



Geography: Passport to Europe

Teacher Notes

Introduction

Teaching a unit on the European Union (EU) can be tackled in many different ways. In this module, a cross-curricular approach with Modern Foreign Languages has been taken. The case studies focus on geographical issues within a range of EU member countries - some commonly studied in MFL, others less so. All lessons include the learning of key terms from the languages of the countries studied.

Within each country case study, an 'issues-based' approach is taken. Each country is examined through a particular geographical theme or issue. The following case studies are used:

- Poland and the UK: Economic migration
- France: Crime
- Germany: Sustainable energy production
- Spain: Food miles, globalization and consumerism
- Bulgaria: Tourism
- Italy: Plate tectonics

These issues also link to the main aims of the EU:

1. To promote economic and social progress.
Help people earn enough money and get treated fairly.
2. To speak for the European Union on the international scene.
By working as a group the EU hopes that Europe will be listened to more by other countries.
3. To introduce European citizenship.
Anyone from a member state is a citizen of the EU and gets four special rights, including the freedom to move freely between countries of the EU.
4. To develop Europe as an area of freedom, security and justice.
Help Europeans to live in safety, without the threat of war.
5. To maintain and build on established EU law.
Make laws that protect people's rights in the member countries.

Approaching the module

Prior to teaching this module, ensure that you have a good understanding of the EU. The links provided at the end of this document will help you to gain a good understanding of its member countries, aims and the way in which it is governed and operates. Further details are also given in the fact sheet that accompanies the module.

Today, 27 countries make up the EU, and three more are candidate countries, meaning that they are working towards the requirements of membership. As of January 2007 the EU had some 494 million citizens.

The member countries of the EU are listed in the table below, along with their years of joining.

Member country	Year of joining
Austria	1995
Belgium	1957
Bulgaria	2007
Cyprus	2004
The Czech Republic	2004
Denmark	1973
Estonia	2004
Finland	1995
France	1957
Germany	1957
Greece	1981
Hungary	2004
Ireland	1973
Italy	1957
Latvia	2004
Lithuania	2004
Luxembourg	1957
Malta	2004
The Netherlands	1957
Poland	2004
Portugal	1986
Romania	2007
Slovakia	2004
Slovenia	2004
Spain	1986
Sweden	1995
The United Kingdom	1973
Croatia	Candidate country
Macedonia	Candidate country
Turkey	Candidate country

Suggestions for starting the topic

- The student booklet that accompanies this tutorial provides an overview of the module, and is therefore a useful way to introduce students to some of the key ideas and terms they will encounter.

- Introduce the EU by having a brainstorm to gauge prior levels of learning and understanding amongst the class. How many member countries can they list? Are they aware of the history and aims of the EU?
- Another interesting question to ask might be about students' experiences of EU countries. Ask them to bring in some pictures of any countries they have visited and to share their experiences with the class.
- Set an ICT exercise to look at some of the suggested websites in the student handbook. This will give students a good background understanding before they embark on the lessons themselves. In groups, they could be asked to focus on a particular country and feed back to the class, to give everyone an introduction to each country / case study.
- The interactive starter activity for lesson 1 is a good exercise to use at the start of the module to introduce students to the EU and its member countries. It is a simple task; students are given 'clues' which they use to identify the member countries of the EU.

Suggestions for teaching the module

After deciding how many lessons you will be able to devote to the topic, look at the module plan and downloadable resources provided with this module.

Download the accompanying student booklet and distribute it to your students. It includes key terms and basic introductions to each of the lessons. Alternatively, students can view the document online for homework or during a lesson where they may access computers.

After completing lesson 1 which introduces the EU, its member countries and main aims, the rest of the module then focuses on individual countries. There is the risk that students see this as a string of case studies, so links to the EU aims introduced in lesson 1 should be made clear throughout.

Extensive and detailed background information on each of the countries and the geographical issues addressed is contained in the fact-sheet which can be downloaded. This should be read before tackling each lesson, so that you feel comfortable with the material. There are also links provided in the fact-sheet, many of which are also listed at the bottom of this resource, to enable you to research some of the materials.

Suggestions for extension and G&T activities

The module plan includes some ideas for differentiation of the lesson tasks. Some additional extension activities are suggested below:

- Hold a debate on whether it's a good thing to be part of the EU. This could be held as an extension to lesson 1, or even after completion of the whole module. Students should prepare for the activity in groups, and could refer to the online tutorial materials on 'controversial issues' for assistance with this.
- Switzerland is an example of a European country which has decided not to become a full member of the EU. Students could research the reasons for this, and investigate the quality of life in Switzerland, to see whether the decision has benefited or disadvantaged the country. The activity could culminate in a speech which students write and address to the class.



- Students could also examine the 'candidate countries' which are waiting to become members of the EU. What are the requirements of membership? Why might countries be keen to join the EU? What are the implications of further enlargement of the EU?
- Students could hold a debate on the free movement of migrant workers within the EU. Do they think this is a good policy? Within the debate, they could draw on the impacts of Polish migration to the UK. A table of information on this topic is provided in the fact-sheet accompanying the module.
- Students could examine the positive and negative aspects of wind energy, and especially to focus on offshore wind farms - are they the best option for the future?
- Students could produce a 'food miles' map of the world, by researching certain foods sold in their local supermarket and where they come from, e.g. fresh fruit and veg - this could be given as a homework task. They could then plot them on a world map and present the distances over which they will have travelled in order to get to the supermarket in the UK.
- Students could design a WWF 'clean up Coto Doñana National Park' campaign poster
- Students could imagine that they have been on the alternative holiday they were assigned to research and present in the lesson on Bulgaria, and write a diary or postcard describing what it was like and how it differed from a more 'traditional' holiday.
- As an extension to the final lesson of the module, more able pupils might like to try an activity which looks at how the scale of an eruption is measured. The website link for the activity is provided at the end of this document. is found on the teacher notes for the lesson. They could also consider how the relocation and evacuation plans could be improved.

Completing a unit of work on the European Union

If time is available, an eighth lesson could be added to the module in which students choose another EU country to research, and find a geographical theme or issue within that country to investigate. Ideas for this, along with relevant weblinks, are provided below:

Lesson 8 - ideas for geographical topic research:

1. **Candidate countries for EU membership and the process of EU enlargement:** criteria for membership, country bids, the pros and cons of membership, implications for the country itself, potential future candidate countries, the impact of the last big enlargement of the EU in 2004.
(See http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/candidate-countries/index_en.htm, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/index_en.htm, <http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/> and http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/5th_enlargement/index_en.htm).



2. **Retired populations in southern Spain:** retirement migration and its impacts, for example enclaves, reduction in available fertile farmland due to development, pressure on water supplies, implications for health services.
(See www.technologyreview.com/microsites/spain/water/p3.aspx and www.european-citizenship.net/details.php).

3. **The European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF):** what is it, what is it used for and how does it benefit EU countries? Much of the fund is linked to natural disasters, for

example forest fires in Portugal. Research could also be related to the study of weather and climate in the EU and/or global warming.

(See http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/solidar/solid_en.htm, www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/RMOI-FS33P?OpenDocument&RSS20=02-P and <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/g24217.htm>).

4. **The European capital of culture:** mapping past, present and future capitals of culture, researching one city in detail (for example Liverpool in 2008 or Vilnius (Lithuania) in 2009), how the cities are chosen.

(See

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Capital_of_Culture, www.culturelive.lt/en/main/, www.linz09.at/en/index.html and http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm)



Conclusion

Teaching a unit on the European Union allows for a varied and stimulating range of geographical topics to be covered. There are many aspects of the EU which can be examined, many countries to study and many issues within these countries to focus on. In addition, a module on the EU can be re-visited later in the programme of study when related themes or issues arise.

Internet links

Detailed information about the history and development of the EU can be found here: http://europa.eu/abc/12lessons/index_en.htm, or here: http://europa.eu/abc/history/index_en.htm.

The Newsround CBBC website which summarises the top 5 aims of the EU can be viewed at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_2130000/newsid_2139000/2139071.stm.

The Euroscholar Day held each year with 500 pupils from all over the EU is detailed in this video from Teacher's TV: www.teachers.tv/video/4905.

There are excellent links on Polish migration to the UK on the geography pages website at: www.geographypages.co.uk/poland.htm.

This video on the Teacher's TV website is about the integration of Polish children into UK schools: www.teachers.tv/video/17833

Radar graphs to compare crime levels in selected EU countries can be obtained from: www.europeansafetyobservatory.eu/downloads/EUICS%20-%20The%20Burden%20of%20Crime%20in%20the%20EU.pdf.

Links to the EUCPN award and 2008 UK winning project can be found at:

www.eucpn.org/eucp-award/index.asp and www.eucpn.org/docs/ECPA_2008_UK.pdf.

The location of the Alpha-Ventus wind farm is shown on a map at:

www.spiegel.de/fotostrecke/fotostrecke-33595.html#backToArticle=567622 and further information on the project can be found at www.alpha-ventus.de/index.php?id=80.

Students can use the following website to research their alternative trips to Bulgaria:

www.responsibletravel.com/.

The website www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/vesuvius/deadliest.html contains the on-line exercise to examine the methods used to measure the magnitude of volcanic eruptions.

