

Balanced **E**uropean
 **S**ocial **T**ransformation

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The European Social Model in the classroom

- a teaching unit

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Education and Culture

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The present teaching unit is intended in general terms for social or general studies at secondary (high) school level, post-O level (approx.). Individual elements or texts will also be suitable for younger pupils or for other subjects.

The teaching unit pre-supposes certain basic knowledge of Europe and of the European Union. The EU and its institutions, together with the (founding) history of the EU should have been studied at an earlier stage.

The unit is an attempt to come to terms with a topic which is currently occupying an important place in public discussion in Europe – the European Social Model.

To be strictly accurate, there is not one single European social model, one may well refer to at least four different types (Northern/Scandinavian, continental European, Anglo-Saxon, Southern European/Mediterranean). However, all of these models have common values and principles. This point was addressed in the first module as a point of emphasis. The idea was to communicate to pupils an impression of what is European about Europe, that is, what differentiates us from other continents and economic powers.

In later sections a variety of aspects are addressed which have impacts on our social security systems: external challenges (globalisation in the goods (commodities) and capital market) and also internal challenges (demographic change, immigration). The EU offers responses to these questions.

It is aimed to make this point clear in the final module dealing with the future of the European Social Model.

At the beginning of each module there is a brief introductory text which opens up the subject, and is intended to indicate to pupils what they might expect.

Our hope in providing, in the form of this lesson unit, not only a variety of texts, but in addition other material such as tables, graphic items, photos, etc. which we have adapted accordingly, is that you may be able to use them in accordance with your requirements either along with the suggested assignments and in this sequence, or in your own lesson plan which you have designed yourself.

The lesson unit was designed as one outcome of a project about the European Social Model, a project which was operated by the European Academy Berlin and its project partners on behalf of and with funding by the European Commission. Further information about the project may be found on the Academy's homepage at <http://www.eab-berlin.de/best.htm>.

The Academy's partners on this occasion were the Universities of Economics in Prague (Czech Republic) and in Poznan (Poland) and the Centre Européen Robert Schuman in Metz (France). For this reason, the lesson unit is also available in Czech, Polish and French, as well as this English version and in German. We have made every effort to ensure that the topic is not being approached from a national, but on the contrary from a European perspective, using European texts and examples or case studies.

We hope too that we can encourage or prompt you by means of this unit to address European topics in the classroom and that in so doing we have made your task more easy.

We wish you much pleasure and success with the material, and I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to Lisa Moldenhauer who compiled this teaching unit.

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