

ALL ABOUT

**The European Union
and the European Parliament**

DEMOCRACY

LESSON PLAN No.1



European Parliament
Liaison Office
in the United Kingdom

ALL ABOUT DEMOCRACY

The EU is responsive, adaptive and accountable to the needs and demands of citizens despite diverse histories and cultures – **UNITED IN DIVERSITY**.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What is democracy?
- How does the EU work?
- What can young people do to make their voices heard in the EU? Why is this important?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Understand how the EU functions and feel confident using facts and information
2. Understand how important young people's voices are in a democracy and engage with how it feels to be heard
3. Be able to reflect on why accountability in government/authority is important; and be motivated to discuss political decisions which affect their lives and their own sense of right and wrong in relation to being a citizen

EU FOCUS

- Examples of bodies that represent young people – European Youth Forum, European Parliament Youth Platform
- European Youth Capitals – 'youth friendly policies that could result in more participation of young people in urban life'
- EU 'Have your say' initiative

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITY	TIME	RESOURCES
L02 L03	<p>Starter activity option 1 Discussion: 'what is democracy?'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Line up: class has two minutes to line up in order of who is the most and least powerful in the room (everyone takes part including teachers). It may be that a line up is not agreed. This is fine. Discuss what was challenging. Use the process of this line up to discuss 'what is democracy?' Students identify how they decided where to position themselves and others. 	10 mins	Timer
L01 L02 L03	<p>Starter activity option 2 'Washing line': stages of the legislative process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hang a washing line across the classroom and give groups stages of EU legislative process and clothes pegs. Quickest group to hang stages of legislative process up in the correct order 'wins'. Discuss what is important about each stage. How does this process demonstrate 'democracy'? 	10 mins	Washing line and clothes pegs EU institutions and the legislative process – See Resources page 5 & 6
L01	<p>Starter activity option 3 Which branch is which?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using their existing knowledge about the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the UK Government (or the devolved administrations, or the USA, depending on curriculum subject), students identify which EU institution is which by interpreting key information (e.g. the Commission proposes ideas for laws). 	10 mins	Key Clues resource – See Resources page 7
L01 L02 L03	<p>Main activity part 1 Preparing a proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go through the key steps of the legislative process. Introduce the EU Youth Forum and the campaign for 'Vote at 16' across all Member States. Identify countries where the voting age is already 16. Students in groups allocated the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting age Driving age Drinking age Age of consent Research the age across a range of countries and write a brief proposal for a new piece of legislation. 'Balloon debate': which issue is most important to you? Quick fire debate to eliminate issues and decide on one for next activity. 	30 mins	Summary of EU legislative process: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/infographic/legislative-procedure/index_en.html https://europa.eu/european-union/law/decision-making/procedures_en https://www.youthforum.org/vote-16 https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/alcohol/docs/eyes_on_ages_report_en.pdf

TOP TIP
If the teacher was placed as the most powerful, discuss why and consider who makes the decisions. Focusing on those feeling less powerful, explore how you can make your voice heard.

TOP TIP
This is ideal for Politics or Law students who already have some understanding of legislation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITY	TIME	RESOURCES
L01 L02 L03	<p>Main activity part 2 Legislative process role play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole class acts as the EU Commission working in small groups (of 4-5 students). Each group develops a proposal around one of the issues, then nominates a spokesperson to present and recommend to the European Parliament. 	10 mins	
L01 L02 L03	<p>Plenary Was that democratic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative role play: Whole class as European Parliament votes on the recommendation. • Final discussion: was that democratic? Students could 'score' the democratic process through a 'vote with their feet' moving to different areas of the room for 'yes', 'no', 'undecided'. 	10 mins	

TOP TIP




Teachers of A level Law (AQA, OCR, WJEC): how about using this lesson to develop students' understanding of the impact of EU law making on law making in England and Wales?

Teachers of BTEC Level 3 in Creative Media Production (Pearson): how about using this lesson as part of students' 'Special Subject Investigation' unit? Those pursuing a career in Journalism could investigate voting rights for their peers across EU Member States.

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EU Institutions and the legislative process

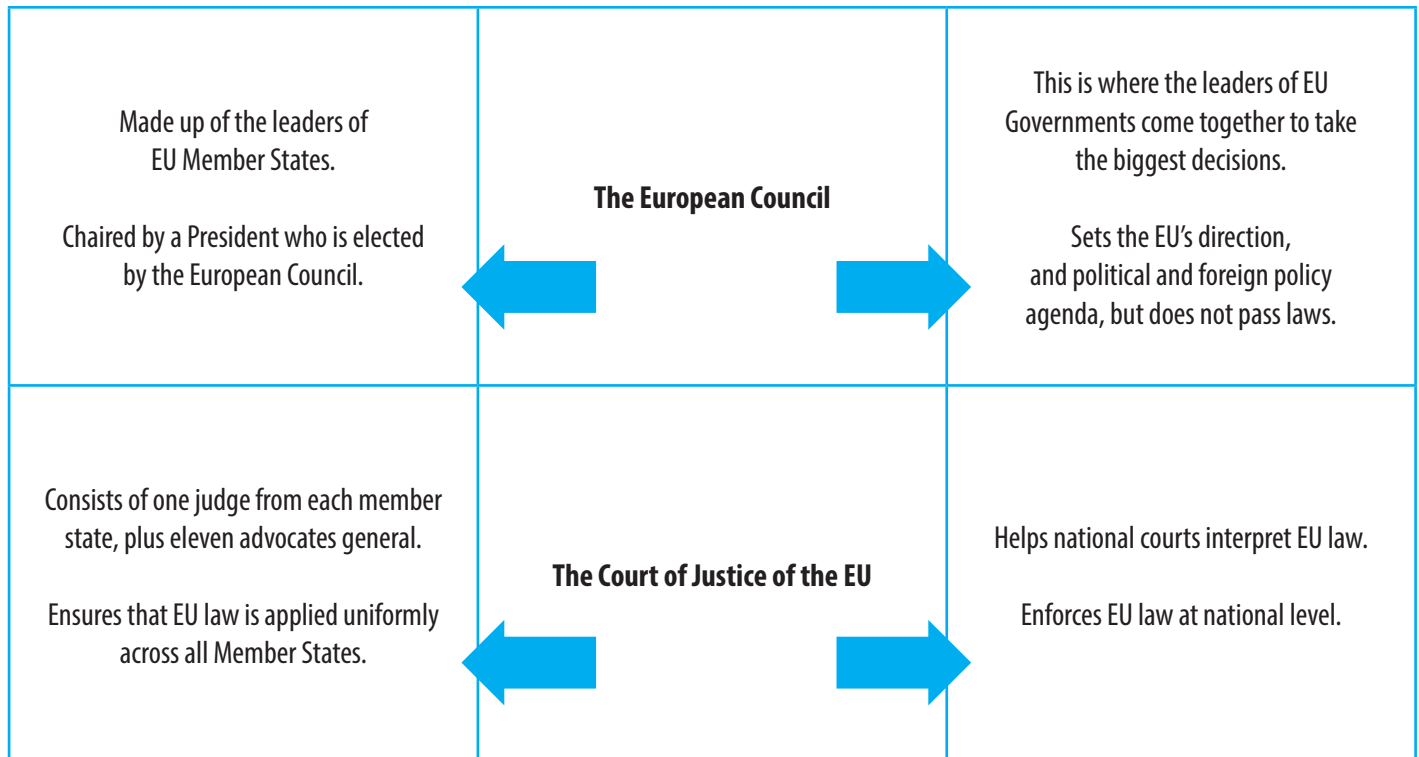
Institutions of the EU that make laws:

<p>Consists of Commissioners, one from each member state.</p> <p>The Head of the Commission is called a President who is appointed by national leaders and elected by the European Parliament.</p>	<p>The European Commission</p> 	<p>Proposes new laws for the Parliament and Council to approve, amend or reject.</p> <p>Protects the interests of EU citizens.</p>
<p>Membership consists of ministers from the governments of member states.</p> <p>There is no fixed membership – if, for example, the issue is the environment, then environment ministers will attend.</p>	<p>The Council of the European Union (often called The Council of Ministers)</p> 	<p>Is the main decision-making body and works with the European Parliament to approve, amend or reject laws.</p> <p>Ensures coordination in policy-making across EU member states.</p>
<p>Made up of MEPs elected by citizens in all Member States.</p> <p>Elections are held every five years.</p>	<p>The European Parliament</p> 	<p>Has joint role with the Council of the European Union to approve, amend or reject EU law.</p> <p>Also has a role in scrutinising all EU institutions.</p>

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EU Institutions and the legislative process

Other key institutions of the EU:



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Key Clues

This is the principal decision-making body of the EU and is made up of ministers from each Member State government.

This institution proposes laws and is responsible for the administration of the EU.

This is the EU institution whose members are elected by citizens.

This institution ensures that EU law is applied uniformly in all Member States.

This brings together top EU leaders to set the EU's political agenda.