



IO2 – Toolbox of Integration Resources

Handbook – The EU and
its Benefits



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Young Migrant Integration Leaders

Integration Leader Handbook

The aim of this short handbook is to support you, as a young leader of integration, to use the digital resources provided in the Toolbox of Integration Resources with young migrants in your community. Through this short handbook, we will provide you with some background information on the topic being discussed in the digital resource and then we will provide some guidance on a follow-up activity that you can complete with young people in your local network. The activity included in this handbook will work to further develop their understanding of the topic outlined in the digital resource. In some cases, where group discussions are more appropriate, we will guide you in how to set up a group discussion, and will provide some discussion points and questions for you to introduce to young people in your local group.

The topic of this handbook relates to the digital resource – **The EU and Its Benefits**

Introduction to the Topic

The aim of this digital resource is to make young people aware of some of the rights and protections that they enjoy as citizens of the EU and to raise awareness among them about what the EU is, why it was established and the core functions that its institutions performs. In this section, we will provide some background information for you on these topics, with the aim that you will share this knowledge with young people in your group to enhance their understanding of the European society that they are a part of.

What is the EU?

The European Union, or EU, is a political and economic union of 28 countries in Europe. Member countries include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Why was the EU established?

The initial aim of a union of European countries was to establish peace and prosperity in Europe by increasing economic cooperation between countries following the Second World War. This led to the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1958 between six countries. As more countries joined the Union, the goals expanded to include policy development on a range of issues including climate, security, justice, health, environment and migration. To reflect this evolution the name was changed to the European Union in 1993.

What are the aims of the EU?

Today the European Union has four main aims:

1. To protect human rights and freedoms by establishing European citizenship
2. To cooperate with member states in the area of justice to ensure freedom, security and justice
3. To promote economic and social progress through a range of co-operative initiatives which include the single market, a common currency (the euro), social and regional development and environmental protection.
4. To assert Europe's role in the world

What are the different EU institutions?

The European Union function through 5 main institutions:

1. The European Parliament
2. The Council of the European Union
3. The European Commission
4. The Court of Justice
5. The Court of Auditors

The 3 institutions which are responsible for EU legislation are:

- The **European Parliament**, which is elected by EU citizens through elections held every 5 years.

- The **Council of the European Union**, which represents the governments of member countries.
- The **European Commission**, which represents the interests of the Union as a whole.

What are your rights as an EU citizen?

As a European citizen, you have the following rights:

- The right of free movement and residence in the territory of the Member States.
- The right to vote and stand for election in European and local elections.
- The right to diplomatic protection in third countries
- The right to petition the European Parliament
- The right to bring complaints before the European Ombudsman.
- The right to address any of the Union's institutions or bodies in one of the official languages and to receive an answer in the same language.
- The right to access official European Parliamentary documents

Using this Resource with a Group

To use this resource with young people in your local group, we recommend that you begin by introducing the topic to people in your group. To prepare what you will say, you should first watch the digital resource yourself and then you can recap on some of the key points mentioned in this handbook.

You should then invite all young people in your group to watch the digital resource. As you won't have access to a projector and a screen, you can invite your peers to log on to the EXEMPLAR project website: www.exemplars.eu and watch the digital resource on their smartphone, tablet or other device.

Once all peers in your network have watched the video resource, you should begin by asking them:

1. What did you think of the video resource?
2. What did you learn from it? Did you learn something new?
3. How did you find this resource useful and why?

Follow-up Activity

When you have made sure that all young people in your group have watched the digital resource and have engaged in this short discussion, we would encourage you to lead a more in-depth group discussion about their rights and entitlements of EU citizens.

Activity Name: Group Discussion – What has the EU done for you?

Timing: We recommend that you should hold this discussion with your group for 15-20 minutes - depending on how much they are willing to engage in the discussion and share with the group.

Materials: You do not need any materials for this activity, just to have a space to sit around and discuss this issue with young people in your group – try a local community centre or a youth café, if there is one in your town or city.

Setting up a Group Discussion:

- Before you start a group discussion, it is important that the atmosphere is right – so consider where you will hold your local meeting. As previously mentioned, a youth café or community centre can be a good place to start.
- To create a nice atmosphere, agree with young people in your group that you should all respect the opinions of others, listen when others are speaking and don't interrupt each other – all opinions should be considered as valid and respected in your group.
- Ensure that all young people have watched the digital resource, and then begin by addressing the question posed at the end of the video:
 - If you could live in any EU country, what would it be? And why?

- For this discussion, allow young people a few minutes to think before they choose which EU country they would like to speak about. If you are happy to, you can share which country you would like to live in and why with the group first to get the conversation started.
- After all young people in your group have shared which EU country they would choose and why, you can next introduce the topic of their rights as EU citizens.
- To begin this discussion, ask them to answer:
 - What has the EU done for you?
 - What rights and protections do you enjoy as an EU citizen?
 - Do you think you have a responsibility as an EU citizen to uphold certain values and why?
- If young people are struggling to answer these questions, you can allow them some time to research all of their rights online – using their phones or other smart devices.
- Through this group discussion, the aim is to develop an appreciation among young people about the rights, protections and values that are built into the ethos of the EU.
- You may wish to share the following link with young people in your group if they need more support to fully understand the European Union and its values:
<https://europarlamenti.info/en/values-and-objectives/values/>.

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