

## **MODULE 1:**

### **The things we have in common- What makes Europe European?**

We live in Europe and we talk about Europe every day. The question, however, is: What is it that makes Europe European? What makes us differ from other parts of the world? Are there really that many differences in the time of globalisation, the internet and MTV? Or do elderly ladies and gentlemen just like to evoke the spirit of former times whilst sipping their drinks in an idyllic coffeehouse atmosphere?

These are the questions that will be dealt with in the first module. What is it that we like about Europe, what is there to displease us? Are there things that we should preserve or should we think about a complete change and strive to become more dynamic like Asia, more modern like the U.S.A. or more laid back like Africa? These questions cannot be answered with a straight “yes” or “no”. Here we ask for your opinions and thoughts on the matter. Do join the discussion!

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We are striving for peace and freedom, for democracy and the rule of law, for mutual respect and shared responsibility, for prosperity and security, for tolerance and participation, for justice and solidarity.

We have a unique way of living and working together in the European Union. This is expressed through the democratic interaction of the Member States and the European institutions. The European Union is founded on equal rights and mutually supportive cooperation. This enables us to strike a fair balance between Member States' interests.

We preserve in the European Union the identities and diverse traditions of its Member States. We are enriched by open borders and a lively variety of languages, cultures and regions. There are many goals which we cannot achieve on our own, but only in concert. Tasks are shared between the European Union, the Member States and their regions and local authorities.

We are facing major challenges which do not stop at national borders. The European Union is our response to these challenges. Only together can we continue to preserve our ideal of European society in future for the good of all European Union citizens. This European model combines economic success and social responsibility.

The common market and the euro make us strong. We can thus shape the increasing interdependence of the global economy and ever- growing competition on international markets according to our values. Europe's wealth lies in the knowledge and ability of its people; that is the key to growth, employment and social cohesion.”

Excerpt from the Berlin Declaration (25 March 2007), signed by the President of the European Council, Angela Merkel, the President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gerd Pöttering, and by the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso  
[http://www.eu2007.de/de/News/download\\_docs/Maerz/0324-RAA/English.pdf](http://www.eu2007.de/de/News/download_docs/Maerz/0324-RAA/English.pdf)

The Berlin declaration makes mention of “our ideal of European society“. What do you think is an ideal European society? Which reference can be found in the excerpt of the Berlin Declaration referring to this ideal? Which are the values that the ideal European society is based on?

You may refer to the text by EU Commissioner Špidla to answer these questions:

„The European social model that we are talking about here is a package of common values that underlie the European Union. These values are freedom, democracy, equality and solidarity. They have inspired the social systems of all the EU’s member countries. Although applied in various guises, they share a number of common characteristics. It is not by chance that they all involve government intervention to reduce poverty and social exclusion, redistribute income more fairly, ensure high levels of social security and promote equal opportunities.“

Vladimir Špidla, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
 "ESF role in protecting the European social model", speech held at the European Parliament, Brussels, 9 November 2006  
[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/speeches/2006/vs\\_061109\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/speeches/2006/vs_061109_en.pdf)

**Basic values on which the ideal of European society is founded:**

Basic value	Opposite	What does it mean to us in every day life?

Are these values particularly European? What is the situation in other societies? Please do some group work discussing these questions and summarize the results in a short presentation.

Holiday greetings from the hospital

„Dear Susie,  
 as you already know from my text message I'm not taking in the Greek sun but am stuck in hospital :-(  
 Yesterday, I slipped by the hotel's pool and fell in such a manner that I broke my arm!  
 I'm totally cross because now I can forget about my holiday. Luckily, however, thanks to my European health insurance card it was really easy to get treatment at the hospital's emergency unit. They'll let me out tomorrow but swimming is not on anymore. Instead I will have a look around the area. I'll be coming back in five days – are you going to pick me up from the airport? As you can imagine I can't carry my suitcases on my own ...  
 See you then. Kind regards,  
 Mary”



**Things about Europe that I (don't) like:**

(Please tick the appropriate!)

What I like		What I don't like at all	
Within the EU I can travel wherever and however I like.	<b>Unrestricted travel opportunities</b>	All the other EU citizens can just come to our country.	
For my holidays I don't have to change money and therefore it is easier to check the price of things.	<b>Common currency (at present in 13 member states of the EU)</b>	Because of the common currency a certain feeling of being on a holiday is missing. It's just not necessary to go abroad anymore.	
(Soon) I can find work wherever I want.	<b>Free movement of labour within the internal market</b>	EU citizens from other countries can take away my job.	
I can chose the best product for me – no matter where it was produced.	<b>Free movement of goods within the internal market</b>	Foreign products damage our national industry and therefore also me.	
When travelling I don't have to worry about health protection.	<b>European health insurance protection</b>	I feel patronized instead of looked after. And, moreover, it causes higher costs for my health insurance company.	
This is an opportunity to meet with many cultures and mentalities – it is fun.	<b>Many languages</b>	Nobody is able to learn 23 languages. There should be one language only – preferably my mother tongue.	
I can be what I want and live life according to my ideas.	<b>Tolerance</b>	Values are being lost. You don't have to tolerate everything.	
Only by reaching joint decisions can we shape our environment. This is good for me, too.	<b>European laws and guidelines</b>	Being patronized by Brussels becomes ever more evident. This makes me feel restricted in my ways.	
	<b>(What can you think of? Please make a note of it here and judge for yourself!)</b>		

There is a lot of talk about the European Social Model. What do you think should be dealt with by the EU and what should be left to individual member states?

Issue	YES – the EU should take care of this	NO – this is none of the EU's business	Reason:
The EU should take care of getting more people a job <i>(Promotion of employment)</i>			
The EU should make sure that living and working conditions of all people are improved and that therefore people who are not living in good conditions now will live in better conditions but without anyone else living in worse conditions than they are now <i>(Improvement of living and working conditions – therefore making their harmonisation possible while the improvement is being maintained)</i>			
It is important that the EU takes care of proper social protection for a woman who gets pregnant or for someone who becomes ill or disabled <i>(Proper social protection)</i>			
The EU should organise the different social groups in society, for example encourage employers and employees to talk and listen to each other. <i>(Dialogue between management and labour)</i>			
The EU should guarantee that more people in society are working and that the labour potential of women is used as well. <i>(Development of human resources so as to achieve lasting high employment)</i>			
Working places are often dangerous and make people sick. An important task of the EU is to make sure that working conditions are safe and that the protection and safety of the workers is looked after. <i>(Improvement of the working environment so as to protect employees' health and safety)</i>			
The EU should pay attention to working conditions and make sure they are okay because workers are human beings <i>(Working conditions)</i>			
People who are working must be protected against asocial exploitation by the EU. The EU must help people who have become unemployed or cannot work because of other reasons. <i>(Social security and social protection of employees)</i>			
If someone quits or is fired, he should not be left standing on the street. The EU should make sure that employees are protected when their employment is terminated. <i>(Protection of employees when their employment contract is terminated)</i>			
People who are employed in a company must know what is going on in the company. Also, they must have a say. <i>(Information and consultation of employees)</i>			
Employees must have the right to present their			

<p>interests together (for example, in unions) and to have their say in company decisions.  <i>(Representation and collective defence of the interests of employees and employers, including co-determination)</i></p>			
<p>Foreigners are not cheap goods who can be exploited deliberately. The EU should assure fairness in working conditions and wages of people coming from countries outside the EU.  <i>(Employment conditions for nationals of third countries legally residing in the territory of the EU)</i></p>			
<p>Those who have lost their jobs (even if it was their own fault) must be given a chance to return to the labour market. The EU must create support for their reintegration into the workforce.  <i>(Integration of persons excluded from the labour market)</i></p>			
<p>Women and men must be treated equally, for example, with regard to payment and career opportunities. That is a major task for the EU.  <i>(Equal opportunities for men and women with regard to the labour market, equal treatment in the workplace)</i></p>			
<p>There should not be any groups on the edge of society which are not included in the social system. The EU must prevent social exclusion of any groups, for example, ethnic groups.  <i>(Combating social exclusion)</i></p>			
<p>Life changes and so does society. What was correct yesterday might be outdated today. The EU must make sure that our social security system does not become outdated.  <i>(Modernising systems of social protection)</i></p>			

## Background for teachers

The Berlin Declaration was signed on 25 March 2007 by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Commission on the occasion of the celebrations marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome by which the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) were founded. The aim of the Berlin Declaration is to portrait the common grounds of the 27 European Union member states and to define common tasks for the future.

The following is the full version of the Berlin Declaration (the text used in the students' part is marked in grey):

### **Declaration on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the signature of the Treaties of Rome**

For centuries Europe has been an idea, holding out hope of peace and understanding. That hope has been fulfilled. European unification has made peace and prosperity possible. It has brought about a sense of community and overcome differences. Each Member State has helped to unite Europe and to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. Thanks to the yearning for freedom of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe the unnatural division of Europe is now consigned to the past. European integration shows that we have learnt the painful lessons of a history marked by bloody conflict. Today we live together as was never possible before. We, the citizens of the European Union, have united for the better.

#### I.

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#### II.

We are facing major challenges which do not stop at national borders. The European Union is our response to these challenges. Only together can we continue to preserve our ideal of European society in future for the good of all European Union citizens. This European model combines economic success and social responsibility. The common market and the euro make us strong. We can thus shape the increasing interdependence of the global economy and ever- growing competition on

international markets according to our values. Europe's wealth lies in the knowledge and ability of its people; that is the key to growth, employment and social cohesion. We will fight terrorism, organised crime and illegal immigration together. We stand up for liberties and civil rights also in the struggle against those who oppose them. Racism and xenophobia must never again be given any rein. We are committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the world and to ensuring that people do not become victims of war, terrorism and violence. The European Union wants to promote freedom and development in the world. We want to drive back poverty, hunger and disease. We want to continue to take a leading role in that fight. We intend jointly to lead the way in energy policy and climate protection and make our contribution to averting the global threat of climate change.

### III.

The European Union will continue to thrive both on openness and on the will of its Member States to consolidate the Union's internal development. The European Union will continue to promote democracy, stability and prosperity beyond its borders. With European unification a dream of earlier generations has become a reality. Our history reminds us that we must protect this for the good of future generations. For that reason we must always renew the political shape of Europe in keeping with the times. That is why today, 50 years after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, we are united in our aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before the European Parliament elections in 2009. For we know, Europe is our common future.

The aim of the first task is to familiarize students with some of the basic values that are shared by the member states of the European Union despite all their variedness. These are, as is made evident by the speech of EU Commissioner Spidla: freedom, democracy, equality and solidarity; but also peace, justice, the rule of law, tolerance and participation.

The model of European society is based on these values. Its aim is to preserve and increase affluence, growth, employment and social cohesion. The reasons for leading to this success are defined in the Berlin Declaration as the following: the internal market and the common currency, but also citizens' knowledge and abilities, that is to say education and qualification.

To start with, the task concentrates only on basic values. By asking students to name the opposites of these values (i.e. lack of freedom, dictatorship) they are to be made aware of the meaning of these basic values. This also explains why students should be asked what each basic value means to him or her in every day life. In doing so students will not only repeat the list of values but come to understand their implications.

The postcard sent from the hospital and the health insurance card are meant to illustrate the advantages of living in the European Union by giving a concrete example.

What does the European Union mean to the individual citizen? The next task will help to give an answer to this question. Students should be asked to reflect on this question and come up with their own thoughts rather than being indoctrinated. Each issue is

accompanied by positive and negative statements and students are asked to decide for themselves which side they support. The aim of this task is to demonstrate how Europe has an impact on the life of everybody living in the Union.

The last task in this module deals with social protection in Europe. The issues named in this task are taken from articles 136 and 137 of the EC Treaty (to be found below this paragraph). The articles appear in title IX of the EC-Treaty. They came into being as a social protocol that was added to the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. Great Britain did not sign the social protocol. Only after a change of government did Great Britain give up its resistance and signed the protocol. Thus, with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) the social protocol became part of the Treaty establishing the European Community (EC) as is the official name of the EC-Treaty. The former social protocol comprises articles 136 to 143 of the EC-Treaty. Article 127 which postulates the goal of a high level of employment had already been part of the Treaty before.

### *Article 127*

1. The Community shall contribute to a high level of employment by encouraging cooperation between Member States and by supporting and, if necessary, complementing their action. In doing so, the competences of the Member States shall be respected.
2. The objective of a high level of employment shall be taken into consideration in the formulation and implementation of Community policies and activities.

## TITLE XI

# **SOCIAL POLICY, EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND YOUTH**

## CHAPTER 1

### **SOCIAL PROVISIONS**

### *Article 136*

The Community and the Member States, having in mind fundamental social rights such as those set out in the European Social Charter signed at Turin on 18 October 1961 and in the 1989 Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, shall have as their objectives the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, so as to make possible their harmonisation while the improvement is being maintained, proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting high employment and the combating of exclusion.

To this end the Community and the Member States shall implement measures which

take account of the diverse forms of national practices, in particular in the field of contractual relations, and the need to maintain the competitiveness of the Community economy.

They believe that such a development will ensue not only from the functioning of the common market, which will favour the harmonisation of social systems, but also from the procedures provided for in this Treaty and from the approximation of provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action.

### *Article 137*

1. With a view to achieving the objectives of Article 136, the Community shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in the following fields:

- (a) improvement in particular of the working environment to protect workers' health and safety;
- (b) working conditions;
- (c) social security and social protection of workers;
- (d) protection of workers where their employment contract is terminated;
- (e) the information and consultation of workers;
- (f) representation and collective defence of the interests of workers and employers, including co-determination, subject to paragraph 5;
- (g) conditions of employment for third-country nationals legally residing in Community territory;
- (h) the integration of persons excluded from the labour market, without prejudice to Article 150;
- (i) equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work;
- (j) the combating of social exclusion;
- (k) the modernisation of social protection systems without prejudice to point (c).

2. To this end, the Council:

- (a) may adopt measures designed to encourage cooperation between Member States through initiatives aimed at improving knowledge, developing exchanges of information and best practices, promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States;
- (b) may adopt, in the fields referred to in paragraph 1(a) to (i), by means of directives, minimum requirements for gradual implementation, having regard to the conditions and technical rules obtaining in each of the Member States. Such directives shall avoid imposing administrative, financial and legal constraints in a way which would hold back the creation and development of small and medium-sized undertakings.

The Council shall act in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, except in the fields referred to in paragraph 1(c), (d), (f) and (g) of this Article, where the Council shall act unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, after consulting the European Parliament and the said Committees.

The Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, after consulting the European Parliament, may decide to render the procedure referred to in Article 251 applicable to paragraph 1(d), (f) and (g) of this Article.

3. A Member State may entrust management and labour, at their joint request, with the implementation of directives adopted pursuant to paragraph 2.

In this case, it shall ensure that, no later than the date on which a directive must be transposed in accordance with Article 249, management and labour have introduced the necessary measures by agreement, the Member State concerned being required to take any necessary measure enabling it at any time to be in a position to guarantee the results imposed by that directive.

4. The provisions adopted pursuant to this Article:

—shall not affect the right of Member States to define the fundamental principles of their social security systems and must not significantly affect the financial equilibrium thereof,

—shall not prevent any Member State from maintaining or introducing more stringent protective measures compatible with this Treaty.

5. The provisions of this Article shall not apply to pay, the right of association, the right to strike or the right to impose lock-outs.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2006:321E:0001:0331:EN:pdf>, last access 24 April 2007

When reading this text attentively it may be noted immediately that it is by no means the competence of the EU to achieve these goals. It is much more true that these issues need to be dealt with by the member states. The EU's task however is to support and complement measures taken by individual member states.