

# Decisions and Dilemmas – Exploring European Union History through the Lens of Contemporary Issues

Development Meeting  
27-29 May, 2016  
Bruges, Belgium

## REPORT



**Historiana**

**EURO CLIO**  
European Association of History Educators

Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



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## Summary of the Project

Within the EUROCLIO project *“Decisions and Dilemmas: Exploring European Union history through the lens of contemporary issues”*, EUROCLIO and its partners will develop a series of learning resources that are ready to use in history and citizenship classes at secondary school level across Europe.

The focus of these learning resources will be on contemporary issues for the European Union. These issues include: Enlargement; globalisation; foreign relations - particularly with the USA, Russia and China. But also Energy supply; economic imbalance and the north-south divide within the EU; terrorism and border controls in a Schengen world; and the democratic deficit. All issues that are currently troubling the European Union.

The aim is that all these learning resources together, will help students to be aware of the complexity and interdependence of European/international decision-making and diplomatic processes. This will help students to see and understand the complexity of the EU and the dilemmas that policy makers face when they have to take multiple factors and stakeholders into account. All these people have their own perfect outcomes for dilemmas, but there is never one solution that will please all parties involved. This gives the students an understanding of contemporary issues in their historical context and lets them see how issues recur over time and how new challenges (can) result from solving other challenges.

Each of the issues will result in a learning activity based on active learning methods (such as scripted drama, various forms of debate and discussion, and project work) that are best suited to the nature of that particular issue. As a result the project will show various ways in which students can learn about the EU on an active and engaging way.

These learning resources will be developed, tested and implemented by an international group of experienced educators (who are currently teaching citizenship and/or history) with the support of Jean Monnet professors as academic advisors. The involvement of leading academics and school teachers and teacher trainers, will make sure that the learning resources are both academically sound and suited for use in diverse classroom settings

The key project activities are four development meetings and one international training seminar.

## About the Meeting

The Second Development Meeting was the third meeting within the project. During this meeting, the development team and the Historical Content team participated. This meeting was kindly hosted by project advisor Léonce Bekemans and the ‘Europe House Ryckvelde’ based in Bruges. The overall aim of this meeting was to review and pilot the resources developed by the team, and get feedback from the project advisors.

### Participants

The following participants were present at the meeting in Bruges, Belgium:

Participants:	
<b>Historical Content Team:</b>	Bob Stradling Francesco Scatigna Chris Rowe
<b>Development Team:</b>	Bojana Duikovic-Blagojevic Guido Lessing Kate Smee Ute Ackermann Boeros Kate Brennan
<b>Team Leader:</b>	Helen Snelson
<b>Project Advisors:</b>	Léonce Bekemans Alain Servantie
<b>EUROCLIO Staff:</b>	Judith Geerling Steven Stegers Joyce Schäftlein

### Aims of the Meeting:

- To review and pilot the learning resources developed so far by the development team, including a feedback session with the Historiana Content team.
- To develop a strategy and time plan for the piloting process of the materials.
- To decide what will be ready before the next meeting in October/November, agree on roles & responsibilities and make a timeplan including the pair visits.
- To discuss the training elements for the final training that will take place during the EUROCLIO Annual Conference in San Sebastian in April 2017.

### Outputs:

- Updated timeplan.
- Overview of training elements and where they would fit for the final international training seminar.

## Executive Summary of the Meeting

The second development meeting started with an update to the teams on the current developments for the Historiana webplatform. The recently uploaded unit ‘Changing Europe: European Decisions and European Dilemmas’ was presented, the bigger unit where the activities developed within this project will also feature on Historiana. The team was also introduced to the Europahuis Ryckvelde, the host institute of this meeting.

In the time between the previous meeting and this meeting the development team worked further on their key issues and preliminary enquiry questions. In separate sessions, each team member presented the learning activity related to the key issue they are leading. They presented their initial ideas on methodology and sources, and challenges they faced in the process. The project advisors provided feedback and inputs on the content and focus in each session.

Kate Brennan prepared the first version of a scripted drama focusing on the early days of the European Community. The team and the advisors acted out the script and provided her with feedback on persons to be added and change in focus that could be helpful.

Meanwhile the Historiana Historical Content team worked on the Historiana modules on World War Two and the Cold War period which will become available on Historiana in 2017.



*The development team together with the Historical Content team of Historiana during a city walk in Bruges.*



## Updates: Historiana, Europahuis Ryckvelde

The programme started with a welcome note from *Ines Verplancke*, coordinator of the host institute of the meeting ‘Europe House Ryckvelde’. She explained that the main goal of ‘Europe House Ryckvelde’ is to strengthen citizenship amongst all kinds of students, youngsters and adults from different levels. They aim to accomplish this by explaining how the systems within Europe and the European Union work by collection educational materials and on-site learning activities in a databank which is accessible for all teachers within Europe. This provides educators the opportunity to spend more time on teaching about the EU in their classrooms with good quality materials.



Following this EUROCLIO Programme Directors Steven Stegers gave a presentation on the developments and progress of EUROCLIO’s own online platform Historiana. Preceding this project, EUROCLIO coordinated a project focusing on the EU from a historical perspective. The materials developed within that project are presented together in the Historiana unit “Changing Europe: European Decisions and European Dilemmas”, that has recently been uploaded to the Historiana website. The materials developed within this project will also feature there once they are completed.

## Key Issues

During the meeting, all members of the development team gave a presentation on their idea about a Learning Activity for their specific Key Issue. They updated all other team members about the progress made since the last meeting and took the opportunity to collect feedback about their Learning Activity so far from the other educators and the project advisors.

### 0. Scripted drama: Founding Fathers of Europe

Kate Brennan presented the pilot version of her first scripted drama looking at the Founding Fathers of Europe. This script focuses on the key players at the end of World War 2 that played a role in the establishment of the European Community. The development team and project advisors jointly participated in the script, a fun and engaging way to discuss a complicated topic as such. The concept is to have a leading politician of the key countries involved, and a national daemon. Similar to a ‘daemon’ in Philip Pullman’s book: ‘His Dark Materials’, they are the persona of the fearful and suspicious people in those countries. They express the fears, suspicions, and instinctive nationalism that sizable numbers of individuals are voicing in their countries’ cafes, shops, and bars, on buses and on trains.



After the script was finished, project advisors gave suggestions who could be included as some of the key players, and what the context of certain countries was.



### **1. Economic Imbalances in Europe.**

As agreed in the Meeting in January, Bojana Dujković-Blagojević and Guido Lessing are developing the learning activity around this key issue. The focus is on the EU countries and the possible candidate countries that might join the EU in the future and the challenges that the EU faces regarding economic imbalances between people and countries within the EU.

For this Key Issue, Guido Lessing made a draft learning activity on how you can teach students about these economic imbalances. The idea in this activity is to use personal stories and backgrounds of people from different countries and social standards throughout Europe. If you give each student one of these ‘biographies’, and ask them to read into the life of the person, you give them the opportunity to think about the lives these people live. When each student has an idea of the life of these persons, you can ask them to stand in a line and ask them questions about the financial possibilities of the persons. Each time you can answer the question with ‘yes’ you can move a step forward. This way you let your students make a living graphic of imbalances in Europe. When students have this overview about the differences between people in Europe, you can start a discussion around the key question ‘Shall we create equal living conditions?’. Using sources from different perspectives, you can thus let students think about the economic imbalances within Europe.

The difficulty with this issue is that it is very hard to give it a historical context. To complete it, an overview or timeline to show how these imbalances have changed over time might help. Another possible challenge identified is that by using specific biographies, it is very easy to generalize about all people from a country or region.

### **2. Energy Dependency**

This key issue looks at the energy supply of the European Union. Europe is dependent on other countries for a large part of its energy supply. Most of these energy supplies come from Russia, the Middle East and other parts of the world in the form of natural gases and oil. European dependency on these forms of energy is massive which also implies it is easy to have tensions arising between countries that are dependent on one another.

For this section Kate Smee is developing a learning activity centred around the questions: “Are European energy needs more likely to lead to peace or war?” By focussing a lesson on this question, students will learn about the consequences of these dependencies and think about whether or not it would lead to peace or war between countries. The idea is that students will look at different historical examples of the impact of Europe’s dependency. Students will have to work in pairs and evaluate the information cards which provides them with basic information about a historical example of Europe’s energy dependency and the tensions this brought. Students then can compare different examples and

see which event led more to peace or to war. This gives students the opportunity to evaluate and discuss the different effects that energy dependency can have on countries.



Following the presentation with initial ideas on the information cards and examples by Kate Smee, the team provided feedback on how the activity could be further improved. For instance, a map with all involved countries in these historical examples would help some students to better understand who is involved and how these players/countries are involved. Another suggestion mentioned was to show where the energy supplies are coming from on a map. This also gives the option to include new possible routes for pipelines and the political implications they bring with them. Instead of making the activity completely historically based, this would add a contemporary aspect. Another aspect that was discussed in detail is the issue of nuclear energy. This form of energy is one of the newest ways to become less independent of other countries, though there is always the concern about the maintenance of these power plants.

### 3. Trade in a Global Context

This key issue is focussing on the EU and Trade in a global context. The difficulty here is that a global context is too big to cover in just one learning activity. Therefore it was decided to focus on one aspect of European Trade Policies and its effect on the people from different places all over the world.

For this, Ute Ackermann Boeros has been working on the development of a learning activity focussing on the question: “How does European trade effect African chicken farmers?” She starts her activity by showing some visual sources and asking how all these can be connected. Students will work in groups using a resource sheet with several statements, sources and statistics. In the end, they will discuss how and why European trade is connected to African Poultry farmers and how people from different point of view see this connection as either good or bad.



The difficulty in this activity is that a discussion is very hard to structure, discussions in classrooms can easily get off topic. Therefore it might be an idea to have some cards with moral or ethical questions or answers to structure the discussion. Because of the complexity of the topic, it can also be good to separate the discussion in two topics. First one about the people’s opinions about the ‘EU policies’

regarding global trade, followed by a discussion on the concepts of this trade and policy. Because this activity is based on a classroom discussion, it is quite easy to adjust it to different learning levels. Transforming the question to a complicated or simple version, you can do this activity with all levels of students.

#### **4. Europe as a potential global power.**

Each team member got one or more roles to play and improvised by only having a character description and a script. This resulted in an active and engaging setting in which all team members enjoyed to play a part in this script. To improve this scripted drama, Kate Brennan asked for feedback which she received from all team members.

For the second scripted drama, focussing on the topic ‘Europe as a potential Global Power’, the team had an intense brainstorming session. The starting point for this brainstorming session was to come up with an idea which can show European integration in action. The first idea was to centre the drama around an imaginary competition between countries, based on the concept of the Eurovision song contest. But many more ideas were provided by the team. No decision was made regarding the topic of the content yet, but a pilot version will be developed before the next development meeting.

What do we want to teach about Europe as a Political Global Power?

- Europe has difficulties understanding itself as a unified political global actor. Various countries still have different ideas about political issues.
- The parties within the countries have many different views than European politics.
- Europe intervening and problems solving or not. Europe acting in a coordinated way using its power. In a drama there is room to say ‘look what went wrong last time’.

#### **5. Opening Europe’s Borders for People / Schengen.**



Bojana Dujković-Blagojević is developing a Learning Activity centred around the question ‘Opening Europe’s Borders for people and border controls in a (post)Schengen world?’ The idea so far is to start the lesson with a video explaining the Schengen agreement. Once the students have an understanding of the concept of Schengen, they are divided into three groups. Each of the groups takes a different perspective: (1) ‘Re-establishing of borders’, (2) ‘European politicians – EU has a role in dealing with Migrant crises’ and

last (3) ‘the Non-Schengen countries’. All groups get some sources to work with to write a statement using their perspective.

One of the content challenges indicated by the author was to find sources from the perspective of ordinary people. The same thing goes for sources of more extreme opinions. To make the activity more historically based, it is also important to add some background context of how and why Schengen was established. Doing this via a video might not be completely covering. Another idea is to start the lesson with the four principles of the EU. At the end of the lesson, students can be asked to explain why these principles are important or not. This gives students a clear understanding of the EU and its history and still addressing a contemporary problem like the Migrant Crisis via a discussion about Schengen.



Overall, the development relating to all five Key Issues is well on its way. The development team has worked hard to come up with these ideas and draft learning activities. In the coming period, they will work on the further development of these ideas and start piloting them in classrooms.

## Conclusions and Next Steps

The Second Development Meeting was a useful opportunity for the team to get input and feedback on their draft lesson ideas from the project advisors and other team members. The key issues are further developed from an initial key question to ideas on methodology and sources.

It was decided that the international training seminar with the finalised materials as the final activity of this project will be combined with the EUROCLIO Annual Conference in San Sebastian in April 2017 to reach out to a bigger audience. During the conference, each activity will be presented in the form of an active workshop, and the completed Historiana unit “Changing Europe” – with all materials developed in this project – will be launched to the public.

The initial idea was that the Development team members, would visit each other in pairs to discuss the progress on the learning activities and provide feedback for each other about their materials. During this meeting however they expressed their preference for a joint meeting in without the project advisors and coordinators to have a work weekend and work collaboratively to further improve their activities and make them ready for the piloting stage.

**Acknowledgements:** The ‘Decisions and Dilemmas: Exploring EU history through the lens of contemporary issues’ is implemented with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

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