

# EU Values and Inclusion in the Enlargement Process



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





## Training objectives

### General objective

To enhance the capacity of secondary school teachers to understand, embody, and teach the foundational values of the European Union, enabling them to combat Euroscepticism, promote inclusive and democratic education, and foster a strong sense of European identity among students. This objective is rooted in strengthening teachers' civic education strategies, equipping them to instil respect for EU values in diverse classroom settings.

### Learning outcomes

- Enhance teachers' understanding of EU core and their relevance in civic education.
- Explain the role of EU values in the accession process, focusing on the Copenhagen Criteria and real-world candidate country case studies.
- Raise awareness of EU mechanisms to protect values post-accession.
- Equip teachers with practical tools and strategies to integrate EU values into classroom teaching through simulations, cross-curricular activities, and civic engagement exercises.
- Foster educators' capacity to counter Euroscepticism and promote inclusive, democratic attitudes among students.



# Training Programme

## Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

- 1.1. Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union
- 1.2. Understanding EU values
- 1.3. Exercise proposals to engage students with EU values

## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

- 2.1. The Copenhagen criteria
- 2.2. Case studies of candidate countries
- 2.3. Inclusion policies in the enlargement process

## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

- 3.1. Protection mechanism against value backsliding
- 3.2. Article 7 TEU
- 3.3. The rule of law conditionality mechanism
- 3.4. The case of Poland

## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

- 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries
- 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives
- 4.3. Express your voice: EU Citizen Engagement Platform



## Module 1

# Introducing students to EU values





# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.1. Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union

*“The Union is founded on the values of respect for **human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights**, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.” (TUE, Article 2)*

### Why It Matters for Teachers and Students

1. Civic Foundation of the EU
2. Empowering Students as Active Citizens
3. Countering Disinformation and Euroscepticism
4. Connecting to Real-World Issues

EU values are not abstract ideals - they are the foundation of our laws, our rights, and our identity as Europeans.

Helping students understand and internalize these values prepares them to defend democracy, resist extremism, and actively shape the future of Europe.



# Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.1. Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union

### Why It Matters for Teachers and Students

#### 1. Civic Foundation of the EU

2. Empowering Students as Active Citizens
3. Countering Disinformation and Euroscepticism
4. Connecting to Real-World Issues

- Article 2 is not just aspirational – it is a legal and constitutional cornerstone of the entire European project.
- It defines the EU's identity and the conditions of membership.
- A country that does not uphold these values cannot join or remain in good standing in the EU.
- It is a benchmark for legislation, public policy, and court decisions across all 27 Member States.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.1. Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union

### Why It Matters for Teachers and Students

1. Civic Foundation of the EU
2. Empowering Students as Active Citizens
3. Countering Disinformation and Euroscepticism
4. Connecting to Real-World Issues

- Many young people grow up in the EU without understanding their civic rights and responsibilities.
- Understanding these values builds students'
  - Civic literacy
  - Social responsibility
  - Democratic resilience
- Informed students are more likely to participate in elections, volunteer, speak up against injustice, and stand for equality.



# 👆 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.1. Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union

### Why It Matters for Teachers and Students

1. Civic Foundation of the EU
2. Empowering Students as Active Citizens
- 3. Countering Disinformation and Euroscepticism**
4. Connecting to Real-World Issues

- Eurosceptic narratives often portray the EU as undemocratic or distant.
- Teaching Article 2 helps debunk this by showing that democracy, freedom, and human dignity are central to the EU's purpose.
- It builds a values-based narrative, not just an economic or political one.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.1. Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union

### Why It Matters for Teachers and Students

1. Civic Foundation of the EU
2. Empowering Students as Active Citizens
3. Countering Disinformation and Euroscepticism
4. Connecting to Real-World Issues

Each of the values in Article 2 can be connected to current events and school life:

Human dignity → Anti-bullying campaigns

Freedom → Student press, free speech in classroom debates

Democracy → Student councils and school decision-making

Equality → Gender and disability inclusion

Rule of law → Fair rules, justice, consequences

Human rights → Respect for minorities like Roma, LGBTQ+, or migrant communities



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.2. Understanding EU values

VALUE: **HUMAN DIGNITY**

**Human dignity is inviolable. It must be respected, protected and constitutes the real basis of fundamental rights.**

Human dignity means that every person has **intrinsic worth, simply by being human**. It is not just another right, it is the foundation of all fundamental rights. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes dignity as essential to freedom, justice, and peace. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the Court of Justice of the EU confirm that dignity is a core principle of Union law. This means: **no right can be used to violate someone else's dignity. Dignity must be respected at all times, even when other rights are limited.**

### Relatable examples for students

When a student is bullied and the school steps in to stop it, that is human dignity being protected. It shows that everyone deserves respect, no matter who they are. Laws and institutions shall ensure that dignity is upheld, so young people can feel safe, valued, and treated equally.

Go to the WIDE Case Study Portfolio, **Case Study 1**, for an example of EU initiative ensuring Human Dignity



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.2. Understanding EU values

### VALUE: **FREEDOM**

Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights (**Title, II**)

Go to the WIDE Case Study Portfolio, **Case Study 2 and 7**, for an example of EU initiative ensuring Freedom

### Relatable examples for students

Students in an EU country can openly express their opinions on social media or in class, even if they are critical of the government or school rules - this is freedom of expression, protected by EU law. In some non-EU countries, saying the wrong thing could lead to punishment or censorship.

A teenager in the EU can travel or move freely to study in another EU country, without needing a visa. This freedom of movement gives young people access to new opportunities, languages, and cultures.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.2. Understanding EU values

### VALUE: **DEMOCRACY**

**The functioning of the EU is founded on representative (and participatory) democracy. A EU citizen automatically enjoys political rights.**

Every adult EU citizen has the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in elections to the European Parliament. EU citizens have the right to stand as a candidate and to vote in their country of residence, or in their country of origin.

Go to the WIDE Case Study Portfolio, **Case Study 3, 4 and 9** for an example of EU initiative ensuring Democracy

### Relatable examples for students

Students take part in youth consultations or local town hall meetings to share views on issues that directly affect their lives like public transport, school funding, mental health services, events, digital safety etc. These moments show that having a voice truly matters, because citizen input can lead to real change. In the EU, democratic participation is a right: people can vote, petition, and join consultations to influence decisions. These experiences teach young people that democracy works best when everyone participates, and that their voice can help shape decisions that affect their future.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.2. Understanding EU values

VALUE: **EQUALITY**

**Equality is about equal rights for all citizens before the law.**

The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies and is the basis for European integration. It applies in all areas. The principle of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

Go to the WIDE Case Study Portfolio, **Case Study 5, 6 and 7** for an example of EU initiative ensuring Equality

### Relatable examples for students

A girl and a boy in the same school apply for a summer internship in a tech company. Both have same qualifications and are given equal chances, roles, and pay because EU law protects gender equality. In those country with no or weak legal protection women may earn significantly less than men for doing the same job, or be discouraged from applying. Teachers can encourage students to research global gender inequality and comparing legal systems to prove that **equality is not automatic, it exists because laws protect it**, and the EU plays a key role in upholding those rights for everyone.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.2. Understanding EU values

### VALUE: **RULE OF LAW**

The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything the EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary. The EU countries gave final jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice - its judgments have to be respected by all.

Go to the WIDE Case Study Portfolio, **Case Study 8** for an example of EU initiative ensuring Rule of Law

### Relatable examples for students

If a government in an EU country passes a law that unfairly restricts media or bans peaceful student protests, individuals and civil society groups can first challenge the law in national courts; if these fail to uphold EU values and fundamental rights, the case can be brought before the European Court of Justice.

This example shows students that the rule of law is a safeguard against abuse of power. Even when national systems fail, the EU's legal structure provides a higher level of protection for democracy, human rights, and justice.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.2. Understanding EU values

### VALUE: **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Human rights are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice.

Go to the WIDE Case Study Portfolio, **Case Study 9** for an example of EU initiative ensuring Human Rights

### Relatable examples for students

On 2024, the Court of Justice of the EU ruled that Afghan women are entitled to asylum in the EU solely based on their gender and nationality, given the systemic discrimination and restrictions on women's rights under the Taliban regime. The Court emphasized that the risk of persecution is inherent for Afghan women, eliminating the need for individual proof of specific threats.

This case shows the key role of the CJEU in interpreting and enforcing EU laws to protect fundamental rights across member states.



# 👆 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.3. Exercise proposals to engage students with EU values

### Video Exercise

#### *Connecting EU Values to Personal Experience*

#### What is the Exercise?

- Students create a short video where they narrate a **personal experience** that reflects the importance of an **EU value** (e.g., freedom, equality, human dignity)
- Encourages self-reflection and links **abstract values** to **real-life situations**.
- Can be integrated into **Civic Education** as a core activity.

#### Why is it Important?

- Helps students develop a **personal connection** to EU values.
- Promotes **critical thinking**, **civic awareness**, and **digital communication skills**.
- Encourages **empathy** and a stronger **European identity**.

#### Challenges for Implementation

- **Time constraints** in school curricula can make it hard to include new standalone exercises.
- Requires coordination, time for reflection, and basic video production skills.
- May need teacher support for students with limited access to digital tools or storytelling experience.



# 👉 Module 1: Introducing students to EU values

## 1.3. Exercise proposals to engage students with EU values

### Alternative Approach

### *Linking EU Values to Curriculum Subjects*

#### What is the Alternative?

Integrate EU values into existing subjects:

- **History:** Trace the evolution of a EU value across European events and different historical areas
- **Philosophy:** Analyse the philosophic foundation of a EU value through key thinkers.
- **Literature:** Explore EU values reflected in narratives and characters.
- **Art:** Trace the representation of EU values in art

#### Why is it Important?

- Makes **efficient use of class time** by embedding value-based learning into standard topics.
- Reinforces students' **understanding of EU values** through multiple disciplinary perspectives.
- Encourages **creative thinking** and deeper engagement with academic content.
- Helps students see the **relevance of EU values across different areas of knowledge** and culture.



## Module 2

# EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership





## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.1. The Copenhagen criteria

**EU values are central to determining which countries can join and remain part of the European Union.** Only those that demonstrate a genuine and sustained commitment to these values can begin and progress through the accession process.

This principle is formalized in the **Copenhagen Criteria (1993)**, which require candidate countries to have:

- **Stable institutions** that guarantee **DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, and RESPECT FOR AND PROTECTION OF THE MINORITIES;**
- A **functioning market economy** and the capacity to withstand competition and market pressures within the EU;
- The ability to **adopt and effectively implement the obligations of EU membership**, including alignment with the goals of political, economic, and monetary union. This third criterion includes the obligation to adopt the **EU acquis** (see next slide)



## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.1. The Copenhagen criteria

#### What is the *acquis*?

The *acquis* is the full body of EU law and obligations that all EU countries must accept. It includes treaties, legislation, case law, rights, and principle. It represents the common values and rules-based system that hold the Union together.

The chapters of the *acquis* (presently 35) form the basis of the accession negotiations for each candidate country.

#### Chapter 23: Judiciary and fundamental rights is a key pillar

This chapter is strictly linked to EU values as it ensures that candidate countries:

- Respect judicial independence
- Guarantee human rights and anti-discrimination protections
- Implement the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights



## 👉 Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.2. Case studies of candidate countries

#### TURKEY



**Status:** Candidate country since 1999; accession talks opened in 2005.

#### Main Concerns:

**Authoritarian shift:** The government's consolidation of power, especially following the 2016 attempted coup, has severely weakened checks and balances.

**Judicial control:** Thousands of judges and prosecutors were dismissed or jailed post-2016, raising concerns over judicial independence.

**Press freedom:** Turkey is one of the world's largest jailers of journalists. Many independent media outlets have been shut down or taken over by pro-government actors.

**Civil society:** NGOs face legal and financial pressure, while protests are often violently repressed.

#### EU Response:

- The **European Parliament froze negotiations in 2019**, citing serious violations of human rights and democratic norms.
- The EU-Turkey relationship remains transactional (e.g. migration deal) rather than integrative.



## 👉 Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.2. Case studies of candidate countries

#### SERBIA

**Status:** Official candidate since 2012; accession talks ongoing.

#### Main Concerns:

**Media environment:** Although formally free, many outlets face indirect state control through ownership and advertising pressure. Independent journalists are targets of smear campaigns.

**Judicial reform:** Progress is slow, and courts are seen as vulnerable to political interference.

**Corruption and minority rights:** There is limited accountability for high-level corruption. Roma, LGBTQ+ communities, and other minorities still face systemic discrimination.

**Protests:** Regular civic protests highlight concerns about electoral integrity, public sector politicization, and media manipulation.



#### EU Response:

Despite opening multiple negotiation chapters, the pace has slowed significantly, with the EU calling for “credible and sustained reform” before further steps can be taken.



## 👉 Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.2. Case studies of candidate countries

#### MONTENEGRO



**Status:** Most advanced Western Balkan candidate; started negotiations in 2012.

#### Main Concerns:

- **Rule of law:** Repeated EU warnings about politicized institutions, weak judicial oversight, and lack of progress in organized crime cases.
- **Corruption:** Widespread perception of state capture and elite impunity. Investigations are often slow and rarely result in convictions.
- **Political instability:** Frequent government crises and contested elections have undermined reform continuity.

#### EU Response:

- Negotiation chapters have been opened, but very few are provisionally closed, due to insufficient progress in key rule of law chapters (23 and 24).
- The EU requires stronger judicial independence and anti-corruption enforcement before further advancement.



## 👉 Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.2. Case studies of candidate countries

#### NORTH MACEDONIA



**Status:** Candidate since 2005; accession talks opened in 2022.

#### Main Concerns:

- **Bilateral disputes:** The name dispute with Greece (resolved in 2018 with the Prespa Agreement) blocked progress for years.
- **New obstacles:** Bulgaria has since raised identity and language-related concerns, further delaying negotiations.
- **Rule of law and reforms:** While North Macedonia has made significant reforms (judicial, public administration), challenges remain in media independence and anti-corruption measures.

#### EU Response:

- The EU has praised North Macedonia's commitment to reforms, but bilateral disputes show that political stability and good neighbourly relations are also crucial.
- EU credibility is at stake: delays despite reforms risk disillusionment and democratic fatigue.



## 👉 Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.2. Case studies of candidate countries

#### ALBANIA

**Status:** EU candidate country since 2014;  
accession talks officially opened in 2022 (together with North Macedonia).

While Albania has made significant progress in aligning with the EU acquis, its path to EU membership has been **heavily shaped by value-based conditionality**, particularly in the areas of:

- **Judicial reform and the fight against corruption**
- **Guaranteeing free and fair elections**
- **Protection of fundamental rights and minorities**



#### EU Response:

- In 2019, the European Council delayed opening accession negotiations, citing the need for tangible results in justice reform and anti-corruption measures.
- In 2022, negotiations officially began, but progress remains closely tied to continued adherence to EU democratic standards.



## 👉 Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.3. Inclusion policies in the enlargement process

Protecting minority rights and promoting inclusive governance are non-negotiable conditions for candidate countries during the EU accession process, as shown by the **case of Albania** →

#### What is Inclusive Governance?

Governance that ensures **participation, accountability, transparency, and equal representation** of all groups in society, including ethnic, religious, linguistic, and gender minorities.

#### Why Minority Rights Matter in EU Accession

- Minority protections are part of **Article 2 TEU** and the **Copenhagen Criteria**.
- The EU requires states to **guarantee non-discrimination, cultural and language rights, and equal access to public services**.

- In 2017, Albania adopted a **Law on Protection of National Minorities**, formally recognizing nine groups, including Greeks, Roma, Macedonians, and Egyptians. The law also promotes access to education in minority languages and supports cultural expression.
- Challenges remain in translating legal protections into real change, particularly for **Roma and Balkan Egyptians**, who continue to face **poverty, segregation, and limited public service access**.
- Data collection, enforcement mechanisms, and local-level compliance are still underdeveloped.

**EU Evaluation:** The Commission has welcomed legislative progress but urged **systemic follow-through**, noting that inclusive governance must be visible at all levels of administration and reflected in **public outcomes, not just policy texts**.



## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.3. Inclusion policies in the enlargement process

**THE CASE OF CROATIA:** A notable example of a recent EU member state that implemented significant inclusion policies to align with EU standards is Croatia, which joined the EU on 1 July 2013. A key policy area where Croatia made substantial reforms during its accession process was in social inclusion, particularly concerning the decentralisation of social services and the de-institutionalisation of care

#### Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM) Signed (2007)

- Framework agreement with the EU to tackle **poverty** and **social exclusion**.

#### Social Benefit Reform

- Consolidated fragmented benefit schemes.
- Improved **accessibility** and **transparency** of social welfare.

#### Decentralisation of Social Services

- Transferred service delivery to local levels for greater responsiveness.
- Promoted **community-based approaches**.

#### De-institutionalisation Strategy

- Shift from institutional care to **family and community care models**.
- Focus on children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

#### EU Alignment

- Conformed to EU's **European Social Model**.
- Demonstrated commitment to **inclusive welfare systems**.



## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.3. Inclusion policies in the enlargement process

**THE CASE OF CROATIA:** The protection of minority rights was another essential area of reform that Croatia had to address in order to meet the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership, particularly in the areas of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

#### Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities (2002)

- Guaranteed cultural, linguistic, and political rights.
- Enabled proportional **minority representation** in local and national government.

#### Serb Minority Integration

- Post-conflict reintegration of ethnic Serbs.
- Access to housing, education, and employment restored.

#### Language Rights

- Recognised use of minority languages in public administration and education.

#### Anti-Discrimination Law (2008)

- Prohibited discrimination on grounds including **ethnicity, religion, and language**.
- Established equality bodies and monitoring mechanisms.

#### EU Chapter 23 Compliance

- Reforms directly addressed **judiciary and fundamental rights**.
- Key factor in progressing through accession negotiations.



## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.3. Inclusion policies in the enlargement process

**THE CASE OF ROMANIA:** Before accessing in the EU (2007), Romania undertook comprehensive legal and policy reforms to enhance the rights and inclusion of its national minorities, particularly focusing on linguistic rights, political representation, and the socio-economic integration of the Roma community.

#### 1997 Constitution – Article 6 and Article 120

These articles guarantee the right of persons belonging to national minorities to preserve, develop, and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity. Article 120 specifically allows for the use of minority languages in local public administration in areas where minorities represent over 20% of the population.

#### Law on Local Public Administration (2001)

This law reinforces the right to use minority languages in administrative dealings, ensuring that local authorities provide services and official documents in minority languages where applicable.

#### Education Law Amendments (1995 & 1997)

Amendments to the Education Law permitted instruction in minority languages at all levels of education, from primary to university, supporting cultural preservation and equal access to education for minority groups.

#### National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD)

Established in 2001, the CNCD is an independent body tasked with enforcing anti-discrimination laws, including those protecting minority rights. It plays a crucial role in monitoring and addressing instances of discrimination across various sectors.



## Module 2: EU Values as cornerstone of EU membership

### 2.3. Inclusion policies in the enlargement process

**THE CASE OF POLAND:** The following legal and policy reforms were crucial in demonstrating Poland's commitment to EU values, particularly regarding the protection of minority rights. By aligning its national laws with EU standards, Poland met the political criteria necessary for accession (2004), showcasing its dedication to democratic principles and human rights.

#### 1997 Constitution – Article 35

- Guarantees minorities the right to preserve their culture, language, and religion.
- Allows the creation of cultural and educational institutions.

#### Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Languages (2005)

- Official recognition of national and ethnic minorities.
- Permits bilingual place names and use of minority languages in administration.
- Recognizes Kashubian as a regional language.

#### Roma Inclusion Programme (2004–2013)

- Targeted education, employment, healthcare, and housing for the Roma community.
- Funded initiatives to combat discrimination and promote integration.

#### International Commitments

- Ratified the **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**.
- Later ratified the **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (2009)**.



## 👉 Module 3

# Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership





## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.1. Protection mechanism against value backsliding

#### Article 7 TEU – Political Sanctioning Tool

- Allows the Commission (and others) to initiate action when a member state **seriously breaches EU values**.
- May lead to **suspension of voting rights** in the Council.
- Rarely used due to political sensitivity, but procedures were triggered against **Poland** (2017) and **Hungary** (2018).

#### Infringement Proceedings (Article 258 TFEU)

- Legal action taken by the Commission when a member state **violates EU law**, including breaches of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- Can lead to fines and CJEU rulings (e.g., Poland's judicial reforms, Hungary's asylum law violations).
- Essential tool for **ensuring compliance with rule of law standards**.

#### Rule of Law Reports (Since 2020)

- Annual country-by-country reviews of judicial independence, corruption, media pluralism, and institutional checks and balances.
- Help **monitor trends**, flag early concerns, and promote transparency.

#### Conditionality mechanism (Since 2021)

- The EU can **withhold EU funding** (e.g., recovery funds) from countries that **undermine the rule of law** and misuse EU money.
- Applied for the first time in 2022–2023 to Hungary due to public procurement concerns and weak anti-corruption measures.



## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.2. Article 7 TEU

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of member states committed to shared values such as human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, as outlined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. **To safeguard these values, the Treaty provides a special mechanism under Article 7**, introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997.

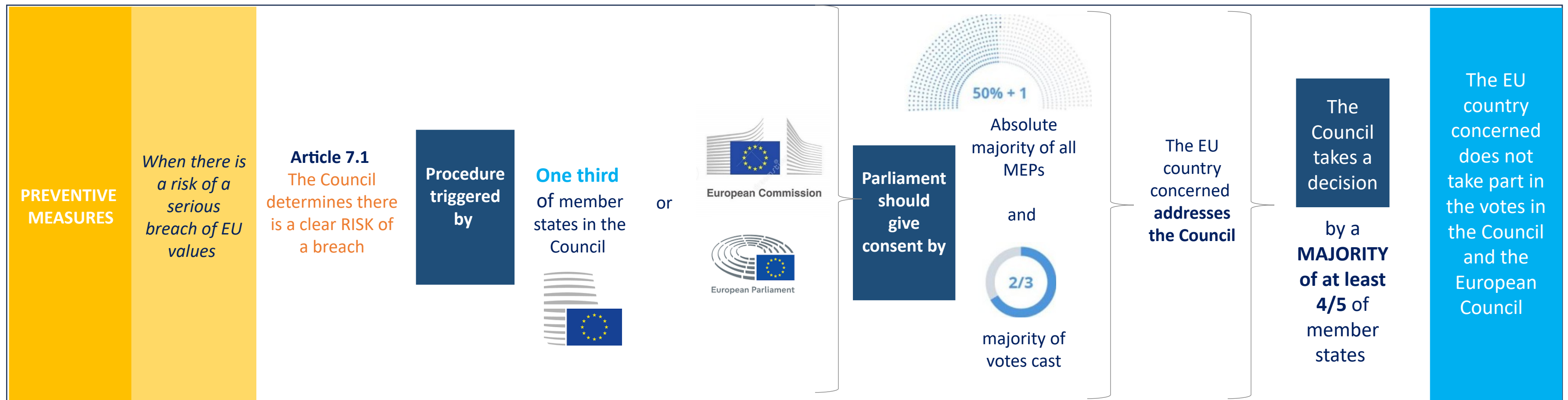
This procedure allows the EU to address serious threats to its foundational principles. It consists of two parts:

- **Preventive mechanism**, which can be triggered when there is a clear risk of a breach. Decisions under the preventive mechanism require a four-fifths majority in the Council.
- **Sanctions mechanism**, applicable if a breach has already occurred. Possible sanctions may include suspending a member state's voting rights in the Council. Decisions under the sanctions mechanism require unanimity among EU heads of state or government, excluding the country concerned in both cases. This ensures that EU values are upheld collectively and transparently.



# Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

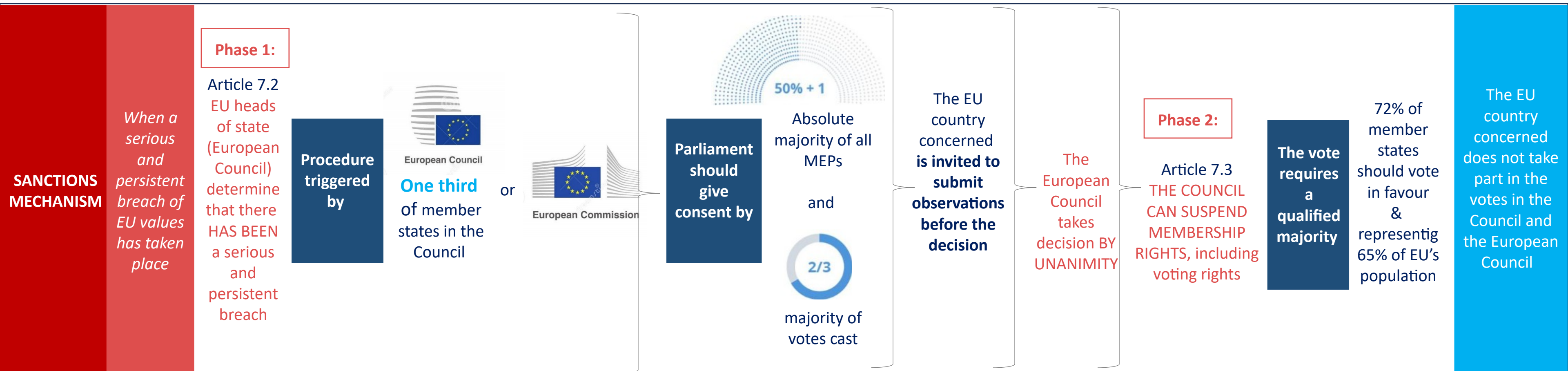
## 3.2. Article 7 TEU – Preventive measures





# Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

## 3.2. Article 7 TEU – Sanctions mechanism





## 👉 Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.3. The rule of law conditionality mechanism

CLICK ON THE  
IMAGE & WATCH  
THE VIDEO





## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.3. The rule of law conditionality mechanism

#### What is it?

- EU mechanism (**Regulation 2020/2092**, in force since January 2021)
- Links access to EU funds with respect for rule of law principles
- Targets issues like judicial independence, corruption, misuse of EU funds

#### Why was it created?

- Response to growing concerns over democratic backsliding (e.g. Hungary, Poland)
- Article 7 TEU (political sanctions) proved ineffective due to unanimity requirement
- Proposed in 2018 during EU budget and recovery fund negotiations

#### Legal Basis

- Based on Article 322(1)(a) TFEU – financial management of the EU budget
- Aims to protect the Union’s financial interests, not replace Article 7



## **Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership**

### 3.3. The rule of law conditionality mechanism

#### How it works

- EU can suspend, reduce, or restrict funds if rule of law breaches threaten the EU budget
- Measures must be proportionate and protect final beneficiaries from harm

#### Legal Challenge

- Hungary and Poland challenged the regulation at the EU Court of Justice
- CJEU upheld the regulation in Feb 2022, confirming its legality and necessity

#### First Use Case

- Dec 2022: **EU suspended €6.3 billion in funds to Hungary** due to deficiencies in public procurement, anti-corruption efforts, and prosecution independence

#### Why it matters

- Strengthens the EU's ability to enforce values and financial accountability
- A key tool for safeguarding democracy, rule of law, and EU taxpayer money



## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.3. The case of Poland

The Commission has not yet formally activated the Conditionality Regulation towards Poland, despite repeated calls from the European Parliament. However, the EU has activated multiple tools to respond to Poland's rule of law crisis;

#### Article 7 TEU Procedure (Preventive Mechanism)

- **Pre-Article 7 (2016–2017):** Initiated due to issues with Poland's Constitutional Tribunal and other systemic concerns.
- **Article 7(1) (2017–ongoing):** Triggered when prior recommendations were ignored. It identified a **clear risk of a serious breach** of EU values. Despite six Council hearings, no formal recommendations or sanctions have been adopted.
- It is a **preventive arm**, not requiring unanimity, unlike the **sanctioning arm (Article 7(2))**, which has never been used.

#### Infringement Procedures (Article 258 TFEU)

**Five key cases** since 2015 addressing judicial reforms, especially the **disciplinary regime for judges**. Notable cases:

- **Case C-619/18:** Targeted early retirements of Supreme Court judges.
- **Case C-791/19:** Found Poland's disciplinary regime incompatible with EU law.
- **Case C-204/21 (Muzzle Law):** Addressed retaliation against judges implementing EU law.
- **Case C-448/23:** Targeted the captured **Constitutional Tribunal's decisions** undermining ECJ authority.

The Commission has been criticized for a **slow and selective use** of this tool.



## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.3. The case of Poland

#### Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs)

Since 2020, Poland has received CSRs on:

- Judicial independence
- Corruption investigations
- Independence of the prosecution

These CSRs are now echoed in the Annual Rule of Law Report (ARoLR). However, the Council's repeated generic language and lack of enforcement undermine their effectiveness.

#### Conditionality Mechanism (Regulation 2020/2092)

Not yet activated against Poland, despite a strong factual basis. The Commission sent a request for information on 17 November 2021 but declined to proceed with formal notification.

Breaches identified in Poland affect:

- Supreme Audit Office (SAO)
- Prosecutorial services
- Judiciary

These violations risk financial mismanagement and obstruct effective judicial review and cooperation with *European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF)* and *European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)*.



## Module 3: Ensuring commitment to EU Values after membership

### 3.3. The case of Poland

#### EU Recovery Fund Conditionality (“Rule of Law Milestones”)

As part of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), Poland's access to EU funds was conditioned on meeting judicial independence milestones:

- Reforming the Disciplinary Chamber
- Enabling review of past decisions affecting judges.
- Reforming law-making procedures

The Commission controversially approved Poland's RRP, although internal dissent from Commissioners and non-compliance persists. €100 billion in funding has reportedly been withheld via other financial levers, without invoking the Conditionality Regulation (more info [here](#))



## Module 4

# Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values





## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

In the following slides, we present a classroom simulation designed to help students assess respect for EU values in candidate countries.

The first part of the slides walks you through the step-by-step structure of the activity, including practical guidelines for preparation and classroom implementation.

Following that, you will engage in a dedicated teacher workshop, where you will reflect on the simulation, explore how to adapt it to your students' level and curriculum, and design a version tailored to your own teaching context.

By the end of this session, you will:

- ✓ Understand how the simulation activity works, step by step
- ✓ Identify the most relevant value domains, countries, and materials for your classroom
- ✓ Be equipped with a customised implementation plan, supported by a range of reliable sources



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

## 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

### TEACHER PREPARATION

Before starting this simulation with students, teachers should briefly explain how the European Commission (EC) evaluates candidate countries. This helps students understand the logic behind the assessments and ensures their role-play is grounded in real procedures and expectations.

#### EC Evaluation Framework

- Each year, the European Commission publishes an **Enlargement Package**, which includes detailed country reports assessing the progress of each candidate and potential candidate country.
- Assessments are based on the **Copenhagen criteria**. This simulation will focus in particular on the **1st criteria**: Stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.

#### Assessment Process

The Commission gathers information from various sources:

- **EU Delegations** in the candidate countries.
- Contributions from **EU Member States** and the **European Parliament**.
- Reports from **international and non-governmental organizations**.
- Input from the governments of the candidate countries themselves.

#### Reporting and Recommendations

- Each report presents a detailed **assessment of the state of play** in the candidate country, highlighting **achievements** and **areas needing improvement**.
- The reports set out **guidelines on reform priorities**, providing a roadmap for the candidate countries to align with EU standards



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

**The scenario:** students will simulate the role of European Commission officials tasked with evaluating a candidate country's progress in upholding EU values, focusing on areas such as democracy, rule of law, human rights, and anti-corruption measures.

#### STEP 1

Together with the students, **select a Candidate Country** - (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine)

Divide students into small groups. **Each group will investigate a specific policy domain** relevant to the first Copenhagen criterion, which focuses on democracy, rule of law, human rights, and minority protection.

#### Suggested Working Groups (policy themes):

**Democratic Institutions & Governance:** Examine electoral systems, political pluralism, separation of powers, and transparency

**Rule of Law & Judicial Independence:** Investigate the functioning and independence of the judiciary, access to justice, and anti-corruption frameworks.

**Human Rights & Civil Liberties:** Focus on protection of fundamental rights (e.g., freedom of expression, assembly, religion), as well as treatment of vulnerable groups.)

**Minority Rights & Inclusion:** Assess legal and social protection for ethnic, linguistic, and other minority groups, and efforts to combat discrimination.



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

#### STEP 2

Each group researches their topic for the selected country using real sources (see next slide for further details on the sources).

By collecting **quantitative** and **qualitative** data, students should investigate:

- Progress made in aligning with EU values.
- Current challenges or violations.
- Recommendations for improvement in line with EU standards.

#### STEP 3

Groups produce a short, structured report including:

- Executive summary.
- 2–3 key findings
- 2–3 concrete actionable recommendation.

#### Presentation Phase

Each group presents their findings to the rest of the class, simulating a briefing to the European Commission. The teacher should encourage critical discussion and comparison between groups.



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

## 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

### TEACHER PREPARATION

To ensure students engage meaningfully in their role, while managing workload and information overload, limit access to 3–5 high-quality resources.

Thematic Group	Main Research Focus	Recommended Sources
<b>Democratic Institutions &amp; Governance</b>	Electoral systems, political pluralism, government accountability, civil society	<a href="#">Freedom House – Nations in Transit</a> : Assesses democratic governance, elections, and civil society in post-communist countries. <a href="#">V-Dem Dataset</a> : Offers global democracy indicators on political pluralism, transparency, and institutional strength.
<b>Rule of Law &amp; Judicial Independence</b>	Judicial reforms, access to justice, corruption, legal institutions	<a href="#">World Justice Project – Rule of Law Index</a> : Ranks countries by judicial independence, legal fairness, and public trust in law. <a href="#">Transparency International – Country Profiles</a> : Includes corruption perception scores and anti-corruption assessments.
<b>Human Rights &amp; Civil Liberties</b>	Freedoms of expression, religion, assembly, privacy; treatment by law enforcement	<a href="#">Amnesty International – Country Reports</a> : Reports on rights violations, policing, and freedom of expression. <a href="#">Human Rights Watch – Country Profiles</a> : Reviews abuses and reforms in areas like press freedom, security forces, and detainees. <a href="#">CIVICUS Monitor</a> : Tracks civil liberties, activism, and freedom of assembly worldwide.
<b>Minority Rights &amp; Inclusion</b>	Ethnic, religious, linguistic minority protection; anti-discrimination measures	<a href="#">Council of Europe – ECRI Reports</a> : Evaluates how countries prevent racism, xenophobia, and protect minority rights. <a href="#">Minority Rights Group International</a> : Provides country-level analysis and advocacy updates on ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. <a href="#">OECD – Inclusive Policy Reviews</a> : When available, offers reviews on social inclusion, equity in education, and non-discrimination.



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

### TEACHER PREPARATION

#### Guiding Questions for Students

- What has the candidate country done well?
- What EU values are at risk or not fully respected?
- What specific actions does the Commission recommend?
- What would your team recommend before full accession?

#### HOW TO OUTLINE RECOMMENDATIONS

The teacher starts by explaining: “A recommendation is an action step the Commission suggests to help a country improve in an area where it falls short of EU values. It should be specific, realistic, and linked to a problem.

Use a simple example:

- Issue: “Low judicial independence in Country X – courts are influenced by politics.”
- Recommendation: “Country X should strengthen the independence of the judiciary by reforming the process for appointing judges, ensuring it is merit-based and transparent.”



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

### WORKSHOP FOR THE TEACHERS

1. Examine the simulation and reflect individually, or in pairs:

Guiding Questions	Your Notes
Would this simulation work with my students?	
Which country/domain would I select?	
What resources are suitable for my students' level?	
Can I simplify or support the research (e.g. pre-selecting sources)?	
What outcomes (skills, values, civic awareness) do I expect?	
Are there national or local sources I'd like to integrate?	



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.1. Simulation: assessing EU values in candidate countries

### WORKSHOP FOR THE TEACHERS

#### 2. Draft Your Classroom Plan

Planning Area	Your Plan
Class profile (age, level)	
Time available (single/double lesson, project?)	
Selected candidate country	
Group structure (number, roles, rotation?)	
Source selection and guidance	
Type of final student output (presentation, written report, mock debate?)	



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

### 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

**Representative democracy** is the form of government in which people elect their representatives (e.g., members of parliament) whom they authorise to propose and pass legislation on their behalf

**Participatory democracy** refers to mechanisms through which citizens are involved in public decision-making processes, thus complementing representative democracy



## 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

Below are two examples of **participatory democracy** initiatives supported by the European Commission that teachers can use as interactive activities to help students understand the EU value of democracy and see its relevance in everyday lives.



### Citizens' Engagement Platform

Your space to participate in EU policymaking

[Get involved >](#)



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

The European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) offers a platform for democratic participation, allowing individuals across the EU to propose legislative changes. Any EU citizen of voting age in European Parliament elections can start an initiative, provided it meets specific criteria.

#### HOW IT WORKS

- Find six other eligible voters from six different EU member states to join your initiative group.
  - Clearly outline your proposal and request the European Commission to officially register your initiative.
  - Once approved, your initiative will be listed on the official ECI website.
- Collect a minimum of 1 million signatures from citizens in at least 7 EU countries within a 12-month timeframe, either digitally or on paper.
  - Ensure the gathered signatures are certified by the national authorities of the respective countries.
  - Submit your complete and verified initiative to the European Commission.
  - Meet with representatives of the EC to discuss your initiative. Present your proposal during a public session at the European Parliament.
  - Receive an official response from the EC regarding your initiative.
  - If applicable, the EC will follow up with concrete actions or proposals.



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

**EXERCISE FOR STUDENTS:** Help students understand and engage with the EU's democratic values through a hands-on simulation of their own European Citizens' Initiative Campaign

- 1. Divide the class into groups of 7** - Each student represents a different EU country.
- 2. Choose a cause** - Let students pick a topic they care about (e.g., climate, youth jobs, digital rights).
- 3. Create your ECI** - Each group:
  - Defines their objective
  - Drafts a short proposal
  - Designs a campaign poster or flyer.

Use the real European Citizens' Initiative website to show examples and videos.

#### 4. Run a signature campaign

- Groups present their initiative to the class.
- Classmates "vote" by signing the ones they support.

#### 5. Hold a mock public hearing

- Top 2 teams present to a "parliament" (rest of the class or students from different classes).
- Q&A and final vote.

Learning Outcomes: Practice teamwork, debate, and civic expression; Develop awareness of democratic participation at EU level.



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

**EXERCISE FOR STUDENTS:** Help students understand and engage with the EU's democratic values through a hands-on simulation of their own European Citizens' Initiative Campaign

- 1. Divide the class into groups of 7** - Each student represents a different EU country.
- 2. Choose a cause** - Let students pick a topic they care about (e.g., climate, youth jobs, digital rights).
- 3. Create your ECI** - Each group:
  - Defines their objective
  - Drafts a short proposal
  - Designs a campaign poster or flyer.

Use the real European Citizens' Initiative website to show examples and videos.

#### 4. Run a signature campaign

- Groups present their initiative to the class.
- Classmates "vote" by signing the ones they support.

#### 5. Hold a mock public hearing

- Top 2 teams present to a "parliament" (rest of the class or students from different classes).
- Q&A and final vote.

Learning Outcomes: Practice teamwork, debate, and civic expression; Develop awareness of democratic participation at EU level.



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

### WORKSHOP FOR THE TEACHERS

1. Use the prompts below to evaluate how you might use this simulation with your own class:

Guiding Questions	Your Notes
What causes would my students be interested in?	
Would students need extra support (e.g., examples, templates)?	
Would I run this over one session or spread it across lessons?	
What skills (research, persuasion, design, speaking) would be most relevant to emphasise?	
Could I link this activity to existing topics in civic education or social studies?	



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.2. Train with the EU value of democracy: the European Citizens' initiatives

### WORKSHOP FOR THE TEACHERS

2. Use this table to build your own teaching version of the ECI simulation:

Planning Area	Your Plan
Timeframe for the activity (e.g. 2 lessons, 1 project week)	
Themes/issues students might explore	
Group structure (number, country roles, language support?)	
Support materials needed (templates, example ECIs)	
Final product (presentation, campaign poster, public hearing?)	
How to evaluate (peer feedback, rubric, participation)	



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.3. Express your voice: EU Citizen Engagement Platform

#### Citizens' Engagement Platform

Your space to participate in EU policymaking

Get involved >

[The Citizens' Engagement Platform](#) is a digital platform designed to enable citizens of the European Union to share ideas and actively participate in shaping EU policies.

With the support of real-time translation across all 24 official EU languages, users can engage in discussions and express their views, connecting with fellow citizens and like-minded individuals across Europe.

Promoting greater public involvement in democratic processes is a central goal of the European Commission. The European Citizens' Panel offers an effective way for individuals to voice their opinions and contribute equally to EU decision-making.



## Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching EU Values

### 4.3. Express your voice: EU Citizen Engagement Platform

#### Citizens' Engagement Platform

Your space to participate in EU policymaking

[Get involved >](#)

#### **SUGGESTED LESSON STRUCTURE (45–60 minutes)**

- 1. Introduction (15 minutes)** - Provide a brief overview of the Citizens' Engagement Platform. Display the platform to all students and show examples of both open and closed consultations to help them become familiar with its features and understand the types of feedback that can be submitted.
- 2. Group Activity (25–30 minutes)**
  - Form small groups (2–4 students).
  - Pick one open consultation that interests your group.
  - Fill in a worksheet or Google Form with >Title of the consultation >What it is about (summarize in their own words) >Who can give feedback > Deadline for participation >Their own draft feedback (5-10 sentences) explaining their opinion.
- 3. Presentation & Discussion (10–15 minutes)**



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.3. Express your voice: EU Citizen Engagement Platform

### WORKSHOP FOR THE TEACHERS

1. Answer the following guiding questions:

Guiding Questions	Your Notes
Is the language level of the platform manageable for my students?	
What topics on the platform are most relevant or interesting for them?	
Could this be used as a civic education or language activity?	
How will I introduce the idea of public consultation and democratic feedback?	
Would I use a worksheet, Google Form, or verbal discussion to guide their response?	
What support might students need when formulating their feedback (examples, sentence starters, peer review)?	



# 👉 Module 4: Classroom Strategies for Teaching Values

## 4.3. Express your voice: EU Citizen Engagement Platform

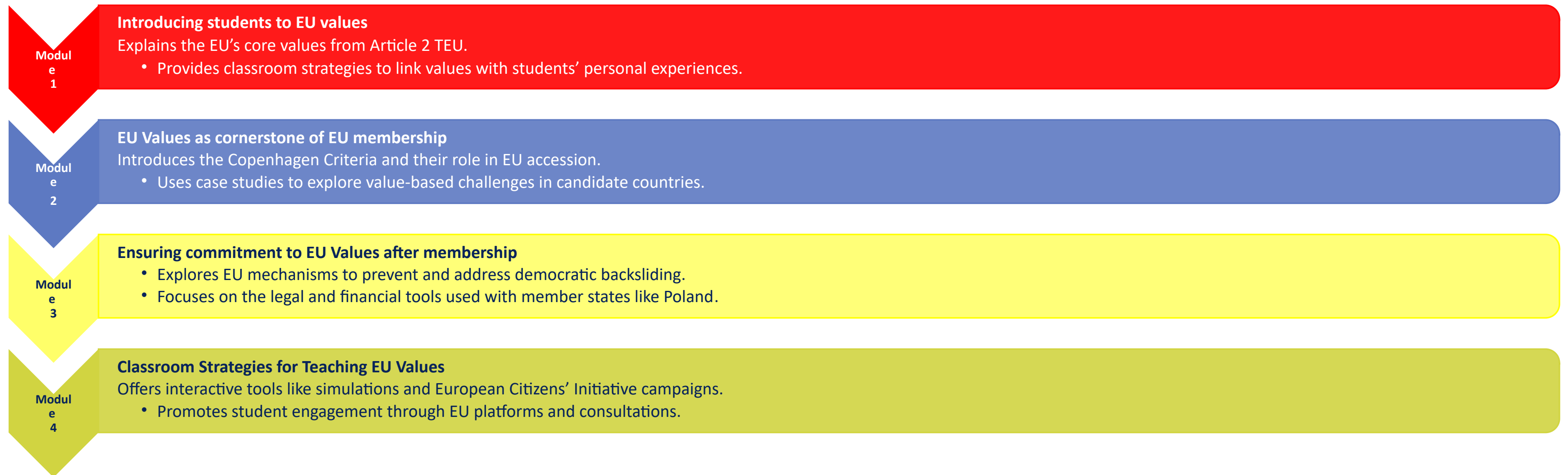
### WORKSHOP FOR THE TEACHERS

2. Design your own plan for using the Citizens' Engagement Platform in class:

Planning Area	Your Plan
Student level (age, skills)	
When/where in the programme it fits	
Consultation topic(s) to suggest or let students choose	
Group size and classroom format	
Preparation steps (e.g. warm-up activity, vocabulary support)	
Tools for response (worksheet, digital form, slides?)	
How to debrief or evaluate the activity	



## Summary



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



**Education about the EU –  
The key to conscious citizenship!**