVAKIA** - UE since 2004
euro zone since 2011/Schengen zone since 2007

 **SLOVENIA** - UE since 2004
euro zone since and Schengen zone since 2007

 **SWEDEN** - UE since 1995
Schengen zone since 2001

 **HUNGARY** - UE since 2004
Schengen zone since 2007

 **ITALY** - UE since 1958
euro zone since 1999/Schengen zone since 1997

 **WIELKA BRYTANIA – 2020 BREXIT**
UE since 1973 until 2020



👆 Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.2. Principles of functioning of the EU

1

Principle of conferred competences

The EU acts only in those areas where Member States have conferred competences on it by the treaties.

2

The principle of subsidiarity

The EU takes action only when the objectives of a given policy cannot be sufficiently achieved at the national level.

3

Principle of proportionality

The EU's actions must not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives set out in the Treaties. Its intervention should be as limited and proportionate to the aim as possible.

4

The principle of solidarity

Member States should support one another and cooperate to achieve common objectives, especially in crisis situations.

5

Principle of loyal cooperation

The EU and its Member States are obliged to show mutual respect and to support the achievement of the Union's objectives.

6

Principle of the Single Market

The EU functions as a barrier-free area, ensuring the free movement of goods, services, people, and capital.

7

The rule of law

All EU actions must be based on the law, and the institutions and Member States are obliged to comply with it.

8

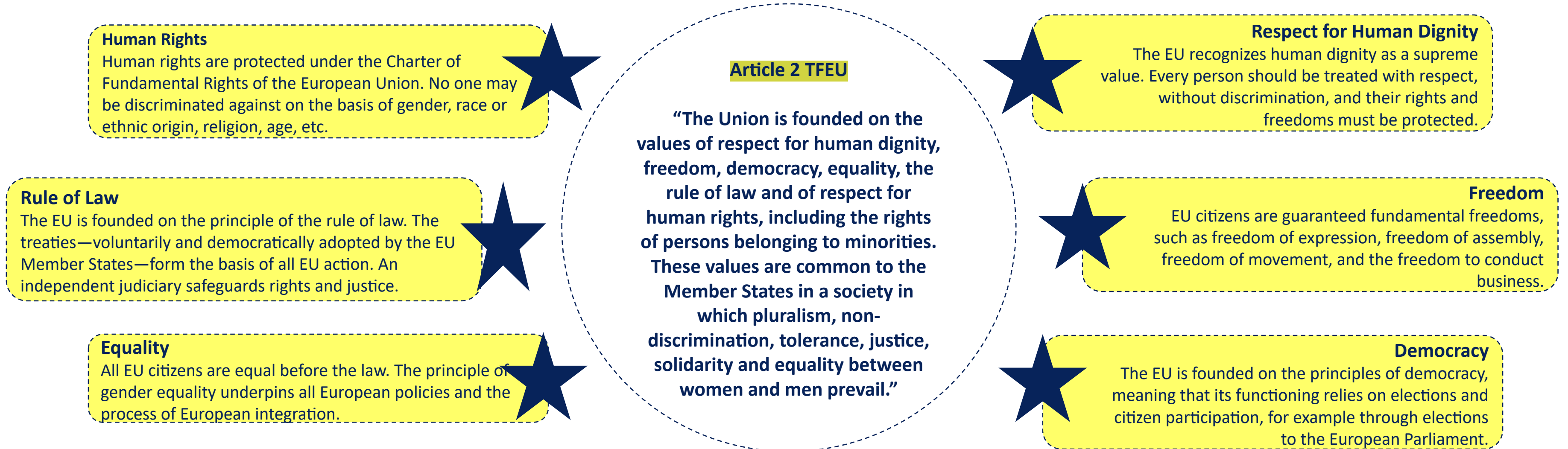
The principle of democracy

All EU actions must be based on law, and institutions and Member States are obliged to respect it.



Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.3. UE values





Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.4. UE competences

Exclusive Competences



Art. 2(1) TFEU

Areas in which the EU may legislate and adopt legally binding acts on its own. Member States may do so themselves only if empowered by the EU to implement those acts.

The EU has exclusive competence in the following areas:

- the customs union
- the establishing of the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market
- monetary policy for the Member States whose currency is the euro
- the conservation of marine biological resources under the common fisheries policy
- the common commercial policy

Shared Competences



Art. 2(2) TFEU

Competences shared between the EU and the Member States cover the following areas:

- the internal market
- social policy (aspects defined in the Treaty)
- economic, social and territorial cohesion (regional policy)
- agriculture and fisheries (excluding the conservation of marine biological resources)
- the environment
- consumer protection
- Transport
- trans-European networks
- Energy
- the area of freedom, security and justice
- public health (common safety concerns)
- research, technological development and space
- development cooperation and humanitarian aid

Supporting Competences



Art. 2(3) TFEU

The EU may intervene only to support, coordinate or complement the actions of the Member States. Legally binding EU acts may not require the harmonisation of national laws and regulations.

Supporting competences cover the following areas:

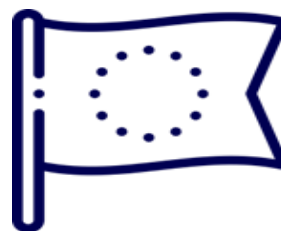
- protection and improvement of human health
- Industry
- Culture
- Tourism
- education, vocational training, youth and sport
- civil protection
- administrative cooperation



Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.4. UE competences

Exercise of Competences



Exercise of Competences

The exercise of EU competences is subject to two key principles laid down in Art. 5 TFEU:



Principle of proportionality. The content and form of EU action must not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.



Principle of subsidiarity. In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the EU may act only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States, and can be better achieved at Union level.



👆 Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.5. UE Institutions

Main Decision-Making Institutions Governing the EU Administration

These institutions collectively set the direction of EU policy and play different roles in the legislative process:

European Parliament (EP)

Represents EU citizens; co-legislates and co-decides the budget; (Brussels / Strasbourg / Luxembourg)

European Council (EC)

Defines the general political direction and priorities of the EU; (Brussels)

Council of the European Union (CEU)

Represents the governments of the Member States; co-legislates and co-decides the budget (Brussels / Luxembourg)

European Commission (EC)

Proposes legislation, implements policies, and ensures compliance with EU law (Brussels / Luxembourg / EU-wide representations)

Supporting Institutions

Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)

Ensures uniform interpretation and application of EU law across all Member States and settles legal disputes between Member State governments and EU institutions. (Luxembourg)

European Central Bank (ECB)

Manages the euro and defines and implements the EU's economic and monetary policy. (Frankfurt)

European Court of Auditors (ECA)

Audits the collection and use of EU funds and assists in improving the Union's financial management. (Luxembourg)

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

An international court that protects human rights and fundamental freedoms in Europe. It hears complaints from individuals, organizations, and states concerning violations of the European Convention on Human Rights (Strasbourg)



👆 Module 1: Introduction to European Union

1.6. EU bodies

Bodies that play specialist roles in helping the EU fulfil its tasks

- **European External Action Service (EEAS)**

The EU's diplomatic service responsible for the Union's external relations and for conducting the EU's foreign and security policy.

- **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**

Represents various civil-society stakeholders—employers, workers and other interest groups—in advising on EU legislation and policy.

- **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)**

Represents regional and local authorities; the European Parliament, Council and Commission consult the CoR on issues affecting regions and cities.

- **European Investment Bank (EIB)**

The EU's lending arm, financing projects in climate and environment, development and innovation, small and medium-sized enterprises, infrastructure and cohesion.

- **European Ombudsman (EO)**

Holds EU institutions and agencies to account for maladministration; assists individuals, businesses and NGOs in lodging complaints and investigates systemic issues.

- **European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)**

Ensures that EU institutions and bodies respect citizens' rights to privacy when processing personal data.

- **European Data Protection Board (EDPB)**

Guarantees consistent application of EU data-protection rules and fosters cooperation among national data-protection authorities.

- **European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)**

Investigates, prosecutes and brings to judgment crimes against the EU's financial interests.

- **European Cybersecurity Competence Centre (ECCC)**

Together with a network of national coordination hubs, supports innovation and industrial policy in cybersecurity.



Modul 2

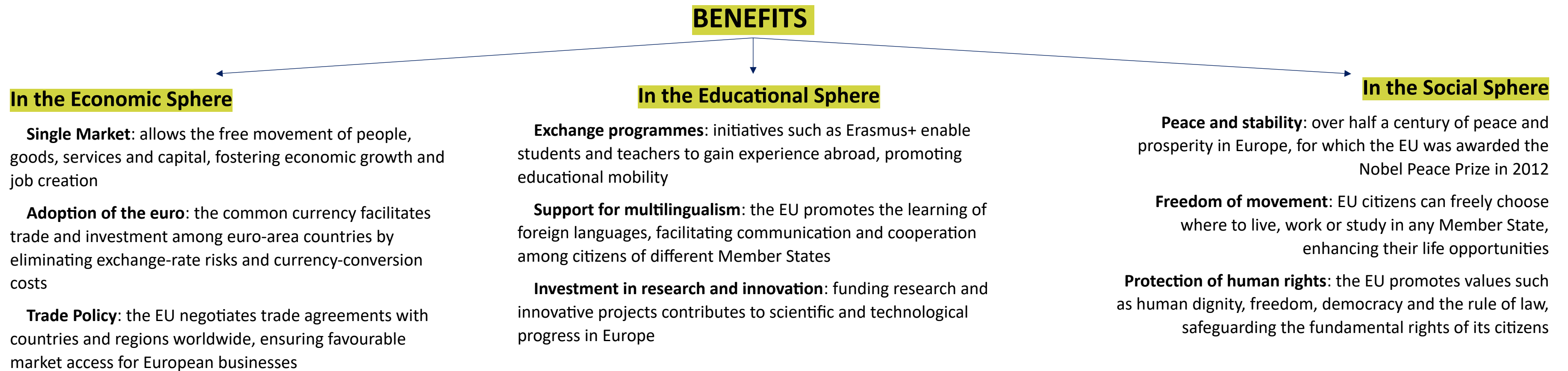
Benefits of EU membership





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.1. The EU's influence on the economy, education and society





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Development with EU Support



- **Since 2004, EU co-funding for projects under the Cohesion Policy has amounted to just over PLN 700 billion (approx. €164.6 billion).** The largest shares of this funding went to transport projects (approx. PLN 243 billion), entrepreneurship and innovation support (approx. PLN 126 billion), and human capital (PLN 105 billion).
- **Among the transport projects financed by Cohesion funds, road construction dominates.** By value, these accounted for about 60 % of all EU support allocated to transport in Poland.
- **Polish rural areas and agriculture have received substantial support from the EU budget.** Financial transfers from the EU to Poland between May 2004 and February 2024 totalled €243.2 billion, of which €78 billion went to villages and farmers (€50 billion in direct payments, €26 billion under the Rural Development Programme, and €1.8 billion for market-intervention measures).





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Development with EU Support

- EU Cohesion Policy funding has fueled Poland's economy and accelerated real economic convergence between Poland and the EU. **Poland's relatively high growth rate between 2004 and 2021 (an average of 3.9% per year versus 1.3% in the EU-27) was to a large extent driven by the effective use of EU funds.**
- Between 2004 and 2021, Poland recorded the third-largest cumulative GDP increase among EU Member States (after Ireland and Malta). **Since accession, Poland's economy has grown in real terms by 99.1%—almost doubling—while the average cumulative GDP growth in the EU-27 was 25.2%.**
- This support enabled the implementation of numerous investment projects that boosted competitiveness, and improved social and territorial cohesion. **It helped integrate Poland into the European transport network, expand broadband Internet infrastructure, and enhance energy security.** EU funds backed not only infrastructure, but also education, vocational training, and broad-based entrepreneurship initiatives—ultimately improving quality of life and business conditions across the country and its regions.





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Development of Poland's Regions with EU Support

In absolute terms, the largest Cohesion Policy funds went to the Masovian Voivodeship (PLN 92.7 billion; 14.7 % of total transfers), the Silesian Voivodeship (PLN 66.2 billion; 10.5 %) and the Lesser Poland Voivodeship (PLN 50.3 billion; 8.0 %). Conversely, the smallest amounts went to the Opole Voivodeship (PLN 15 billion; 2.4 %), the Lubusz Voivodeship (PLN 16.3 billion; 2.6 %) and the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship (PLN 21 billion; 3.3 %).

The picture changes when expressed on a per-capita basis. Then, the highest support was recorded in the Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship (PLN 23 880 per inhabitant), followed by the West Pomeranian Voivodeship (PLN 19 574) and the Subcarpathian Voivodeship (PLN 19 183). The lowest per-capita amounts went to the Greater Poland Voivodeship (PLN 12 516), the Lesser Poland Voivodeship (PLN 14 658) and the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship (PLN 15 194).





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Development of Agriculture with EU Support

- Funds from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), together with other EU funds and national co-financing, **have increased agricultural competitiveness, farm incomes and quality of life in rural areas.** Farm structures improved and the number of holdings over 20 ha grew. In 2023, the average farm size was 12.7 ha, and 1 240 000 farms applied for direct payments.
- **Modernisation and restructuring processes, export successes and CAP support have positively affected agricultural income levels.** In 2023, value added in agriculture rose to €22.1 billion; although still behind France and Italy, Poland has caught up with Germany and is 41 % ahead of the Netherlands. Income per full-time farmer has increased more than 2.5-fold since 2004.



exceeding 3 million tonnes, Poland is the EU's largest producer, second in Europe and fourth globally in exports.

• Poland exports over 80 % of its domestic beef and 53 % of its poultry meat, as well as over 30 % of its dairy products. In 2023, more than 13 million tonnes of cereals were exported. Some 76 % of these exports go to EU markets, of which 26 % is destined for Germany and 6 % each for the Netherlands and France.



Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Development of Agriculture with EU Support

- **The growth of agricultural exports was made possible, among other factors, by the modernization of farms and the upgrading of agri-food processing using EU funds.** In many production sectors—such as poultry, fruit (notably apples), vegetables, sugar beets, cereals and milk—Poland ranks among Europe's leaders. With annual poultry production exceeding 3 million tonnes, Poland is the EU's largest producer, second in Europe and fourth globally in exports.



- **Poland exports over 80 % of its domestic beef and 53 % of its poultry meat, as well as over 30 % of its dairy products. In 2023, more than 13 million tonnes of cereals were exported.** Some 76 % of these exports go to EU markets, of which 26 % is destined for Germany and 6 % each for the Netherlands and France.



Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Challenges for agriculture with EU support

Agriculture, as a sector directly dependent on natural conditions, faces challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, pollinator decline and droughts, which regularly affect around 50 % of the European Union's territory. The economic consequences of these issues are severe, with annual drought-related losses alone amounting to €9 billion.

The European Green Deal (EGD) and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) integrate environmental and climate protection. The EGD aims to transform the EU into a climate-neutral economy by 2050, with a legally binding commitment to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by at least 55 % by 2030 compared with 1990 levels (The European Green Deal is being now under revision and amendments).

The "Farm to Fork" and Biodiversity strategies support the creation of a sustainable food system by, among other measures: reducing the use of chemical pesticides by 50 % and mineral fertilisers by 20 %; cutting nutrient losses in soil by 50 %; reducing sales of antimicrobials for animal farming by 50 %; increasing organic farming area by at least 25 %





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Challenges for agriculture with EU support

- **Emissions of greenhouse gases from agriculture in the EU fell by 3 % between 2005 and 2021, despite rising food production.** By 2030, agricultural emissions are projected to decrease by 8 %. In contrast to overall EU trends, Poland—as one of the largest food producers—recorded an increase in agricultural emissions in 2021 compared with 2005, and further growth is forecast.
- **In 2020, mineral fertiliser use in Poland rose by 10.2 % compared with 2010, reaching 1 951 000 tonnes, with average application of 132.9 kg NPK per hectare.** Although this level remains below that of countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany, those countries have been experiencing a downward trend, whereas Poland's fertiliser use is still rising.





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.2. Economic Development

Challenges for agriculture with EU support



Pesticide use in Poland averaged 2.1 kg/ha in 2020, below the EU average of 3 kg/ha and far lower than in the Netherlands (8.8 kg/ha), but considerably higher than in Denmark (1.4 kg/ha) and the Czech Republic (1.1 kg/ha).

Poland has seen rising pesticide sales, in contrast to the trend in Western Europe, where usage is being reduced in favor of biocontrol methods. Unfortunately, CAP budget support to curb pesticide use in Poland remains largely symbolic.

Between 2011 and 2020, veterinary antibiotic use in the EU fell by 43.2 %, while Poland recorded a 48.8 % increase. Poland and Spain now have the highest levels of veterinary antibiotic use in the EU. Reducing veterinary antibiotic consumption is crucial to maintaining the strong reputation of Polish export products.





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.3. The EU in everyday life

The EU in everyday life

- **No internal borders** – free movement between EU countries without passport checks within the Schengen Area
- **Affordable travel** – competitive prices for flights, trains and buses thanks to the single market
- **Mutual recognition of documents** – an ID card is sufficient for travel in most EU countries
- **Consumer protection** – passenger rights in case of flight delays or lost baggage





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.3. The EU in everyday life



Citizens' rights in the EU

- **Right to work and study in any EU country** – without needing to apply for additional permits
- **Consumer protection** – the right to return goods purchased online in any EU country within 14 days
- **Access to healthcare** – the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) provides medical care in EU countries on the same terms as nationals
- **Right to petition and complaint** – EU citizens can address EU institutions on matters important to them





Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.3. The EU in everyday life

The Schengen Area is an area of the EU without internal border controls.

It comprises 29 countries:



EU countries

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. AT Austria | 9. LU Luxembourg | 18. PT Portugal |
| 2. BE Belgium | 10. LV Latvia | 19. RO Romania* |
| 3. BG Bulgaria* | 11. MT Malta | 20. SK Slovakia |
| 4. CZ Czech Republic | 12. DE Germany | 21. SI Slovenia |
| 5. DK Denmark | 13. GR Greece | 22. SE Sweden |
| 6. EE Estonia | 14. ES Spain | 23. HU Hungary |
| 7. FI Finland | 15. NL Netherlands | 24. IT Italy |
| 8. FR France | 16. LT Lithuania | 25. HR Croatia |
| | 17. PL Poland | |

Non EU countries

- 26. IS Iceland
- 27. LI Liechtenstein
- 28. NO Norway
- 29. CH Switzerland

** Rumunia i Bułgaria częściowo dołączyły do strefy Schengen (w 2024 r.) - na razie tylko w zakresie ruchu lotniczego i morskiego*



Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.4. European Citizens' Initiative

Objective:

To enable EU citizens to actively participate in shaping EU policy by proposing the introduction of new regulations.

Conditions:

- A group of at least 7 EU citizens from at least 7 different countries.
- A minimum of 1 million signatures from at least 7 Member States, with a minimum number of signatures from each country.



Procedure:

- Creation of a group of organizers.
- Submission of an application for registration of the initiative to the EC.
- After acceptance – start collecting declarations of support.
- After collecting the required number of signatures – submission of the initiative to the EC for analysis.

Next steps after the initiative is submitted:

- Meeting of organisers with Commission representatives.
- Public hearing in the EP.
- The Commission issues a formal response, setting out the planned actions.



Modul 2: Benefits of EU membership

2.4. European Citizens' Initiative

RIGHT2WATER



Example of a European Citizens' Initiative: Right2Water

Goal: Recognize access to water and sanitation as a human right and promote water provision as a public service.

Result: The Right2Water initiative was the first to reach the required 1 million signature threshold, leading to a debate in the European Parliament and a commitment from the European Commission to act to improve access to clean water in Europe.

More information: <https://right2water.eu/>



Module 3

EU educational programs





Module 3: EU Educational Programs

3.1. Erasmus+

Programme description:

The European Union programme for education, training, youth and sport for 2021-2027.

Programme objectives:

- Supporting citizens' personal and professional development.
- Promoting sustainable growth, employment and social cohesion.

The European programme's budget for 2021-2027 is €26.2 billion.

EU Programme in the field of education, training, youth and sport Its aim is to support pupils, students, teachers, lecturers and volunteers in carrying out international projects designed to enhance their skills and competences.

Public and private institutions and organisations that support formal education as well as non-formal and informal learning for people of all ages are therefore eligible to participate in the programme.

With the new financial framework, the scope of Erasmus+ has been expanded, making it more innovative, more inclusive and more digital. It will also play a key role in the creation of the European Education Area by 2025, through which the European Union intends, among other things, to ensure that all young people have access to high-quality education and training, to enable learners to move freely between education systems in different countries, and to help them find work anywhere in Europe.

The National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme and its implementing body in Poland is the Foundation for the Development of the Education System: <https://erasmusplus.org.pl>



👉 Module 3: EU Educational Programs

3.1. Erasmus+

Key Actions – What Can Be Funded?

Action 1 (KA1): Learning Mobility

Supports the mobility of pupils, students, teachers and staff of educational institutions. Participants can take part in courses and training, teach or observe work abroad, thereby developing their linguistic, social and intercultural competences.

Action 2 (KA2): Cooperation for Innovation and Exchange of Good Practices

Promotes international cooperation between schools, educational institutions, local and regional authorities and other organisations active in education. Projects under this action focus on designing and implementing innovative educational solutions and exchanging good practices to ensure high-quality teaching and learning.

Action 3 (KA3): Support for Policy Reform

Aims to support policy reforms in education, training and youth to improve the effectiveness of education systems and align them with labour-market needs.

Sectors – Which Areas Can Be Funded?

- **Higher Education (HED)** – mobility for students, lecturers and university staff; international academic partnerships.
- **Vocational Education and Training (VET)** – support for apprentices, teachers and VET institutions.
- **School Education (SCH)** – cooperation between schools, exchanges of pupils and teachers; eTwinning.
- **Adult Education (ADU)** – development of adult competences; training and lifelong-learning projects.
- **Youth (YOU)** – mobility for young people and youth workers; volunteering; international exchanges.
- **Sport (SPO)** – international cooperation in sport; promotion of physical activity and social inclusion.
- **Jean Monnet (JMO)** – an Erasmus+ component supporting teaching, research and debate on European integration, aimed at deepening knowledge of the EU.



👆 Module 3: EU Educational Programs

3.2. eTwinning

Program description:

eTwinning is a European school community that enables kindergartens, primary and secondary schools from EU countries and some partner countries to cooperate using electronic media. This program allows teachers and students to implement joint educational projects, exchange experiences and teaching materials, which broadens the scope of pedagogical possibilities and motivates learning and openness to Europe.

Program objectives:

- Promoting cooperation between schools in Europe
- Supporting the use of information and communication technologies in education
- Developing digital competences of students and teachers

Key Features of eTwinning

- **Use of technology:** the programme promotes the use of computers, the Internet and diverse software, making lessons more engaging for pupils.
- **Practical use of foreign languages:** pupils communicate with peers from other countries, motivating them to learn languages and improve their communication skills.
- **Curriculum integration:** project themes can be easily incorporated into the curricula of various subjects, enriching educational content and encouraging interdisciplinarity.
- **Flexibility:** teachers have the freedom to tailor the topics, activities, tools and duration of projects to the needs of their pupils and school, allowing ongoing adaptation to current requirements.
- **Collaboration:** projects are based on a jointly developed plan focused on close cooperation and the creation of outcomes reflecting the work of all partners, fostering social competences, effective communication and openness to diversity.

eTwinning sets minimal formal requirements, making it easy for teachers to start international educational collaborations and implement projects.

National eTwinning Office in Poland: Foundation for the Development of the Education System – <https://etwinning.pl/kontakt>



Module 3: EU Educational Programs

3.3. Structural funds

Secondary schools in Poland have the opportunity to apply for various European funds that support the development of education, modernization of infrastructure and improvement of the quality of education:

European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)

The **ESF+** supports projects aimed at levelling educational opportunities, enhancing the competences of pupils and teachers, and promoting social inclusion.

An example of such support is the government programme “School for Everyone,” implemented under the European Social Fund 2021–2027, with a budget of over €116 million.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

The ERDF finances investments in educational infrastructure, such as the construction and modernization of schools, equipping classrooms and adapting facilities to the needs of persons with disabilities.

For example, in the Małopolska region, Measure 5.5 “Education Infrastructure – ITI” is being implemented to support the development of primary and secondary school infrastructure in order to improve accessibility for pupils with special educational needs.

Regional Programmes

Depending on the voivodeship, various operational programmes are available to support secondary schools.

For example, in the Małopolska region, under Measure 5.3 “Vocational Education Infrastructure,” the infrastructure of vocational schools—particularly in industries key to the regional labour market—is being supported.



Module 3: EU Educational Programs

3.3. Structural funds

How to apply for funds for educational projects?

1

Finding the right call for projects

Checking current call announcements on the websites of:

- European Funds
- Regional Operational Programs of individual voivodeships
- Ministry of Education and Science and Marshal's Offices
- National Agency of the Erasmus+ Program

2

Preparation of the application

The application for funding should include:

- Project description (objectives, target group, action plan)
- Budget and cost estimate
- Implementation schedule
- Assumed effects and results

3

Submitting an application

The application is submitted electronically through dedicated systems, e.g.:

- SL2014 for national and regional funds
- EU Login and EC portals for international programmes (e.g. Erasmus+)

Each call has a specific deadline – the application must be submitted on time!

4

Assessment and signing of the agreement

- Applications are assessed in terms of form and content
- After a positive assessment, the school signs a contract for funding

5

Project implementation and settlement

- After receiving funds, the school implements activities according to the schedule
- Regular reporting and settlement of expenses is necessary.

In the event of non-compliance with the project assumptions, the funds may be withdrawn!



👉 Module 4

How to teach about the EU?





Module 4: How to teach about the EU?

4.1. EU – Mission (Im)possible? – Association Map

Starting exercise

1

On the board, please write down the first associations related to how students perceive the EU?

2

Please divide the associations into facts and myths.

Question: **Which myths are worth debunking?**



Module 4: How to teach about the EU?

4.2. What difficulties do teachers encounter in teaching about the EU? – discussion

1. **Lack of student interest** – the topic of the EU can seem abstract and disconnected from young people's everyday lives.
2. **Complex issues** – institutional structures, decision-making processes and legal frameworks are hard to explain in an accessible way.
3. **Lack of engaging teaching materials** – although resources exist, they are often not age-appropriate or fail to sufficiently engage students.
4. **Curricular overload** – teachers must cover many topics, and the EU often becomes a lower priority.
5. **Political polarization** – discussions about the EU can be controversial, making objective teaching more difficult.
6. **Lack of training and support** – teachers rarely have access to courses or workshops on effective EU education.
7. **Rapidly changing realities** – e.g. Brexit, new regulations or shifting political priorities can make it hard to keep content up to date.



👉 Module 4: How to teach about the EU?

4.2. What difficulties do teachers encounter in teaching about the EU? – discussion

How to deal with these challenges?

Making teaching more attractive and increasing student engagement

- Linking the EU topic to the everyday lives of young people
- Using games and simulations (e.g. debate, escape room)
- Using social media (TikTok, YouTube, Instagram)
- Interactive quizzes and online tools (Kahoot, Quizizz)

Simplifying difficult issues

- using infographics and mind maps.
- using animations and educational films
- comparisons to situations familiar to students (e.g. EU as a "student government")
- interdisciplinary approach - combining EU topics with other subjects

Combating Political Polarization

- Using Neutral Sources and Facts
- Learning Critical Thinking and Analyzing Different Viewpoints
- Organizing Oxford-Style Debates

Support for teachers and relief in teaching about the EU

- online courses for teachers (e.g. European School Academy)
- cooperation with the European Parliament Office in Poland
- creation of support groups and exchange of teaching materials
- short teaching forms (mini-lessons, podcasts)

Updating knowledge about the EU

- following current events
- regularly updating materials and introducing the "EU News" module
- organizing meetings with EU experts and practitioners



👉 Module 4: How to teach about the EU?

4.3. Four Ways to Teach the EU – Group Work

Group 1

Simulation: The Council of the European Union in Session

Teachers develop a lesson plan for students who will take on the role of EU ministers and negotiate a position on current EU policy (e.g. climate change, EU budget). The aim of the lesson is to show students how the EU decision-making process works.

Group 3

Project: The EU in my city

Teachers are developing a mini-project for students to find out how the EU affects everyday life. The students will be asked to find EU-funded investments, programmes or events in their city or region, and then present them in the form of a poster, short film or presentation.

Group 2

Escape Room: European Union Mysteries

Teachers create puzzles they could use in class for escape room activities. Example tasks: Deciphering the EU treaties; Finding the hidden EU budget; Solving the mystery of the EU institutions

Group 4

Debate: Should the EU introduce a common defence policy?

Teachers are developing a lesson plan for students who, during the debate, will take on the roles of supporters of a common defence policy (arguing for the creation of an EU army and stronger coordination of defence activities) and defenders of state sovereignty (opposing a common army, pointing to the need for independent national armed forces).



Module 4: How to teach about the EU?

4.4. Examples of teaching methods and tools in teaching about the EU

Unia Europejska

Learning corner

Materiały dydaktyczne

learning-corner.learning.europa.eu

Interactive multimedia presentations

"EU in Brief": a presentation containing basic information about the EU, divided into four parts, allowing for flexible adaptation to the needs of the lesson.

Educational games and quizzes

"Europa Quest": an interactive educational quiz on the institutions, history and decision-making process of the EU and European culture.

"EU & Me": a publication with tasks and an accompanying online quiz, allowing to test knowledge about the EU.

Projects and simulations

"EUcraft": a digital simulation game in which students take on the role of EU ministers and negotiate EU decisions.

"Civic Education": a set of materials helping to explain the advantages of European cooperation and integration, including lesson plans and practical activities.



Module 4: How to teach about the EU?

4.4. Examples of teaching methods and tools in teaching about the EU

EU teaching materials for teachers available on the European Education Area website:

- **eTwinning**: a European collaborative platform for teachers, available in 30 languages. It enables communication, exchange of materials, participation in professional development activities and joint educational projects.
- **Learning corner**: A collection of teaching materials, including online games, that help students of all ages to learn about the European Union. Competitions and a variety of educational materials are also available.
- **Eurostat learning corner**: Resources and tools to support teaching statistics, geography or social sciences, enabling students to better understand statistics related to the EU.
- **ePlatform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)**: A multilingual community for adult education professionals offering teaching materials, online courses and publications related to teaching about the EU.
- **Erasmus+ virtual exchanges**: Innovative online exchange opportunities for young people from Europe and the Mediterranean region, promoting intercultural learning experiences related to the EU.



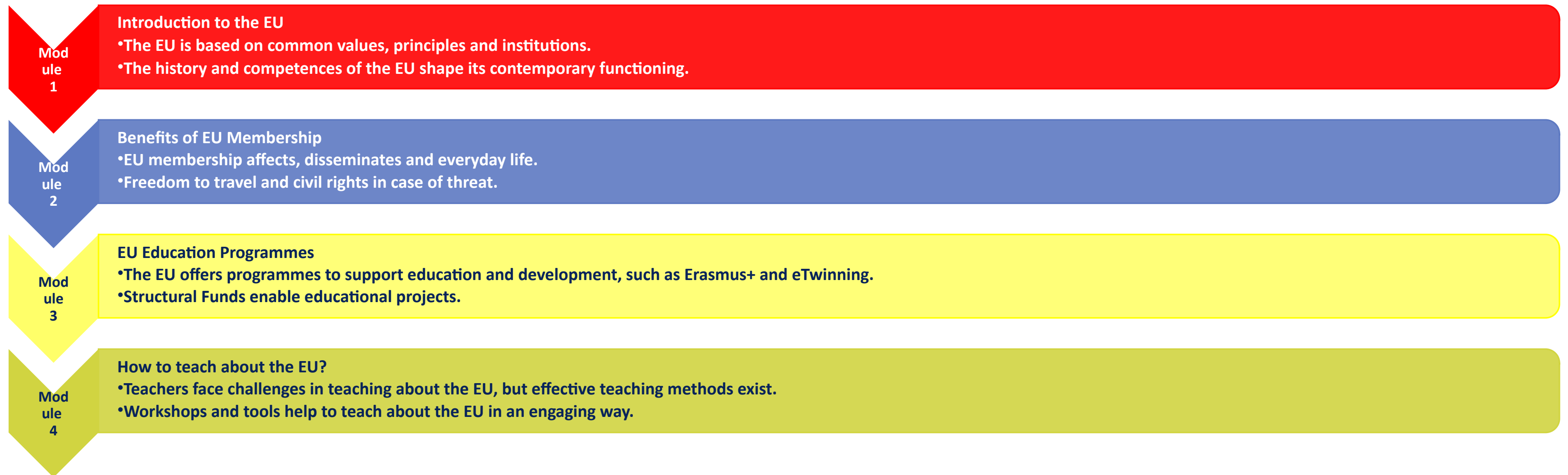
**European
Education
Area**

<https://education.ec.europa.eu/pl/resources-and-tools/online-platforms>

The above platforms and resources provide valuable support for teachers in imparting knowledge about the EU, its structures, policies and values, while also developing students' digital and intercultural competences.



Summary





Education about the EU – the key to conscious citizenship!

WIDE - Wider and Deeper EU
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