



**EXPLORE.
CONNECT.
ACT!**



YOUTH4DEMOCRACY
#ACT4CLIMATE



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

EXPLORE. CONNECT. ACT! - An Experiential Toolkit is a practical educational resource developed within the Erasmus+ project Youth4Democracy: #Act4Climate. The project partners are:

NGO 'Parallel-Silistra', Bulgaria;

Associazione Scienze Naturali Unite aps, Italy;

United Vision ry, Finland;

Intensify World - ASSOCIAÇÃO TECNOLÓGICA ERECREATIVA, Portugal

The toolkit brings together a collection of four **interactive games, outdoor activities, educational workshops and ready-to-use learning materials** designed by our young adults as part of their journey towards becoming trainers.

The activities are based on the principle that young adults learn most effectively when they are not only receiving information, but are given opportunities to **experience, discuss, collaborate, make decisions and take action**.

The resource includes activities such as the *Europe in Action* treasure hunt, an experiential journey combining European knowledge, teamwork, cultural diversity and environmental awareness; *The Odyssey of Species*, an ecological educational game exploring biodiversity and the interdependence of species; and structured workshops on the **European Citizens' Initiative and disability rights and democratic participation**.

A key feature of the toolkit is its **experiential and participatory approach**. The activities are practical and engaging. Participants work together, solve problems, communicate and make decisions. They also reflect on what they have learned. In *Europe in Action*, participants work in teams and complete challenges linked to European countries, languages, cooperation and environmental responsibility. In *The Odyssey of Species*, they take on the roles of species from the Danube ecosystem. They learn about interdependence and the impact of environmental pressures.

The toolkit also connects **knowledge with democratic action**. The European Citizens' Initiative workshop helps participants turn a climate or environmental concern into a possible European initiative. They explore its European dimension, identify possible partners and supporters, and develop a short campaign message. The disability rights workshop helps

participants identify barriers and develop ideas for more inclusive participation. It also promotes the principle of “Nothing about us without us.”

The toolkit is mainly designed for **youth workers, trainers, NGO staff, educators, volunteers and facilitators** working with young people. It can be used in formal and non-formal education, as well as in community activities. The activities can help practitioners explore **European citizenship, democratic participation, climate action, environmental issues, inclusion and intercultural cooperation.**

Project: Youth4Democracy: #Act4Climate
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Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the granting authority. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

YOUTH4DEMOCRACY:ACT4CLIMATE

TREASURE HUNT “EUROPE IN ACTION”

Dedicated to Europe Day - 9 May

GENERAL CONCEPT

Europe is not just a map, institutions or national borders.

Europe is a space of cooperation, cultural diversity, languages, traditions and shared values.

In the game “Europe in Action”, participants embark on a symbolic journey across Europe. Along the way, they solve tasks, overcome challenges, discover clues and collect resources that will help them reach the final destination.

Each team collects:

💰 Euros (game currency)

🇪🇺 European flags

🥚 Eggs for the Final Challenge

The objective is to reach the finish line with as many resources and points as possible.

PARTICIPANTS

Number of participants: 15-40

Team size: 5-6 participants

Duration: 90-120 minutes

BONUS MISSIONS

At the beginning of the game, each team draws two secret missions.

For each successfully completed mission, the team receives:

+ 10 bonus points

Possible missions:

🚶 One team member must be carried by the others for a total of 5 minutes during the game.

🇪🇺 One participant must carry a European flag throughout the entire game.

🎤 At the end of the game, the whole team performs a short song together.

🔗 Two participants must remain physically connected throughout the entire game.

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STAGE 1 TEAM FORMATION

Duration: 20 minutes

Station 0 - “Our European Team”

Challenge

Each team must:

- create a team name;
- design its own team symbol;
- create a team flag.

Materials

- a large piece of fabric;
- paints;

- paintbrushes;
- markers.

Requirement

The team symbol must include at least one European element.

For example:

- stars;
- a map of Europe;
- the European flag;
- a well-known European symbol.

Evaluation

Creativity - up to 10 points

Teamwork - up to 10 points

Time Management - up to 10 points

Maximum score: 30 points

STAGE 2 THE EUROPEAN ADVENTURE

STATION 1

“Unity, Teamwork and Patience”

Challenge

The team lines up in a single file. At the front of the line there is a container filled with water. At the end of the line there is an empty bottle.

Using only one sponge, participants must transfer water from the container to the bottle. After each round, the participant at the front moves to the end of the line.

Objective

Fill the bottle as quickly as possible.

Key Message

Without cooperation and coordination, success is impossible.

Reward

🏆 First Clue



CLUE TO STATION 2

Among the trees a trail awaits, but look with care—not all is easy to see.
Do not search for a river or flowing water, but for something made of metal hidden among the trees.
It connects two banks, though only a small one, waiting patiently beneath the shadows. There you will discover your next clue, if you continue your journey side by side, together as one.
(The station is located near the small metal bridge.)

STATION 2

“Know Europe”

Challenge

The team receives a blank map of Europe. Their task is to correctly identify and label seven European countries.

Requirement

The team may continue only after all seven countries have been correctly identified.

Reward

💰 10 Euros

CLUE TO STATION 3

Your map has come to life, but Europe speaks in many voices.
Follow the wide and open path towards a place for sport and play.
There a hoop reaches high into the sky, where a new challenge awaits, quietly calling your name.

(The station is located at the basketball hoop.)

STATION 3

“The Languages of Europe”

Challenge

The team must write ten words in different European languages.

Rules

- Bulgarian words are not allowed;
- a maximum of three words may be in English;
- the remaining words must be in other European languages;
- words may be written using the Bulgarian alphabet.



Examples

Bonjour • Hola • Grazie • Danke • Salut • Merhaba
• Čau • Hei • Olá • Dzień dobry

Reward

💰 10 Euros

CLUE TO STATION 4

You are already speaking like true Europeans. Continue along the familiar path.

Do not look for water, although the name may be misleading.

Look for the beginning, not the end.

At the entrance to the path leading to Staykov Fountain, your next challenge awaits.

STATION 4



“Flag Hunt”

Since the beginning of the game, flags have been hidden throughout the area. Some belong to European countries. Others are there to mislead you.

Challenge

The team presents all the flags they have collected. For each flag, they must identify the country it represents.

Reward

For every correctly identified European flag, the team receives:

💰 1 Euro

Incorrect answers and non-European flags do not earn points.

CLUE TO STATION 5

Your backpacks are already heavy with European treasure. The next stop is not a museum. It is a place of strength and determination. Look for the blue metal fitness equipment beneath the open sky, where people train using only their own bodies.

STATION 5 “The European Market”

Teams may spend the Euros they have collected.

Available Purchases

✚ 5 bonus points - 5 Euros

🃏 Joker Card for the next challenge - 10 Euros

🕒 Reduce the final time by 3 minutes - 7 Euros

Mandatory Purchase

Every team must buy:

🥚 3 eggs

Price: 8 Euros

Without the eggs, the team cannot proceed to the Grand Finale.

The market remains open until the end of the game.



CLUE TO STATION 6

Every great journey ends where it first began. Return to the starting point. Set your imagination free. Create a memory that tells the story of your European adventure.

STATION 6

“A European Memory”

Challenge

The team must create a short video telling a story about how we can protect nature together.

Requirements

- every team member must appear in the video;
- the video should tell a story;
- all available props may be used.

Evaluation

Creativity - up to 10 points

Originality - up to 10 points

Team Spirit - up to 10 points



STAGE 3

THE GRAND FINALE

All teams gather together. They use the eggs purchased at the European Market.
Challenge

Team members take turns separating the egg whites from three eggs into a bowl.

Objective

Whisk the egg whites until they form a thick, stable foam.

FINAL TEST

The facilitator carefully turns the bowl upside down.

If the foam remains in the bowl:

✓ The team has successfully completed the Grand Finale.

If the mixture starts to run:

✗ The Final Challenge has not been successfully completed.

FINAL SCORING

The final score is based on:

- 💰 Euros collected
- 🏁 Completed stations
- 🇪🇺 European flags collected
- 🏆 Successful completion of the Final Challenge
- 🎯 Bonus missions completed
- 🎨 Team symbol and flag
- 🛒 Strategic bonuses purchased

FINAL MESSAGE

Europe is not built by individual countries.

It is built by people who work together.

Throughout this game, every challenge required cooperation, trust, respect for diversity, and a shared goal.

Just like Europe

itself.





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STATION

European Languages





FAMILY



STATION



FLAG HUNT

STATION

European Market



STATION

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES





**3-MINUTE
ADVANTAGE**

15 €



3 EGGS

40 €



**+ 20
POINTS**

20 €



3 EGGS

40 €



**1-MINUTE
ADVANTAGE**

5 €



**3-MINUTE
ADVANTAGE**

15 €



**MISTERY
BOX**

20 €



**+ 20
POINTS**

20 €



**MISTERY
BOX**

20 €



**1-MINUTE
ADVANTAGE**

5 €

I FLAG = 5€

**ONE TEAM MEMBER
MUST BE CARRIED
FOR A TOTAL
OF 3 MINUTES.**

**TWO TEAM
MEMBERS MUST BE
TIED TOGETHER
BY THE WRISTS**

**ONE TEAM MEMBER
MUST HOLD A BOWL
IN THEIR RIGHT
HAND AT ALL TIMES.**

**ONE TEAM MEMBER
MUST HOLD A BOWL
IN THEIR LEFT HAND
AT ALL TIMES.**



YOUR 10 WORDS!

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



Who decides what in the EU?

When you hear discussions about politics, it is often people who are mentioned: the prime minister of your country, for example, or an opposition leader. This is because it is people who take decisions and shape policies. And the same is true for the EU.

The European institutions are simply places where politicians from all EU countries can meet to work together towards concrete results. Let's take a look at the institutions where most of the decisions are made.

The European Parliament

As the EU's only directly elected institution, the European Parliament is the collective voice of ordinary people. Members are directly elected by European citizens every 5 years. Anyone with EU citizenship is eligible to vote in these elections. In some EU countries where non-citizens can sometimes vote in sub-national elections, people who fulfil extra residency conditions (such as non-citizens legally living in the country) can also vote in European Parliamentary elections.

The last European elections were held in 2024. The next ones will be held in 2029. You have the right to vote from the age of 18 in all EU countries except Austria and Malta, where you can vote at 16, and Greece, where you can vote when you are 17. Belgium and Germany have lowered the voting age to 16 for some elections like the European elections.

Did you know?

Young people between 15 and 30 years old are the most pro-European of all generations. In 2019, over 70% of them said they had a positive view of the EU.

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 478



EU Member States

The European Union is a unique partnership between 27 European countries, known as Member States. Together they cover much of the European continent. The EU is home to around 447 million people, which is around 6% of the world's population. Citizens of the EU countries are also EU citizens.

Exercise: Who is a member of the EU?

Look at the list of flags and country names on the right. They are all European but they don't all belong to the European Union. Once you have identified the EU countries, locate them on the map.

Note: The United Kingdom voted to leave the EU in June 2016 and left in 2020.



	ALBANIA
	ANDORRA
	AUSTRIA
	BELARUS
	BELGIUM
	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
	BULGARIA
	CROATIA
	CYPRUS
	CZECHIA
	DENMARK
	ESTONIA
	FINLAND
	FRANCE
	GERMANY
	GREECE
	HUNGARY
	ICELAND
	IRELAND
	ITALY
	LATVIA
	LIECHTENSTEIN
	LITHUANIA
	LUXEMBOURG
	MALTA
	MOLDOVA
	MONACO
	MONTENEGRO
	NORTH MACEDONIA
	NETHERLANDS
	NORWAY
	POLAND
	PORTUGAL
	ROMANIA
	SAN MARINO
	SERBIA
	SLOVAKIA
	SLOVENIA
	SPAIN
	SWEDEN
	SWITZERLAND
	TÜRKİYE
	UKRAINE
	UNITED KINGDOM
	VATICAN CITY

European Union

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic association of 27 European sovereign states. It traces its origins to the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) by six European nations in the post-Second World War years.

The aim of the European Community was to pursue closer economic cooperation on the European continent, with the intention of preventing the horror and destruction of two world wars from happening again. In this respect, the EU has proven its worth: Western Europe has never before enjoyed such a long period of peace.

Although the EU began as a purely economic community, cooperation has expanded over time to include areas such as asylum, migration, justice, safety, energy, environment, and foreign policy, developing into a unique political organisation.

Key data (timeline)

- **2020** – Withdrawal of the United Kingdom (EU-27)
- **2013** – Accession of Croatia (EU-28)
- **2012** – 25 EU member states sign a “fiscal pact” as part of the response to the debt crisis
- **2007** – Signing of the Treaty of Lisbon (effective 2009)
- **2007** – Accession of Bulgaria and Romania (EU-27)
- **2004** – European Constitutional Treaty fails after referendums in France and the Netherlands
- **2004** – Enlargement: Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Cyprus, Malta (EU-25)
- **2002** – Introduction of the euro as cash currency
- **2001** – Treaty of Nice (effective 2003)
- **1997** – Treaty of Amsterdam (effective 1999)
- **1995** – Austria, Sweden, Finland join (EU-15)
- **1992** – Treaty of Maastricht (effective 1993): creation of the EU
- **1990** – Reunification of Germany
- **1986** – Spain and Portugal join; Single European Act
- **1981** – Greece joins
- **1973** – United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark join
- **1965** – Merger Treaty (effective 1967): common institutions
- **1957** – Treaties of Rome (effective 1958): EEC and Euratom
- **1951** – Treaty of Paris (effective 1952): European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)

Founding of the EU

At the end of the 1940s, after the immense suffering and destruction caused by two world wars, there was a strong need to ensure lasting peace in Europe.

On 9 May 1950, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed that coal and steel production be placed under a joint authority. This idea aimed to make war between France and Germany not only unthinkable, but materially impossible.

This led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, founded by France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg

The EU also has three common symbols:

a flag (12 golden stars on a blue background)

a hymn (Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy')

a motto ('United in diversity')

ACT4CLIMATE

THE ODYSSEY OF SPECIES Ecological educational game about biodiversity on the Pozarevo Islands

Concept

"Odyssey of Species" is an interactive educational outdoor game that puts participants in the role of real animal species from the Danube River ecosystem. Through movement, knowledge, cooperation and experience, participants learn about the complex relationships between organisms and realize the consequences of human activity and climate change on nature.

The story begins with an ecological crisis. Due to drying up of reservoirs, pollution, human disturbance, climate change and habitat destruction, various species are forced to leave their home.

Ahead of them lies a legend of a new refuge - the protected area "Pozharevsky Islands", one of the most valuable wetland habitats on the Bulgarian section of the Danube.

Each team must reach the new refuge, overcoming the trials that their species would encounter in real life.

Educational goals

The participants:

- learn more about the species in the Danube ecosystem;
- understand how food chains function;
- are aware of threats to biodiversity;
- develop teamwork skills;
- realize the interdependence of all living organisms.

Participants

Age: 10+ years

Number of participants: 12-30

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Teams:

- Little cormorants
- Crucian carp
- Mosquitoes

Playing field

There are 10 positions marked on the field.

Teams move by throwing a pebble to the next position.

Special fields:

Field 4 - Question #1

Box 6 - Challenge #1

Field 8 - Question #2

Field 10 - Challenge #2

After successful execution, the team continues.



TEAM "LITTLE CORMORANS"

History

You are little cormorants .

Your species is globally endangered.

Your body length is between 45 and 55 cm, and your wingspan reaches up to 90 cm.

They nest colonially in trees near water bodies and feed mainly on fish.

In recent years, your habitat has been shrinking. Riverside forests are being cut down, reservoirs are drying up, fishing nets are becoming a deadly trap, and human presence is disrupting the breeding season.

Looking for a new safe home.

Field 4 - Question #1

You are in a protected area " Pozharevsky Islands".

Why is this area protected?

Expected answer:

Because it preserves valuable wetland habitats and is home to endangered birds such as the little cormorant , the Dalmatian pelican, herons, the common kingfisher, the oystercatcher and many other species.

Box 6 - Challenge #1

Build a nest

After a long flight, you finally find a suitable place to breed.

You only have 2.5 minutes.

From the available natural materials you need:

- to guess what materials cormorants use ;
- to build a stable nest.

After execution, the moderator checks whether the nest is sufficiently stable.

Field 8 - Question #2

Why is the little cormorant an endangered species?

Expected answers:

- drying up of water bodies;
 - destruction of riparian vegetation;
 - human disturbance during nesting;
 - poaching;
 - fishing nets;
 - water pollution.
-

Field 10 - Challenge #2

The fishing net

During migration, you fall into a fishing net.

Participants stand in a symbolic network of rope or intertwined hands.

Without breaking the "net", they must free themselves in a maximum of 2 minutes.

They are allowed two attempts.

Arrival

Congratulations!

You have reached the Pozharevsky Islands.

You have trees for nesting and peace.

But you have no food.

If there are no fish, you cannot survive.



TEAM "CARASSI"

Background

You are crucian carp .

You are known for your ability to survive even in oxygen-poor waters.

But even your endurance has limits.

Low water levels, sandbars, pollution, and changes in the river make survival an increasingly difficult task.

Field 4 - Question #1

Why is crucian carp becoming an endangered species in some parts of the Danube?

Participants discuss:

- low water levels;
- pollution;
- habitat loss;
- overfishing ;
- climate change.

Box 6 - Challenge #1

Crossing the sandbar

A huge sandbar separates you from the new shelter.

You only have one bottle of water.

The task is for the entire team to keep water "within themselves" and simultaneously go around the playing field and return to the starting point.

The challenge symbolizes survival at low water levels.

Field 8 - Question #2

What does the crucian carp eat ?

At least three correct answers:

- worms;
- larvae;
- aquatic insects;
- caviar;
- small invertebrates.

Field 10 - Challenge #2

Passage

The fish move in synchrony.

The team chooses a leader.

Only he initiates movements.

The others instantly follow him.
The moderator has 3 minutes to guess the leader.
If he fails, the team survives.

Arrival

You have reached the protected area.
There are calm waters, shelters, and a lack of commercial fishing here.
But without insects and other small organisms, there is nothing to eat.



TEAM "MOSQUITOS"

Background

Most people don't like mosquitoes. But they have been part of ecosystems for over 100 million years. They are food for many birds, fish and bats.

Although they are not an endangered species, they depend on the availability of suitable wet habitats.

Field 4 - Question #1

What do mosquitoes eat?

Expected answer:

Mainly with nectar and plant juices.

Only females take blood, which is necessary for the development of eggs.

Box 6 - Challenge #1

Night hunting

All participants are blindfolded.

The moderator plays the role of a food source.

The team must reach it only by hearing and sound signals.

The task shows how mosquitoes detect their victims through their senses.

Field 8 - Question #2

What do mosquitoes need to live?

Expected answers:

- water;
- wet habitats;
- vegetation;
- suitable temperature;
- animals or humans for the development of the generation.

Field 10 - Challenge #2

The Hot Shore

On your way you encounter a huge colony of shore martins.

They feed on mosquitoes.

To avoid them, you need to walk along the shore.

You only have a few sheets a bottle of water.

The leaves are the only safe places to land.

The entire team must cover the designated distance without stepping outside of them.

Arrival

You have arrived at the Pozharevsky Islands.

You have water and vegetation.

But females have to lay eggs.

For this they need blood.

If there are no birds and mammals, the life cycle cannot continue.

THE GRAND FINALE

The first team reaches the protected area. It expects to be the winner.

But he learns the most important lesson.

The cormorant cannot live without fish.
Crucian carp cannot do without small invertebrates.
The mosquito cannot live without other animals.
No species exists alone.

From that point on, the first team to reach the finish line begins to help the other teams. True victory only occurs when all species reach their new home and the ecosystem becomes whole again.

Main message

All living organisms are part of a web of interdependencies.

When one species disappears, it affects all the others.

Conservation of nature is only possible through understanding, cooperation and respect for every form of life.

HANDOUTS FOR THE GROUPS



HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



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juv.

TEAM "LITTLE CORMORANS"

QUESTION No. 1

YOU ARE IN A PROTECTED AREA "POZHAREVSKI ISLANDS". IT COVERS THE ISLAND OF SMALL POZHAREVSKI ISLAND /MALK KOSUY/ AND THE EASTERN PART OF THE GREAT POZHAREVSKI ISLAND /GOLYAM KOSUY/, WHERE WE ARE LOCATED. THE AREA OVERLAPS THE PROTECTED AREA "POZHAREVO ISLAND" - PART OF THE EUROPEAN ECOLOGICAL NETWORK NATURA 2000. WHY IS THE AREA PROTECTED?

ANSWER No. 1

THE AREA IS PROTECTED DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF VALUABLE HABITATS, AS WELL AS THE PRESENCE OF THREATENED SPECIES OF BIRDS, AMONG WHICH THE LIGHT-SPECIFIC LITTLE CORMORAN WITH A HUGE COLONY THAT CAN BE SEEN AT NIGHT, VARIOUS SPECIES OF PELICANS, HERONS, EARTHQUAKES, OYSTER EATS AND MANY OTHERS.

QUESTION No. 2

THE LITTLE CORMORAN IS A GLOBALLY ENDANGERED SPECIE.

BODY LENGTH: 45 - 55 cm. WINGSPAN: 75 - 90 cm.

THE GREAT CORMORAN IS SIGNIFICANTLY SMALLER. THE TAIL IS RELATIVELY LONG, THE BEAK AND NECK SHORT. THE PLUMAGE IS DARK BROWN TO BLACK WITH A METALLIC SHINE.

IT NESTS IN TREES IN COLONIES. IT FEEDS ON FISH AND INHABITS SHALLOW WATERS RICH IN VEGETATION, DOES NOT MIGRATE IN WINTER, BUT SEEKS UNFROZEN WATERS, WHERE IT CONGREGATES IN LARGE COLONY.

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS SPECIES IS CURRENTLY GLOBALLY THREATENED. WHAT ARE THE REASONS?

ANSWER #2

Drainage of water bodies, cutting down of riverside trees and bushes, disturbance during nesting, shooting in fish farms, entanglement in fishing nets, water pollution.

CHALLENGE #1

YOU ARE ON A FLIGHT, LOOKING FOR A NEW PEACEFUL PROTECTED AREA AND YOU ARE ALREADY CLOSE TO THE DANUBE RIVER AND POZHAREVSKY ISLAND. IN THE MORNING FISHERMEN COME BY, THROWING NETS, DURING THE DAY TOURISTS COME TO THE BEACH. YOU ARE TIRED FROM THE LONG SEARCH AND THE DIFFICULTIES ON THE ROAD. YOU HAVE A VERY SHORT TIME TO BUILD YOUR NEST SO AS NOT TO MISS THE BREEDING PERIOD.

YOU HAVE 2.5 MINUTES TO GUESS WHAT MATERIALS A CORMORAN USES TO BUILD A NEST AND BUILD ONE.

CHALLENGE #2

WHILE TRYING TO BUILD A NEST, YOU FALL INTO FISHING NET. YOUR TASK IS TO IMITATE A NET AND THEN ESCAPE OUT OF IT. THE MODERATOR WILL GIVE YOU INSTRUCTIONS.

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TWO ATTEMPTS.

TIME 2 MIN.

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU ARE ALREADY IN THE PROTECTED AREA "POZHAREVSKI OSTROVI", YOU HAVE A NEST AND PEACE.

HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT ENOUGH TO SURVIVE.

YOU NEED FOOD. IF YOU HAVE COME AFTER THE TEAM, REPRESENTING A SPECIES YOU CAN FEED ON - GOOD. BUT IF NOT, YOU WILL HAVE TO HELP IT, BECAUSE THERE IS NO SPECIES IN THE WORLD THAT CAN SURVIVE ALONE. WE ARE ALL ONE.



TEAM "CARASS"

QUESTION No. 1

CARASS OR CURB IS A FRESHWATER FISH FROM THE CARP FAMILY. INHABITS STAYING OR SLOWLY FLOWING WATERS.

THE carp is capable of staying alive even in an ordinary puddle. Its only requirement is that there is no fast current, as its body is cumbersome and unsuitable for fighting it.

THE CARP IS OMNIVORES. IT ALSO SERVES FOOD FOR MANY LARGER FISH SPECIES, WATERBIRDS AND HUMANS.

WITHSTANDS VERY LOW DISSOLVED OXYGEN CONTENT IN WATER.

WHY DO YOU THINK THE CARASS IS BECOMING AN ENDANGERED SPECIE IN OUR SECTION OF THE DANUBE RIVER?

ANSWER #1

There are several reasons : changes and loss of suitable habitats, water pollution, drought and water level fluctuations, human activity and competition with other fish species.

Of particular importance is the reduction of riparian wetlands, floodplains, marshes and calm bodies of water connected to the Danube.

Therefore, the decline in crucian carp can be seen as a signal of changes in the ecosystem of the Danube and riparian wetlands .

QUESTION No. 2

WHAT SMALLER ANIMAL SPECIES IN THE DANUBE RIVER CAN CURRANT FEED? CHOOSE AT LEAST THREE IN 2 MIN.

ANSWER No. 2

WORMS, LARVAE, OTHER AQUATIC INSECTS, OTHER FISH FOOD

CHALLENGE #1

ON YOUR DIFFICULT PATH TO THE PROTECTED AREA "POZHAREVSKI OSTROVI" YOU ENCOUNTER LOW WATER. HUGE SAND SHELLS ARE EMERGING EVERYWHERE, THE OXYGEN IN THE WATER IS DECREASING, AND YOU ARE BEING TROUBLED EVERYWHERE BY FISHING NETS, BIRDS OF PREY, FISH, AND RAPIDS. YOU REACH ANOTHER HUGE SAND SHIELD THAT SEPARATES YOU FROM YOUR NEW HOME. IF YOU GO AROUND IT, YOU WILL EXPOSE YOURSELF TO NEW DANGERS. YOU HAVE TO PASS THROUGH IT, YOU CAN BECAUSE YOU ARE AN EXPERT IN SURVIVAL WITH LITTLE OXYGEN. YOU HAVE A BOTTLE OF WATER, USE IT SO THAT EVERYONE ON THE TEAM HAS WATER IN THEM, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME YOU ALL MANAGE TO GO AROUND THE PLAYING FIELD 1 TIME AND RETURN TO THE STARTING POSITION.

CHALLENGE #2

AS YOU KNOW, FISH LIKE TO MOVE IN PASSAGES AND IT OFTEN SEEMS AS IF THEY ARE MOVING IN PERFECT SYNCHRONISM. SAYING THAT ONE OF THEM GIVES THEM SIGNALS AND THEY ALL FOLLOW IT. THIS MUST BE THE MOST EXPERIENCED AND LEADERSHIP-MINDED FISH.

STAND IN A CIRCLE. THINK ABOUT WHO WILL TAKE ON THE ROLE OF THE LEADER. THE LEADER SHOULD SHOW DANCE MOVEMENTS AND THE OTHERS SHOULD IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW THEM. THE MODERATOR WILL TRY TO GUESS WHO THE LEADER IS. IF HE/SHE SUCCEEDS IN LESS THAN 3 MINUTES, YOU LOSE BECAUSE YOU ARE LEFT WITHOUT AN EXPERIENCED LEADER. IF HE/SHE FAILS, YOU MOVE ON.

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU ARE ALREADY IN THE PROTECTED AREA "POZHAREVSKI ISLANDS", YOU HAVE CALM WATER, ENOUGH HIDDEN PLACES AND A BAN ON COMMERCIAL FISHING.

HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT ENOUGH TO SURVIVE.

YOU NEED FOOD. IF YOU HAVE COME AFTER THE TEAM, REPRESENTING A SPECIES YOU CAN FEED ON - GOOD. BUT IF NOT, YOU WILL HAVE TO HELP IT, BECAUSE THERE IS NO SPECIE IN THE WORLD THAT CAN SURVIVE ALONE. WE ARE ALL ONE.



TEAM "MOSQUITOS"

QUESTION No. 1

THERE ARE OVER 3,500 SPECIES OF MOSQUITOS IN THE WORLD, AND OVER 20 IN BULGARIA. THEY ARE SMALL INSECTS THAT SUCK BLOOD FROM HUMANS AND MAMMALS. MOST ARE SAFE.

THEY ARE ANCIENT INSECTS. NATURE HAS HAD 100 MILLION YEARS TO DEVELOP THEM. THEY CAN SURVIVE ALMOST ANY CONDITION, TEMPERATURE AND DEVELOP RESISTANCE TO MORE AND MORE PESTICIDES. THEY HAVE BECOME PERFECT LITTLE BIOLOGICAL ENGINES FOR FLYING, REPRODUCING AND BLOOD-SUCKING.

WHAT DO MOSQUITOES EAT?

ANSWER No. 1

Mosquitoes feed primarily on plant sugars - nectar from flowers, plant juices and other sweet liquids. This is the main source of energy for both male and female mosquitoes. Only female mosquitoes suck blood, and not as a primary food source. Blood provides them with proteins and other substances necessary for the formation and development of eggs. They can feed on the blood of humans, birds, and other animals, depending on the species.

Male mosquitoes do not bite or feed on blood - they feed on nectar and other plant sources of sugars.

QUESTION No. 2

WHAT DO MOSQUITOES NEED TO LIVE?
DESCRIBE THEIR HABITAT.

ANSWER No. 2

Mosquito habitat

Mosquitoes prefer warm, moist places, especially near water. Their life cycle is closely linked to the aquatic environment, as eggs, larvae, and pupae develop in or around water.

Suitable habitats include swamps, lakes, riverbanks, canals, puddles, and other places with stagnant or slow-moving water. Mosquitoes can also breed in built-up areas, such as in water collected in buckets, pots, barrels, gutters, old tires, and other containers. Adult mosquitoes seek shady, moist, and protected places among grasses, shrubs, and other vegetation. They feed primarily on plant sugars, and the females of many species also need blood to develop their eggs.

Therefore, the most favorable environment for mosquitoes combines water + warmth + moisture + vegetation + access to food.

CHALLENGE #1

AS YOU KNOW, EVERYONE HATES MOSQUITOES. BUT THEY HAVEN'T EXISTED FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS FOR NO REASON.

MOSQUITOES HAVE GREAT SENSORS WITH WHICH THEY DETECT HEAT, CARBON MONOXIDE EMISSIONS, AND BLOOD VESSELS.

ALTHOUGH MOSQUITOES ARE NOT A THREATENED SPECIES, YOU ALSO NEED A PLACE WHERE YOU CAN EXIST WITHOUT BEING SUBJECTED TO MASS DEATH BY BEING SPRAYED ON VARIOUS SUBSTRATES.

YOUR FLIGHT HAS BEEN LONG, IT'S LATE IN THE EVENING AND YOU NEED FOOD. WITH YOUR EYES BLINDFOLDED, YOU ALL TOGETHER MUST REACH YOUR DINNER, WHICH IS NEARBY. THE MODERATOR WILL GIVE YOU CLEARER INSTRUCTIONS.

CHALLENGE #2

YOU HAVE ALMOST REACHED YOUR NEW HOME AND YOU COME UPON A HUGE COLONY OF TURTLE SWALLOWS, WHICH ARE JUST ACTIVE FOR THE EVENING FEEDING OF THE NUMEROUS LITTLE ONES IN THEIR NESTS. IF YOU GO ACROSS THE DANUBE, YOU WILL DIE SIGNIFICANTLY, AND MAYBE NO ONE WILL SURVIVE. IF YOU GO ACROSS THE COAST

IN THIS TERRIBLE HEAT, YOU MAY NOT BE ABLE TO LAST A DROP OF WATER, AND THE WIND IS STRONG. YOU HAVE TO FLY LOW.
HAVE LEAVES AND A BOTTLE OF WATER. MAKE A PATH 20 MIN LONG AND WALK ALONG IT FOR 1 MIN WITHOUT STEPPING ON THE HOT SAND

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU HAVE REACHED THE PROTECTED AREA "POZHAREVSKI ISLANDS".
YOU HAVE PEACE, WATER AND VEGETATION, BUT.....IT IS TIME FOR THE FEMALES TO "VAMPIRE" SO THEY CAN LAY EGGS, I.E. THEY NEED BLOOD. THERE ARE NO MAMMALS OR BIRDS HERE, HOWEVER.

IT WOULD BE GOOD TO LOOK AROUND. IF THE TEAM THAT CAN HELP YOU WITH BLOOD HAS ARRIVED BEFORE YOU, GOOD. IF NOT, YOU WILL HAVE TO HELP THEM.

YOUTH4DEMOCRACY

40-MINUTE WORKSHOP PLAN

How to Use the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI)

Youth4Democracy: #Act4Climate | Based on the European Democracy Passport, ECI Guide

1. Workshop purpose

To introduce young people to the European Citizens' Initiative as a transnational participatory democracy tool and enable them to assess whether a climate-related idea could be developed into an ECI.

2. Learning outcomes

- Explain what an ECI is and what it can achieve.
- Identify the basic requirements: at least 1 million EU citizens, support from at least 7 Member States, and a one-year collection period, as presented in the Passport.
- Recognise the role of the group of organisers and the importance of a transnational team.
- Distinguish between an ECI and other participation tools by asking whether an ECI is the appropriate instrument.
- Transform a broad climate concern into a simple, Europe-focused ECI idea.

3. Materials

- Handout 1: ECI in a Nutshell
- Handout 2: Build Your ECI Idea
- Pens/markers and sticky notes
- Optional: one printed example card - Stop Glyphosate or Save Bees and Farmers!

4. 40-minute sequence

Time	Stage	Facilitator	Participants
0-5 min	Opening: “What would you change in Europe?”	Ask: If you could change one EU policy related to climate/environment, what would it be? Collect 3-4 ideas.	Share quick ideas.
5-12 min	ECI in 7 key facts	Use Handout 1. Explain the purpose of an ECI and the key requirements. Emphasise: agenda-setting, Commission competence, 7 organisers/7 Member States, 1 million supporters, one-year collection.	Listen, ask questions and underline the facts they consider most important.
12-18 min	Is an ECI the right tool?	Present three cases: local recycling problem; EU-wide pesticide regulation; individual complaint about an EU authority. Ask which should/should not be an ECI and why. Link the discussion to the Passport’s advice to check whether another tool is simpler.	Decide and justify their choice.
18-30 min	ECI Design Challenge	Form groups of 3-5. Give each group Handout 2. Ask them to turn a climate concern into a clear ECI concept: problem, EU relevance, goal, proposed change, organisers/partners and target supporters.	Develop an ECI idea and prepare a 60-second pitch.
30-37 min	60-second pitches	Invite 3-4 groups to pitch. After each pitch ask: Is it European? Is it within Commission competence? Is the goal simple and clear? Would people across Europe support it?	Pitch and give peer feedback.
37-40 min	Reflection and action	Ask: “What is the first thing you should do before launching an ECI?” Reinforce: check the issue, legal/political scope, alternatives, knowledge, goals and team.	Give one takeaway and one next step.

5. Facilitator notes

- Keep the distinction between an ECI and a petition clear: the Passport presents the ECI primarily as an agenda-setting tool through which citizens ask the European Commission to propose legislation in areas where it has competence.
- Use climate/environment examples because they are explicitly identified in the Passport as possible ECI fields.
- Stress that an ECI is a demanding, long-term process. The Passport describes ten steps from Idea and Knowledge through Registration, Signature Gathering, Dialogue, Thresholds, Communication and Conclusions.
- For a real ECI, participants must consult the current official ECI rules and the European Citizens' Initiative Forum; the Passport is an educational resource and contains information reflecting the time of its publication.



HANDOUT 1 EUROPEAN CITIZENS' INITIATIVE (ECI) – IN A NUTSHELL

What is an ECI?

The European Citizens' Initiative is a transnational participatory democracy tool. It allows citizens to ask the European Commission to propose legislation in areas where the Commission has the power to propose legislation. The Passport describes it as an agenda-setting instrument.

The key facts presented in the European Democracy Passport

1. The idea: Your issue must relate to an area in which the European Commission has competence to propose legislation. Examples include environment, agriculture, transport, public health and international trade.
2. The organisers: A group of at least 7 EU citizens resident in at least 7 different EU Member States is required.
3. The support: The initiative needs at least 1 million EU citizens from at least 7 Member States to be politically considered by the Commission.
4. The time: The organisers have one year to collect the required statements of support.
5. Who can support?: EU citizens old enough to vote in European Parliament elections can support an initiative, subject to the country-specific rules presented in the Passport.
6. What happens after success?: The Commission meets the organisers; the initiative can be presented at a public hearing in the European Parliament; the Commission adopts a formal response within six months.
7. Important principle: An ECI does not itself create EU legislation. It gives citizens a mechanism to put an issue on the EU political agenda and ask the Commission to act.

Before you choose an ECI

- Is the issue genuinely European, or would local, regional or national action be more appropriate?
- Does the European Commission have competence to propose legislation on the issue?
- Is an ECI the best participation tool, or is there a simpler option?
- What exactly do you want to achieve? Keep the goal and proposal clear and simple.
- Who will form your transnational team and support network?

The 10-step ECI journey

Idea → Knowledge → Goals → Design → Registration → Signature Gathering → Dialogue → Thresholds → Communication → Conclusions

Three possible roles

- ORGANISER – leads the process and represents the initiative.
- SUPPORTER – signs the formal statement of support for a registered initiative.
- OBSERVER – follows the process and may provide insights or comments.

Remember

A strong ECI starts with a clear European problem, a realistic goal and a committed transnational team.

HANDOUT 2

BUILD YOUR ECI IDEA – CLIMATE ACTION CHALLENGE

Work in a group. Choose one climate/environmental problem that you believe requires action at European level. Use the questions below to develop a 60-second ECI pitch.

1. OUR ISSUE

What problem do we want to address?

2. WHY EUROPE?

Why is this a European issue rather than only a local or national one?

3. EU COMPETENCE

Could the issue fit an area where the European Commission can propose legislation? Which area?

4. OUR GOAL

What exactly do we want the European Commission to do? Write one clear sentence.

5. OUR TRANSNATIONAL TEAM

Who could be part of our group of organisers? Name at least 7 EU countries we would want to connect.

6. OUR SUPPORTERS

Who would care about this issue across Europe? Which young people, communities, organisations or networks could support us?

7. OUR MESSAGE

Write a short campaign message that could encourage people to support the initiative.

60-second ECI pitch

“We want to address _____. It matters at European level because
_____. We want the European Commission to
_____. We would work with partners from
_____ and our campaign message would be:
_____.”

Peer-check: Is our idea ready?

- ☐ It addresses a clearly European issue.
- ☐ It is linked to an area in which the Commission can propose legislation.
- ☐ The goal is specific and easy to understand.
- ☐ We can imagine a transnational team and support network.
- ☐ We can explain why people in different EU countries would support it.
- ☐ We have considered whether another participation tool might be more appropriate.

From an idea → to a European voice → to democratic action.

YOUTH4DEMOCRACY

40-MINUTE WORKSHOP PLAN

Disability Rights: From Barriers to Participation

Based on the EESC Factsheet: Disability Rights

Youth4Democracy: #Act4Climate | Based on the European Democracy Passport, ECI Guide

1. Workshop purpose

To help young people understand disability rights as a question of equality, dignity and democratic participation, and to explore how barriers can be identified and transformed into concrete proposals for a more inclusive Europe.

2. Learning outcomes

Identify different physical, social, informational and administrative barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

Explain the shift presented in the factsheet from viewing persons with disabilities as recipients of charity or medical/social protection to recognising society's responsibility to remove barriers.

Understand the importance of participation and the principle "Nothing about us without us".

Recognise voting and access to democratic participation as fundamental rights.

Develop a practical inclusion proposal based on a real-life barrier.

3. Materials

Handout 1: Disability Rights in a Nutshell

Handout 2: From Barrier to Action

Pens/markers and sticky notes

Optional: projector with the factsheet page 3 image showing accessibility and democratic participation

4. 40-minute sequence

Time	Stage	Facilitator	Participants
0-5 min	Opening: “Can everyone participate?”	Ask participants to imagine arriving at a polling station, school, workplace or public event. What could prevent someone from participating? Collect answers without judging them.	Identify barriers from everyday situations.
5-12 min	From charity to rights	Present the factsheet’s key idea: disability rights are grounded in dignity, equal treatment, independent living and full participation. Explain the shift of responsibility from the individual to society.	Discuss: “Who should change – the person or the environment?”
12-18 min	Barrier mapping	Give groups four categories: physical, social/attitudinal, information/communication, administrative. Ask them to place examples from the factsheet into the categories.	Classify barriers and add examples.
18-30 min	Inclusion Challenge: From Barrier to Action	Groups choose one barrier, complete Handout 2 and design a concrete action for an EU institution, national authority, municipality, school or organisation.	Develop a proposal using the worksheet.
30-37 min	Mini-presentations	Invite 3-4 groups to present their proposals in 60 seconds. Ask: Is the action accessible? Does it involve persons with disabilities? Who is responsible for change?	Present and give peer feedback.
37-40 min	Reflection: “Nothing about us without us”	Use the quotation as the closing concept. Ask participants to name one decision-making process where people affected by a policy must have a direct voice.	Share one principle they will take into future projects or activities.

5. Key content for the facilitator

The factsheet states that persons with disabilities have equal rights to dignity, equal treatment, independent living and full participation in society, with these rights anchored in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), ratified by the EU in 2010. The EESC factsheet highlights barriers including physical barriers, prejudice and stigmatisation, as well as practical and social hurdles affecting work, education and voting. The EESC's work includes gathering input through public hearings/conferences and fact-finding missions, and using this input in its advocacy for disability rights.

The factsheet presents a set of recommendations including mainstreaming disability equality in EU policies, accessibility standards, common approaches to disability benefits and services, improved data collection, and involvement of civil society and organisations of persons with disabilities.

The right to vote is presented as a fundamental right and a cornerstone of European democracy. The factsheet describes barriers to voting and calls for genuine participation of EU citizens with disabilities in European Parliament elections.

Youth4Democracy: #Act4Climate | Workshop based on the EESC Factsheet: Disability Rights



HANDOUT 1

DISABILITY RIGHTS – IN A NUTSHELL

1. Disability is a rights issue

The EESC factsheet presents persons with disabilities as rights-holders. They are entitled to dignity, equal treatment, independent living and full participation in society. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is central to this rights-based approach; the EU ratified it in 2010.

2. Look for barriers – not deficits

The factsheet identifies barriers that can restrict participation:

Physical barriers – inaccessible buildings, polling stations and public spaces.

Social barriers – prejudice, stigma and discrimination.

Information and communication barriers – information that does not take different needs into account.

Administrative barriers – procedures that make participation unnecessarily difficult.

3. “Nothing about us without us”

The factsheet stresses that persons with disabilities must have a voice in processes of change. Participation is therefore not simply consultation after decisions have been made; people affected by policies should be involved in shaping them.

4. What can institutions do?

Mainstream disability equality in all EU policies.

Establish disability focal points in EU institutions.

Improve coordination between EU institutions.

Adopt rules to eliminate discrimination based on disability.

Develop common accessibility standards, including for workplaces.

Improve recognition of disability across EU countries.

Develop common approaches to disability benefits and services.

Improve data collection.

Involve civil society and organisations of persons with disabilities in disability policy.

5. Democracy and the right to vote

The factsheet highlights voting as a central democratic right. It describes barriers related to national rules, information, polling stations and administrative procedures. The EESC considers such barriers contrary to fundamental EU values.

Quick reflection

Complete the sentence:

“A truly inclusive democratic process is one in which
_____.”

Youth4Democracy: #Act4Climate | Workshop based on the EESC Factsheet: Disability Rights

HANDOUT 2

FROM BARRIER TO ACTION – INCLUSION CHALLENGE

Work in a group. Choose one barrier that can prevent a person with a disability from participating fully in society. Turn the barrier into a concrete action proposal.

1. THE BARRIER

What prevents participation? Where does it happen?

2. WHO IS AFFECTED?

Who experiences this barrier? What might their specific needs be?

3. WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Which right or aspect of participation is affected: dignity, equal treatment, independent living, education, work, voting, etc.?

4. “NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US”

How will persons with disabilities be directly involved in designing or evaluating the solution?

5. OUR ACTION

What concrete change do we propose?

6. WHO SHOULD ACT?

Who has the power or responsibility to make the change: EU institution, national authority, municipality, school, employer, organisation, etc.?

7. HOW WILL WE KNOW IT WORKED?

What would be different after the action? What evidence would show greater inclusion?

60-second action pitch

“The barrier we identified is _____. It affects _____
_____. It matters because _____. We
propose _____. The people most affected will be involved by
_____. The actor responsible for change is
_____.”

Peer-check

- ☐ We identified a real barrier rather than a problem with the person.
- ☐ Our proposal protects equality, dignity and participation.
- ☐ Persons with disabilities have a meaningful voice in the solution.
- ☐ The responsible actor is clearly identified.
- ☐ The action is practical and measurable.
- ☐ Accessibility is considered from the beginning, not added afterwards.

**INCLUSION IS NOT ONLY ACCESS TO A SPACE — IT IS THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE, BE HEARD
AND HELP SHAPE DECISIONS.**