

**Mario Bajkuša and Maja Šarić**

# **White Paper**

## **on the Challenges of Education about Europe in Croatia**





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**on the Challenges of Education**  
**about Europe in Croatia**

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# INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

This National White Paper is one of the results produced for the MEGA – Make Europe Great Again project. The MEGA project is an Erasmus+ project, funded by the French National Agency through the Erasmus+ programme and includes partners from France, Croatia, Germany, Spain and Portugal. The project aims to address the challenges of education about the EU in Europe, as well as to improve learning materials, available resources and understanding on the EU in secondary education.

The respective target groups are teachers in secondary education, pupils aged 13 to 17 in secondary education and policy makers who are involved in the national education framework in Europe.

The expected results of the project include:

- Research was carried out, which became the basis for the drafting of the National White Papers on the challenges of education about the EU across Europe;
- A Resource Library including practical and useful learning resources to be utilised in education about the EU;
- E-learning materials and modules to reinforce teachers' knowledge about Europe and improve their teaching approaches for learning about the EU;
- Pick and Teach: Adaptation of training materials to secondary education specifically to improve usability and effectiveness of teaching and learning resources;
- Policy Paper to directly present the projects findings, results and impact to policy makers and inform them of possible challenges, obstacles and changes needed in the education framework to improve education on the EU.

These National White Papers revolve around education about the EU in France, Germany, Portugal, Croatia and Spain, and includes one White Paper on European level for cross-reference between the respective countries. All White Papers are available on the project website. The following National White Paper focuses on education about the EU in Croatia.

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Asociación Caminos.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY<sup>1</sup>

Between December 2020 and June 2021, the project partners of the MEGA project carried out surveys and focus groups with headmasters, teachers and pupils. In total, the partners collected 1283 questionnaires for pupils, 675 teacher questionnaires, multiple focus groups with teachers and 80 surveys with headmasters, across all participating partner countries. Participants came from public and private secondary schools, general secondary schools without specialisation, as well as vocational schools and training centres.

## *What is the importance of education about the European Union?*

For the EU topic to even be covered in the curriculum of a country, education about the EU has to be seen as an important factor for the country and its inhabitants, as well as a significant influence into the life, decisions and choices of its population. As one of the participants of the survey put it, their reason for being interested in the EU is as simple as “because I live in Europe”. However, what importance does education about the EU really have in the partner countries? Is it seen as an important aspect of education due to the EU’s influence on its population and daily life?

While all interviewed headmasters in Spain, Germany and Portugal agreed that education about the EU is at least somewhat important for their country, only 57% of headmasters in France name it as moderately important. At the same time, about 89% of school administrators in Croatia found education about the EU moderately to fully important in their country. This should not be seen as an overall representative image of the educational situation in all countries but shows a trend for the schools interviewed during this project.

## *Who is responsible for the framework/curriculum for schools?*

While it is important how headmasters and school administrators think about education about the EU, as they may emphasise certain extracurricular activities, school projects and similar exercises in their institutions, it is not always their decision to include the topic in the curriculum. At times, the curriculum is set by a national framework and depending on this framework the schools are able to decide on their subjects, topics and teaching content.

All partner countries have a general framework set by the national government, the federal state or a regional authority. The Ministry of National Education sets the programme for French schools, with 80% of headmasters stating they have no real authority over the subjects to be taught. They do have some leeway in setting the specific activities of school projects, especially in the private sector.

In Portugal the national curriculum is also set by their Ministry of Education, however, there is a difference between public school, which have no freedom in their curriculum, and private schools, which can adapt their curriculum to a certain degree. In that regard, there are similarities as in the case of France.

Over 65% of headmasters in Croatia also state that the national framework mostly prescribes their school curriculum, while the majority of headmasters do agree to have some freedom in the detailed design of school curriculum.

Different from the other countries, the Spanish and the German educational framework is set by regional authorities. In Germany, the teaching curriculum is designed by the federal state and, depending on the type of school, gives some freedom to set their own priorities. All headmasters in Germany agreed in being able to adapt the framework into a detailed curriculum according to their own priorities. In Spain, the teaching curriculum is set by their autonomous community instead of the national government, with some freedom in adapting the curriculum, as long as the programme adheres to the pre-set priorities of the autonomous community government.

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Asociación Caminos.



## Which subjects cover education about the EU?

The survey showed different results regarding which subjects should include education about Europe between headmasters (Table 1) and teachers (Table 2).

Subject	Croatia	France	Germany	Portugal	Spain
History	63%	26%	67%	60%	//
Geography	84%	26%	67%	80%	67%
Civic Education	42%	26%	33%	60%	//
Foreign Languages	52%	22%	//	20%	100%
Politics	86%	//	100%	//	//
Economy	86%	//	//	20%	//

Table 1 - Headmasters' opinion on subjects that should include education about the EU. All numbers rounded to the nearest full percentage. "//" signifies 0%.

Subject	Croatia	France	Germany	Portugal	Spain
History	18%	23%	44%	82%	85%
Geography	24%	14%	15%	82%	85%
Civic Education	2%	30%	3%	84%	38%
Foreign Languages	5-8%*	21%	17%	48%	60%
Politics	24%	//	86%	48%	58%
Economy	24%	6%	25%	53%	5%
Social Sciences	3%**	6%	53%	52%	53%

Table 2 - Teachers' opinion on subjects that should include education about the EU. All numbers rounded to the nearest full percentage. "//" signifies 0%. \*counting mentions of "Foreign languages", "English language" and "German language". \*\* Sociology.

While headmaster and teachers from all countries agreed that Geography includes education about the EU to a certain degree, not all countries agreed that it is included in other classes with sometimes even a big difference between the teachers and the headmasters.

When looking at the results, other aspects have to be considered as well: not all subjects cover education about Europe to the same amount and some of these classes cover the topic because it is a mandatory part of the curriculum while some teachers cover it on a voluntary basis in their subjects. About 53% of teachers in Croatia were unsure whether it was part of the mandatory curriculum while it is an obligatory part of classes in Germany.

## Barriers and challenges identified by teachers/headmasters

In summary, about eleven different reasons were named by different countries for why teachers and headmasters did not include education about Europe in their lessons:

- Time constraints: not enough preparation time as well as not enough time in class to analyse the topics. If the EU topics are not set as mandatory to the curriculum, many teachers are not willing to include these topics due to the current overload of content in the overall curriculum;
- Lack of necessary funding and financial support;
- Lack of training for the teachers to be able to include education about Europe;
- Lack of motivation or interest: headmasters especially identified the lack of interest from pupils and teachers as a reason for not including the topic in the lessons;
- Not a priority in the curriculum: some teachers noted that they are less likely to cover the topic of the EU in their subject due to it not being a priority in the educational framework or curriculum to their knowledge, showing that they would cover the topic more in their teaching if it was more emphasised in the curriculum;
- Multiple teachers and headmasters named the adaptability of resources and materials as a problem for teaching. Many resources are not adaptable to their school environment or their subject and teaching, preventing them from using the materials;
- Lack of resources (technical resources, materials, staff, etc.)
- Not enough support from their institution: some teachers named the missing support from their institution, their colleagues, the headmasters and other parties as a reason for not being able to include education about Europe in their classes;
- Too much content: Teachers from Germany and Spain noted that the topic is so vast and detailed it is hard to separate the important aspects which should be taught to pupils from the rest of the content;
- No connection/priority of the subject: participants stated there was no connection between their subject and education about Europe, while some teachers and headmaster noted that often other topics take priority over education about Europe, resulting in the topic not being covered in classes.
- Unfamiliarity with European projects and programmes: Answers showed that many teachers are not too familiar with established programmes/initiatives that exist either at European or national level to integrate education about the EU in schools, with the most known being Erasmus+, while other transnational programmes like eTwinning or national projects are less known to teachers.

## What is the level of confidence of knowledge about the EU?

The survey explored how confident teachers as well as pupils felt in their knowledge about the EU and what they felt most confident in (Table 3).

Confidence in...	Croatia	France	Germany	Portugal	Spain
General EU knowledge, institutions and economic structure and influence	46%	58%	78%	69%	33%
EU's social and civic impact and processes	46%	47%	67%	74%	33%
EU's history and development	57%	57%	76%	71%	33%
EU's cultures and cultural heritage	59%	52%	62%	70%	28%

Table 3 - Teachers' self-confidence in knowledge about the EU (all countries). All numbers rounded to the nearest full percentage. Positive confidence is taken from answers "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" to the respective questions.

It shall be noted that most of the questioned participants in France were history and geography teachers, making history part of their required knowledge. While most teachers in Germany

felt confident in their knowledge about the EU, 79% of them stated they think they and their colleagues could benefit from additional training.

Bolded numbers in the Table 4 show the percentage of pupils feeling confident in a specific area while italics shows the percentage feeling insecurity regarding the topic.

Confidence in...	Croatia	France	Germany	Portugal	Spain
General knowledge about the EU	55%	47%	<b>58%</b>	<b>60%</b>	62%
Name all EU member states	<b>50%</b>	64%	38%	<b>39%</b>	56%
Purpose of the European Parliament	56%	60%	62%	<b>45%</b>	72%
Purpose of the European Commission	71%	67%	36%	<b>46%</b>	73%
Knowledge of all EU institutions	74%	68%	30%	<b>39%</b>	76%
Origin and development of the EU	52%	53%	49%	<b>71%</b>	<b>54%</b>
Impact of the EU in their own country	<b>69%</b>	<b>45%</b>	66%	<b>68%</b>	55%
Different cultures and cultural prejudice	<b>61%</b>	41%	50%	<b>62%</b>	51%

*Table 4 - Pupils' self-confidence in knowledge about the EU (all countries). All numbers rounded to the nearest full percentage. Positive confidence is taken from answers "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" to the respective questions. Negative confidence is counted with answers "Disagree" and "Strongly disagree".*

All countries showed a majority of pupils claiming they would like to learn about the EU and were interested in finding out more information.

Headmasters, teachers and pupils identified multiple challenges in improving education about EU, while also stating their interest in including it more in their teaching and learning. The focus groups showed that many teachers highlight the need to have clear and structured materials, which can be easily implemented and adapted to their classes, which corresponds with the survey results of them having to have time to even prepare all the materials. The survey results do show that general interest is there, both for pupils and for teachers alike.



## METHODOLOGY

Several data sources are components of this White Paper. It includes the gathering and analysis of publicly available databases and reports, interviews with stakeholders of the education system, questionnaires with headmasters, expert staff in schools<sup>1</sup>, teachers and pupils, as well as focus groups with teachers. In this chapter, we describe all of used methods and tools.

### *Desk Research*

Data for the desk research was collected from publicly available databases and relevant research related to the subject of this Paper. Most of the sources include various research conducted with teachers and pupils on the topic of knowledge of the EU and the presence of topics about the EU in education. Part of the resources included in this Paper are studies on the civic competencies of children and youth.

### *Interviews with Stakeholders*

To conduct interviews with stakeholders in the education system, the project partner, Asociación Caminos from Spain, drafted a protocol for interviews with stakeholders. Following consultations, the consortium adopted the final version of the protocol containing eight questions with sub-questions. Based on the agreed stakeholders' interview protocol, the partners selected the relevant stakeholder representatives in their countries.

The Forum for Freedom in Education identified six stakeholders, of which five were from the state administration and one stakeholder from a European institution active in Croatia. We sent the letters to all identified stakeholders with an invitation to participate enclosing project description, research objectives and translation of questionnaires.

Of the six invited stakeholders, five responded and participated. We held interviews from November 2020 to January 2021, virtually via Zoom platform with three stakeholders, one stakeholder gave a written answer and another opted for a live interview. We used the MS Word software for transcription and analysis of the interviews.

### *Questionnaires with School Leaders, Teachers and Pupils*

The project partner, Asociación Caminos from Spain, drafted three separate questionnaires for headmasters, teachers and pupils. The consortium adopted the questionnaire after consultation, followed by a translation into national languages.

Based on established practice, on December 21st 2020, the Forum for Freedom in Education sent a request for an expert opinion to the Ministry of Science and Education, which contained project and research description and translated questionnaires. Based on the positive expert opinion of the Education and Teacher Training of January 22nd 2021, the Ministry gave its support to the project implementation with its letter of February 2nd 2021.

On January 4th, 2021, the Forum for Freedom in Education published the invitation for participation in the project activity on the organisation's website aimed at secondary schools teachers. Teachers' task, if selected, was to ensure the completion of the questionnaire by the school's headmaster and/or expert staff, by at least five teachers and at least ten pupils. Applications were collected from January 4th to 24th, 2021 with 92 teachers from 33 secondary schools submitting their applications. The Forum for Freedom in Education sent to all selected teachers the protocol containing a detailed procedure for implementing the questionnaire and links for all three questionnaires. Special emphasis was placed on the coordination of schools from which we had several applications.

Completion of the questionnaire was conducted between February 10th and April 1st, 2021. In total, 62 headmasters and/or expert staff and 313 teachers from 29 schools and 578 pupils from 31 schools responded to questionnaires. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the data was downloaded from the SoSci Survey platform (oFb - der onlineFragebogen), while data cleaning

<sup>1</sup> Expert staff in the Croatian education system are psychologists, pedagogues, librarians etc.

and analysis were performed in MS Excel. The socio-demographic characteristics of all three samples is presented in the appendixes to this Paper.

### ***Interviews with Teachers***

As in the case of stakeholder interviews and questionnaires, the Spanish partner Asociación Caminos developed the protocol for focus groups with teachers. The protocol was accepted following the consultation with the consortium after which the partners started conducting focus groups.

The Forum for Freedom in Education sent the invitation to all teachers participating in the collection of the questionnaire. 20 female teachers participated, of which 12 taught in vocational schools and eight in grammar schools.

Focus groups were conducted during April 2021, virtually via the Zoom platform, with an average duration of an hour and a half. The conversations were transcribed and analysed using MS Word. Part of the interviewees' input has been recorded using the Padlet platform.

### ***Limitations***

This research was not completed on a representative sample. This should be kept in mind while reading and using the results presented in this Paper. Although all secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia had the same opportunity to apply for participation in the project, because the invitation was published on the organization's website and was publicly available, it must be noted that most participating schools implement or have implemented the program "European Parliament Schools Ambassadors". This fact has significant impact on responses and one should have this in mind when reading or using this Paper.



## ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

In general, the citizens of Croatia have a positive view of the EU. According to the Standard Eurobarometer No. 94, more than half of the respondents (51%) have a positive view of the EU and the same percentage say that they tend to trust the EU, which is above the EU average<sup>1</sup>.

The EU has much larger importance among pupils in their eighth year of education. In the ICCS 2016 study (Losito et al. 2018), 98% of pupils consider themselves European citizens, 95% are proud to live in Europe, 89% feel first and foremost as a citizen of Europe and then of the world. 85% of pupils feel like a part of the EU, and 90% of pupils from Croatia are proud that Croatia is a member state of the EU. One other survey on youth from 14 to 30 years old records the decline in identity connections with Europe where 68% of respondents see themselves as European citizens (Gvozdanović et al. 2019).

### Teachers View of the EU

In our questionnaires, we asked teachers and pupils how they perceive the EU.

Almost two-thirds of teachers (65%) express a positive view of the EU while 30% have a neutral and 5% negative view of the EU. Teachers with a positive view see the EU as:

*A community that empowers each nation, provides individuals with opportunities for development in education and career, and member states with cooperation and support. (teacher, vocational school) - [Zajednicu koja osnažuje svaku individualnu naciju, pruža pojedincima mogućnost razvoja u području edukacije i karijere, a državama članicama međusobnu suradnju i potporu. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)],*

*A community of European countries with common values and goals. (teacher, grammar school) - [Zajednica europskih država s jednakim vrijednostima i ciljem. (nastavnik:ca, gimnazija)],*

*As mostly an economic and political union of several European countries whose goal is to advance all European countries and encourage togetherness and cooperation. (teacher, vocational school) - [Kao jednu, ponajviše ekonomsku i političku uniju više europskih država. Čiji je cilj unaprijediti sve europske zemlje i poticati zajedništvo i suradnju. (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)],*

*As a great place to live; a community of different people who cooperate on many levels, develops solidarity, a community that has preserved peace and freedom. (teacher, grammar school) - [Kao odlično mjesto za život; zajednica različitih koji ostvaruju suradnju na mnogim planovima, razvija solidarnost, zajednica koja je očuvala mir i slobodu. (nastavnik:ca, gimnazija)],*

*As my home, and the home of my friends from other countries, as a place of encounter and ensuring peace on European soil, as a place of exchange of experiences and opinions, as unity in diversity. (teacher, vocational school) - [Kao svoj dom i dom svojih prijatelja iz drugih zemalja, kao mjesto susreta i osiguranje mira na europskome tlu, kao mjesto razmjene iskustva i mišljenja, kao ujedinenost u različitosti. (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)],*

*As a union of different countries working together to improve each member state and create competitiveness with the United States and China. (teacher, grammar school) - [Kao uniju različitih zemalja koje zajedno rade na boljitku svake članice te stvaranju konkurentnosti SAD-u i Kini. (nastavnik:ca, gimnazija)],*

<sup>1</sup> EU average = 49%.

*As my homeland, which I want to travel all over, visit the squares, meet people, listen to languages, taste food. (I still have a lot of work to do). (teacher, vocational school) - [Kao svoju domovinu. Koju želim cijelu proputovati, trgovu obići, ljude upoznavati, jezike slušati, jela isprobati (imam još puno posla). (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)],*

*As a community of different cultures with a common socio-historical discourse: a community that enables the maintenance of peace, growth and development. (teacher, grammar school) - [Kao jednu zajednicu različitih kultura sa zajedničkim društveno-povijesnim diskursom: zajednici koja omogućava održanje mira, rasta i razvoja. (nastavnik:ca, gimnazija)]*

Teachers having a neutral view of the EU frequently give a common definition of the EU while others emphasize mostly the economic nature of European unification process. These teachers see the EU as a necessity in the modern world and as a very complex super state.

*As a well-conceived idea that is slowly beginning to melt. Especially now at a time of epidemiological situation, when it is evident that there is no equality among EU countries. (teacher, vocational school) - [Kao izuzetno dobru zamišljenu ideju, koja se polako počinje topiti, osobito sad u vrijeme epidemiološke situacije, kad je evidentno da ne postoji ravnopravnost i jednakost među zemljama EU. (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)]*

*It sounds good in theory, but it does not work completely. Not everyone is seen as equal. As is usually the case in the world. (teacher, grammar school) - [Zvuči dobro u teoriji, ali ne funkcionira u potpunosti. Ne gleda se svih jednako. Kao što to i inače biva u svijetu. (nastavnik:ca, gimnazija)].*

The situation around the epidemic has prompted some teachers to think of the EU as

*No longer as well organized and secure as before. (teacher, vocational school) - [Ne više tako dobro organiziranu i sigurnu organizaciju kao prije. (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)].*

Respondents with a negative attitude mention that the EU is overcomplicated, disorganized, bureaucratic, and not united enough.

*As a necessary evil in which the big ones decide on behalf of the small ones. (teacher, vocational school) - [Kao nužno zlo u kojem veliki odlučuju u ime malih. (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)]*

*As a political project created to counterbalance the world's growing economies. (teacher, mixed school) - [Kao politički projekt nastao zbog protuteže rastućim ekonomijama svijeta, (nastavnik:ca, srednja škola)]*

*A creation that will not last long. (teacher, vocational school) - [Tvorevina koja neće još dugo. (nastavnik, strukovna škola)].*

The EU management of the pandemics contributed to the reasons for teachers' negative attitudes:

*[I see the EU] negative, which is especially noticeable in the current time of the pandemic, visible through the lack of independence in deciding some important matters. (teacher, vocational school) - [Negativno, što je posebno izraženo u sadašnje vrijeme pandemije, vidljivo kroz nedostatak samostalnosti u odlučivanju o nekim važnim stvarima. (nastavnik:ca, strukovna škola)]*

Regardless of their personal view of the EU, teachers see the opportunities for the next generations. This is evident in vast majority of teachers agreeing with the statement "The EU is important for future generations". As many as 93% of teachers and 89% of headmasters and expert staff agree or completely agree with this statement, emphasizing the great potential that the EU has, especially

for the younger generations to whom the EU will be their living space. Teachers mentioned this in the focus groups when asked why pupils should learn about the EU:

*Talking about the EU is extremely important because it is, after all, our living space. (teacher, grammar school) - [Govoriti o EU je izuzetno bitno jer je to na kraju krajeva i naš životni prostor. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*I think that educational methods are also important, pointing out what is important for them to know, that the Commission is not the same as the Croatian Government and that there is a difference between the Croatian and European parliament, but also that they understand it as their living space. (teacher, grammar school) - [Mislim da su važne i edukativne metode, upućivati na ono što je važno da znaju, da nije Komisija isto što i hrvatska Vlada i da je razlika između hrvatskog i europskog parlamenta, ali isto tako da oni to shvate kao svoj prostor života. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

### **Pupils view of the EU**

We asked pupils how much they agree or disagree with several statements about the EU. As seen in the Table 5, pupils largely agree with all of the statements: 84% of pupils agree or completely agree with the statement that the EU has a direct impact on EU citizens as well as on pupils themselves, and 83% of pupils agree with the statement that the EU dominates the Member States economically. Finally, 70% of pupils agree with the statement that the EU is mostly an administrative organization while 30% of pupils disagree with this statement.

Statements	completely disagree	disagree	agree	completely agree	average
I think the EU is mostly an administrative organization.	4%	26%	55%	15%	2,80
I think the EU has mostly an economic impact on its member states	3%	15%	64%	19%	2,99
I think the EU has a social and civic impact on the European population and myself.	2%	14%	64%	20%	3,02

Table 5 - Pupils view of the EU





# THE EU IN CURRICULUM

## *The EU in the National Curriculum*

The Law on Primary and Secondary Education prescribes that the national curriculum, teaching plans and programs, and school curriculum are the sole basis for the implementation of education in schools (art. 26). The Minister of Education has the authority to adopt the national curriculum and related documents (art. 27) and the school board is in charge of adopting the school curriculum (art. 28). From the above-described legal provisions, it is clear that the central government has the greatest influence in determining what is taught in schools. More precisely the Ministry of Education, through the adoption of the national curriculum and related documents guides the content and outcomes of education.

In our study, we asked headmasters and expert staff if the education about the EU is a priority in the Croatian educational system. They share the opinion that education about the EU is somewhat or very important in Croatia. Precisely, 38 out of 42 headmasters and expert staff share this opinion. However, 41 out of 42 headmasters and expert staff express the need for further improvement of education about the EU in schools. Their recommendations emphasize the need for curriculum modernisation, intertwining education about the EU into other subjects, deepening the content about the EU, more information activities with pupils, and more teacher training opportunities. On the other hand, teachers do not share this stance. More than 71% of teachers participating in the study disagree or completely disagree with the statement "I think education about the EU is already a significant part of my country's compulsory education".

The concept of the European dimension in education (Ledić, Turk 2013: 188 according to Ledić, Turk 2012: 269) is categorised into four groups of indicators: European knowledge society, European values, and identity and modern approaches to learning. To gain a complete overview of the presence of these indicators in this topic, it is useful to look at the national curriculum framework to determine how EU education is set up and how present it is at all. In the preliminary, as yet unpublished FFE report on the national curriculum, out of about 8245 analyzed educational outcomes in 16 compulsory subjects, seven cross-curricular topics and four elective subjects, a total of 33 educational outcomes directly or indirectly related to the EU were found. Based on this analysis, the Croatian pupils start to learn on the EU in the second educational cycle (grade four to six) all to the end of secondary education. The education about the EU is the most present in the Geography curriculum. Other subjects that cover education about the EU are Ethics, Croatian language, History and Civic Education .

The results of the curriculum analysis are in line with the answers of headmasters and expert staff when asked to assess how much certain topics about the EU are present in the curriculum. As shown in the Table 6, the topic that is the most intensively represented in the curricula relates to the geography of Europe, i.e. the curriculum covers it in detail or it is the integral part of the curriculum. The next three most intensively present topics in the curriculum are topics of European history, European cultures and topics related to the working languages of the EU. Topics such as European cultural heritage, EU politics and institutions, social and civil impact of the EU, economic and legal impact of the EU, EU identity and citizenship as well as other non-working languages of the EU are mentioned in subjects or provides pupils with basic knowledge of these topics.

	Topic is not covered	Topic is mentioned in subjects	Basic knowledge is included	Topic is covered in details	Topic is integral part and priority	average
Working languages of the EU (English, French, German)	3%	24%	30%	19%	24%	3,38
European geography	3%	27%	24%	35%	11%	3,24
European history	0%	21%	45%	24%	11%	3,24
European cultures	0%	37%	39%	18%	5%	2,92
European cultural heritage (e.g. cultural landmarks, music, etc.)	0%	35%	49%	11%	5%	2,86
The European Union (politics, institutions)	3%	38%	46%	11%	3%	2,73
The European Union (social and civil impact)	3%	47%	39%	11%	0%	2,58
The European Union (economic and legal impact)	3%	54%	32%	11%	0%	2,51
European identity and citizenship	5%	45%	47%	3%	0%	2,47
Official EU languages (except English, French, German)	26%	42%	21%	8%	3%	2,18

Table 6 - Presence of certain topics about the European Union in school subjects.

Despite all this, the EU themes are present in a very small segment as part of the curriculum. According to teachers, the curriculum as the backbone of teaching about the EU is insufficient.

*We can forget the curriculum. It all depends on the teacher. (teacher, mixed school) - [Možemo kurikulum zaboraviti. Sve ovisi od nastavnika do nastavnika. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

*Those who write these curricula, they did not get that reality and the problem in teaching. (teacher, grammar school) - [Oni koji pišu te kurikulume, do njih nije došla ta stvarnost i problem u nastavi. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*The curriculum is very short and [the topics are covered] just to be done. (teacher, vocational school) - [Kurikulum je baš štur i to se radi samo da se odradi. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

## The EU in the Schools' Curricula

Schools have a certain level of autonomy in which they can express their particularities or emphasise certain curricular areas. It is very difficult to assess precisely how autonomous schools are in shaping their curriculum. The largest number (27) of headmasters and expert staff who participated in the study say that the national framework prescribes most of the school curriculum. Five headmasters and expert staff claim that the national curriculum determines everything and an equal number of headmasters and expert staff claim that most of the school curriculum is designed independently or that the national framework prescribes half, while half is up to the school to define it independently.

In the study, we asked headmasters and expert staff, teachers and pupils if the education about the EU is present in their school's curriculum.

When asked if their school's curriculum includes compulsory content about the EU, 44,7% of headmasters and expert staff responded positively. Further, 58% of headmasters and expert staff agree or completely agree with the statement "My educational institution supports education about the EU greatly and covers it in each class as much as possible".

We asked teachers if their school's curriculum provides education about the EU in one or more compulsory or elective subjects (see Table 7). Interestingly, between 41% and 53% of teachers do not know if the curriculum of their schools covers education about the EU. Of those who responded, 48,44% say that the education about the EU is present in one or more compulsory subjects and 34,16% say that the EU is covered in one or more elective subjects.

	Yes	No	I do not know
in one or multiple compulsory subjects	48,44%	10,03%	41,52%
in one or multiple elective subjects	34,16%	12,46%	53,38%

*Table 7 - Presence of the content about the EU in schools curriculum (teachers)*

We also asked pupils if the EU is taught in their school. 78,3% of pupils responded positively and 21,7% said that they do not learn about the EU in school. It is worth to mention here the results of the ICCS 2016 study (Losito et al. 2018). In the mentioned study, 71% of pupils say they had opportunity to learn about political and economic system of the European countries, and 73% has a chance to learn about political and social issues in European countries. In their own words, 92% of pupils say they had a chance to learn about the European history, and 74% had a chance to learn about political and economic integrations between European countries.



# IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICES

## Teachers' Capacities to teach the EU

*In new educational areas, teachers often feel not well prepared to teach immediately and need a longer period of preparation. (...) Teachers' pre-training is needed and then continuous professional development support as well as material support to schools involved in additional activities. (...) Higher education institutions should change and adjust their programs to be more flexible and able to provide support to teachers. (stakeholder representative)*  
*- [U novim područjima obrazovanja učitelji se često osjećaju nedovoljno pripremljenima za predavanje i potrebno im je dulje razdoblje pripreme. (...) Potrebna je prethodna obuka učitelja, praćena kontinuiranom podrškom za profesionalni razvoj, kao i materijalna podrška školama uključenim u dodatne aktivnosti. (...) Visokoškolske bi ustanove trebale mijenjati i prilagođavati svoje programe kako bi bile fleksibilnije i mogle pružiti podršku nastavnicima. (predstavnica dionika)]*

As seen from stakeholder representative's quote, and supported by the claims of the teachers in the questionnaire, subjects and educational programs at higher education institutions where future teachers are educated do not cover topics about the EU. More over, in our study, 70% of teacher disagrees with the statement "I have learn about the EU during my university education". For example, in the research on the presence of the European dimension in the education of school pedagogues, Ledić and Turk (Ledić and Turk, 2014: 276) conclude that the higher education program of pedagogy and professional development programs in Croatia do not contribute to the development of European dimension competencies in school pedagogues.

This means that teachers' formal education does not prepare future teachers either in terms of content or methodology for teaching about the EU. Exceptionally, in faculty programs such as history, political science, sociology, geography and other (social) specializations, given the nature of the field, some of the European topics are incorporated into the entire specialization curriculum. Moreover, the preparation for methodological approaches and strategies for integrating and linking European themes into the subject and cross-curricular themes is missing. It should also be added that professional development of pedagogues does not cover the European dimension and it is necessary to provide education that will place the European dimension in the educational environment, both for school pedagogues and other expert and teaching staff (Ledić and Turk, 2014: 276).

In this context, we wanted to see how headmasters, expert staff and teachers are confident in their knowledge of the EU in general and in particular segments related to the EU. In the case of headmasters and expert staff (Table 8), just under two-thirds of headmasters and expert staff in schools agree or fully agree with the statement "I am confident in my knowledge of the EU". Exactly two-thirds of headmasters and expert staff express agreement or complete agreement with the statement "I have confidence in the knowledge of my colleagues and teachers about the EU".

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	average
I am confident in my personal knowledge and teaching about the EU.	0%	39%	53%	8%	2,69
I am confident in my teaching colleagues' knowledge and teaching about the EU.	0%	33%	56%	11%	2,78

Table 8 - Headmasters' and expert staffs' self-confidence and confidence

Table 9 presents the data about teachers' confidence in their knowledge about particular EU-related topics. Most teachers feel confident about their knowledge of different cultures and

cultural heritage of the EU and EU's history and development. Teachers are split into halves when asked about their confidence in knowledge about the social and civic impact of the EU, processes in the EU and EU's institutions, economic structure and influence.

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	average
I am confident in my knowledge of the EU, its institutions and its economic structure and influence.	6%	40%	40%	6%	9%
I am confident in my knowledge of the EU and its social and civic impact and processes.	7%	39%	38%	8%	9%
I am confident in my knowledge of the EU's history and development.	3%	35%	47%	11%	5%
I am confident in my knowledge of the different cultures and the cultural heritage of the EU.	2%	34%	48%	11%	5%

Table 9 - Teachers' self-confidence in knowledge about certain aspects of the EU

We further explored teachers' self-confidence in teaching the EU through focus groups. Teachers' perception of their own knowledge, self-confidence in teaching EU topics and confidence in teaching methods vary, depending on the field, previous knowledge and specialization. Teachers point out that through their own formal, university education, they did not have teaching content that covers the topics of the EU, nor how to methodically approach such content.

*I think we are all here, so to speak, globally ignorant or self-taught. (teacher, grammar school) - [Mislim da smo svi tu ako mogu tako reći, globalno neuki ili samouki. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*With the arrival of material about the EU, of course, you do not feel competent. Because after all, we all had to learn about it, because it is not something we have had the opportunity to learn about through our formal schooling and in college. (teacher, grammar school) - [S dolaskom materijala o Europskoj uniji, naravno da se ne osjećaš kompetentno. Jer na kraju krajeva smo svi morali učiti o tome, jer to nije nešto o čemu smo mi imali prilike učiti kroz naše formalno školovanje i na fakultetima. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Due to the lack of pre-service training, teaching materials, but also systematic support, teaching preparation remains the responsibility and motivation of teachers themselves.

*I do not think it is something where we are well grounded, formally speaking, these are still new topics for us. For me personally, every entry into teaching with this topic means a lot of preparation, both theoretical and especially practical, because you have to show the children what kind of reflection it actually has in practice. Therefore, it is all on a personal level. (teacher, grammar school) - [Mislim da to nije nešto gdje smo mi formalno strašno potkovani, da su to nama još uvijek nove teme. Za mene osobno svaki ulazak u nastavu s tom temom, znači jako puno pripreme, na teorijskoj i posebno na praktičnoj jer morate djeci pokazati kakvog u praksi to zapravo odraza ima. Tako da sve je to na osobnoj razini. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Most often, they are "learning by doing" and thus strengthen their own capacities.

*When you ask what I know and what I do not know, that is a nice question. Of course, European regulations are always so bad for me because something is always changing here and I have to keep in mind that I need to constantly check my knowledge. (teacher, mixed school) - [Kada pitate što znam, a što ne znam, to je zgodno pitanje. Naravno da su mi europske regulative uvijek onako knap jer se tu uvijek nešto mijenja i tu moram imati na umu da trebam stalno nešto provjeravati svoje znanje. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

*I would not say that I feel safe here. I do not go into some details and depth. And if pupils ask me something, it's not a problem for me to say I'm going to explore or we explore it together, but it is part of the general culture. I would like to know more. (teacher, vocational school) - [Ne bih rekla da se tu osjećam sigurno, ne idem u neke detalje i dubinu. I ako me učenici nešto pitaju, uopće mi nije problem reći da ću istražiti ili da istražimo zajedno, ali dio je to opće kulture. Ja bih voljela i više znati. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*I know very little. (...) I find out about some topics through MEPs. Then I educate myself on these topics on my own initiative, as far as I am interested. If a pupil asks me something concrete, I would not be very competent to transfer knowledge. (teacher, vocational school) - [Ja jako malo znam. (...)] Saznam ovako, kroz europske zastupnike. Samoinicijativno se o tome educiram koliko me zanima. Tako da me evo sad netko pita od učenika, ne bih bila baš kompetentna za prenošenje znanja. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

They often network with other teachers exchanging good practices and "patch holes" in their own knowledge.

*We are very poorly trained and we know very little. Mostly you do the research, you call colleagues. (teacher, vocational school) - [Vrlo smo slabo potkovani i vrlo malo toga znamo. Većinom se istražuje, zoveš kolege. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

Here we must mention that, alongside EPAS program, teachers heavily rely on civil society organisations' programs. Namely, "Education for EU Literacy" by the Association "GONG" which is recognized by 30% of teachers and in which 3% of teachers participated. The second program is the Forum for Freedom in Education's "Education on the EU" which is known by 35% of teacher and 4% of them participated in it.

## **Subjects and Activities covering the EU**

In the chapter about the EU in curriculum we presented a short overview of EU related content in curriculum. We asked headmasters, expert staff and teachers about the actual implementation of education about the EU in teaching, i.e. in which subjects the contents related to the EU are taught, and integrated.

Headmasters and expert staff report (Table 10) that contents on the EU are taught in Politics and Economy and Geography in all three forms of secondary schools. In other subjects, we can see greater variability when speaking about the forms of secondary schools. It is interesting to see how the contents on the EU are more or less represented in all the above subjects when it comes to vocational schools, while in the case of grammar schools the centre of the contents on the EU is in Politics and Economy and Geography.

	Grammar School	Mixed School	Vocational School
Politics and Economy	30%	36%	33%
Geography	31%	34%	34%
History	25%	33%	42%
Foreign Languages	15%	35%	50%
Civic Education	25%	50%	25%
Other subjects	10%	30%	60%

Table 10 - Presence of the education about the EU in certain subjects as seen by headmasters and expert staff

When asked in which compulsory subjects they teach about the EU, teachers confirm what the headmasters and expert staff have already mentioned. Teaching about the EU is present in Politics and Economy, Geography and History. Of the other subjects mentioned, it is evident that topics and contents related to the EU are present in foreign languages, the economic and legal group

of subjects in vocational schools. Table 11 contains all compulsory subjects that covers education about the EU as reported by teachers.

	grammar school	mixed school	vocational school
Politics and Economy	23	20	32
Geography	24	21	26
History	20	15	20
Entrepreneurship			11
English language		5	5
Sociology	3	4	1
Basics of economy			8
Foreign languages	4	1	3
German language		5	2
Ethics	3		3
Civic education	1	1	3
Croatian language		1	3
Techniques of Foreign Trade			4
Global Business Environment			4
Professional courses			2
Market		2	
Class of class communities			2
Banking and Insurance			2
Introduction to State and Law			2
Economic group of subjects			2
Commercial Business			1
Law			1
Croatian Tourist Geography			1
Other			1
Transport and Freight Forwarding			1
Marketing		1	
Tourism Basics			1
STEM subjects		1	
Practical classes			1
Economy			1
Constructs		1	
Business communications			1

Table 11 - List of compulsory subjects where education about the EU is present reported by teachers

When we discuss elective subjects, the most present activity is EPAS – European Parliament Ambassador Schools Program, which is mostly present in grammar and mixed schools, and the least in vocational schools. In vocational schools, the EU is the most talked about in activities related to the cross-curricular theme of Civic Education and the elective subject of Ethics. It is noticeable that schools organize occasional activities connected to the EU, which are mostly related to the celebration of Europe Day or are integrated to European projects implemented by the school. Table 12 contains the list of elective subjects and groups of subjects, which have EU related content.

	grammar school	mixed school	vocational school
EPAS	6	7	2
Civic Education	3	5	7
Ethics related activity	4	1	5
EU-related activity	2		7
Geography related activity	4	2	
Politics and economy related activity	2	1	2
History related activity	2	2	
Erasmus+ projects			4
Global Business Environment		1	3
Debate club	1	1	1
Special EU-related activity	3		
Media Culture			3
Sociology related activity	1		1
School projects	1		1
Tourism related activities			2
Civic Engineering related activities		2	
Politics and economy	2		
Philosophy related activity			1
Catholic Catechism			1
English language			1
Ecology related activity			1
Entrepreneurship		1	
Social Responsible Business			1
Marketing			1
eTwinning projects			1
Economy related activities			1
EU projects		1	
Orthodox Catechism			1

Table 12 - List of elective subjects where education about the EU is present reported by teachers

## Teaching Practices

From our research, we see that teachers who are intrinsically motivated to teach about the EU lack no creativity to integrate content about the EU in everyday teaching.

Thus, in regular classes teachers seek to observe and organize activities related to important EU dates through presentations, exhibitions and public speeches of guest lecturers. They also include topics of European values and laws connecting them with human rights, gender equality, consumer rights and their protection within the EU. They often emphasize European values in teaching, such as solidarity, social justice, migrants' rights and others, and integrate related topics into the teaching content.

Teachers link current events in Philosophy classes, teach the structure of the EU through History and Politics and Economics. Some teachers try to correlate vocational, natural science and mathematics subjects within the EU context.

In general, teachers of Politics and Economics, Ethics, Geography and History point out that they are most successful in integrating EU topics in the curriculum, but very superficially, while foreign language teachers can implement certain topics in more detail and thoroughly due to more teaching hours. Within the curriculum, most work is done in Geography classes, although there has been a change and reduction in curricula, while foreign language teachers manage to include



the EU content through topics of diversity, culture and language in regular classes. On the other hand, teachers often face the problems of material overloading and lack of time.

*Because of the overcrowding of the program. So, to me if we want to deal with the EU in more detail; not when Croatia joined the EU, how many member states there are, some basic facts, you don't have time in class to do and process it in more detail. This is where I see the problem. (teacher, grammar school) - [Zbog pretrpanosti programa. Znači mi ako se želimo detaljnije pozabaviti EU; ne kada je Hrvatska ušla u EU, koliko ima država članice, one osnovne neke činjenice, vi nemate vremena na satu detaljnije to raditi i obrađivati. I tu ja vidim problem. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Some schools report that they rely heavily on extracurricular activities, through networking in eTwinning, Erasmus+ projects, optional classes in Civic Education, Media Literacy and EPAS activities. Many schools promote and highly encourage participation in study visits (for example, visits to European institutions).

*That is why we have extracurricular activities. EPAS helped us the most to deal with EU topics, as well as Forum for Freedom in Education training for EU education, which is used with pupils in practice. (teacher, vocational school) - [Imamo zato izvannastavne aktivnosti. Za bavljenje temama EU nam je najviše pomogao EPAS, a također edukacije o EU Forumu za slobodu odgoja, što se primjenjuje s učenicima u praksi. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*Our school was an ambassador for the European Parliament, so we had a lot of activities. (teacher, vocational school) - [Naša škola je bila ambasador za Europski parlament pa smo imali puno aktivnosti. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

In some schools, there are no extracurricular activities, so topics are taught exclusively through regular classes. This poses the question of how many and how frequently EU topics are on the agenda in teaching. With that being said, it leads us to the extremely important problem of systematic support and encouragement of teaching on this topic in schools.

*We have no incentive to do that. You either have an inner incentive to do things like this, to do eTwinning, to do Erasmus, to do projects, to talk about the EU in class or not. That's it. (teacher, mixed school) - [Nemamo mi poticaja za to. Ti ili imaš unutarnji poticaj da radiš ovakve stvari, da radiš eTwinning, da radiš Erasmus, da radiš projekte, pričaš o Europskoj uniji na nastavi ili nemaš. To je to. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

Content wise, teachers pointed out that they attach importance to discussing general facts such as Croatia's accession to the EU, the number of member states of the EU, its origins, differences between institutions, but at the same time trying to make teaching more interesting.

*We do many things spontaneously and as we come, we do it. (teacher, grammar school) - [Mi dosta toga radimo spontano i kako nam što dolazi, tako to i obrađujemo. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

What they point out is that they often leave the teaching content to the pupils' choice according to their interests and ideas.

*Pupils come up with a new idea, they come up with something new or we get an assignment from the EP [European Parliament] office and then we act in accordance with those instructions and the initiative of the pupils is the most important thing, to be satisfied with what they do and to see results. (teacher, grammar school) - [Učenici dođu s nekom novom idejom, nešto su si novo zamislili ili dobijemo neki zadatak iz ureda EP [Europskog parlamenta] i onda u skladu s tim naputcima djelujemo i inicijativa učenika je u principu tu najbitnija, da su zadovoljni time što rade i da vide rezultate. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Next, we want to point out the diversity in implementation of European topics in three-year and four-year vocational schools and grammar schools.

Grammar school teachers note that they often give pupils a choice of topics in schools in order to teach them what interests them because due to the overload of the school program, it is much harder to adjust the content about the EU to the existing opportunities in the schedule.

*I like to let them choose what they want, and secondly I like to choose those pupils who are not the best, so I try to include them in some other projects. (teacher, grammar school) - [Volim im dati da sami odaberu što žele, a drugo volim odabrati one učenike kojima nije godina baš najbolja pa ih nastojim uključiti u te neke ostale projekte. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Vocational schools teachers, on the other hand, find it much easier to integrate EU topics. They focus on the practical side of the EU such as, integrating topics about the European funds, European subsidies and funds for a family farm or similar into the curriculum. They also encourage pupils to go through Erasmus+ internships to acquire additional professional skills.

*Since we are a vocational school, education is in second place for us, and upbringing is in the first place for us. And practice is ahead of theory and general knowledge. (teacher, vocational school) - [Pošto smo strukovnjaci, nama je obrazovanje na drugom mjestu, a odgoj nam je na prvom mjestu. I praksa je ispred teorije i općeg znanja. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*We are a three-year school, so our pupils do not have too many general education subjects, including Geography and similar subjects in which they could learn more about the EU. Erasmus+ also helps us a lot through mobility, but not to all pupils, only for those who are actually participating in the mobility. We introduce them to anything that has to do with the EU. I know that the class teachers do it through the class meeting, but I think that all that is not enough. (teacher, vocational school) - [Mi smo trogodišnja škola pa tako naši učenici i nemaju previše općeobrazovnih predmeta pa tako i geografiju i slične predmete na kojima bi mogli više učiti o Europskoj uniji. I Erasmus+ nam tu puno pomaže barem djelomično kroz provođenje mobilnosti. ali ne svim učenicima, nego učenicima koji su zapravo sudionici mobilnosti. Njih upoznajemo sa bilo čim što ima veze s EU. Znam da to razrednici odrade kroz sate razrednog odjela, ali sve to smatram da nije dovoljno. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*We go more to this exchange of experiences so that pupils can acquire different knowledge outside. (teacher, vocational school) - [Idemo više na tu razmjenu iskustva da učenici mogu steći različito znanje vani. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

We also asked pupils about the most effective and interesting methods of teaching the EU. Their answers are in high alignment with what teachers reported. The vast majority of pupils - 88% - say that the most interesting method of teaching the EU are excursions and study visits. Quizzes are in second place with 46%, group projects in third place with 42% and presentations by guest lecturers with 30%. In the last place comes lectures and individual presentations with 16% of pupils who finds these methods interesting to teach the EU.

	Yes
Excursions, Travel	88%
Quiz	46%
Group projects	42%
Guest lecturers	30%
Lecture	16%
Individual presentations	16%
Others	2%

*Table 13 - Pupils' preference for teaching methods*



## RESOURCES AND BEST PRACTICES

The participants mostly come from the European Parliament Ambassador Schools Program, so it is not surprising that most of them enriched their knowledge and skills within the program.

*Until I entered the EPAS program, I was impoverished by all these possibilities. It really gives me great opportunities for personal growth and development, not just classroom work. (teacher, vocational school) [Dok nisam ušla u EPAS program, onako bila sam osiromašena svim tim mogućnostima. Ono meni doista pruža velike mogućnosti i za osobni rast i razvoj, a ne samo rad u razredu. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

Likewise, the largest share of work materials teachers find on the official websites of the European Commission and the European Parliament. What teachers most often mention are concrete materials such as the EU&ME publication, the Learning corner, and the EU teaching publication published by the Forum for Freedom in Education, various digital sources and videos about the EU institutions.

*There is a part of that in the EPAS program, but here we are, a school of open cohesion, so there is also a lot of material. So the only question now is how to find what suits your pupils and, ultimately, your work. It is necessary to single out from the forest of materials what is most useful and best to do and of course evaluate which ones are good, useful, and applicable and so on. (teacher, grammar school) - [Dio toga ima u tom EPAS programu, ali evo mi smo i škola otvorene kohezije pa tako ima isto puno materijala, pa je jedino sad pitanje kako iz šume materijala, naći što odgovara vašim učenicima i na kraju krajeva i vašem radu. Treba iz šume materijala, izdvojiti ono što je najkorisnije i najbolje za raditi i naravno ocijeniti koji su dobri, korisni, primjenjivi i tako dalje. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*There is a lot of material digitally and online. And we who are involved in the project, always with that project comes many materials. However, it is one thing to have the material in the form of a newspaper article, these are not materials made for teaching. (teacher, grammar school) - [Postoji mnogo materijala digitalno i online. I mi koji smo uključeni u projekt, uvijek s tim projektom, dolaze mnogi materijali. Međutim, jedno je imati materijal u obliku nekog novinskog članka, to nisu materijali koji su napravljeni za nastavu. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*Some books in which they write about the EU, about institutions, about functioning, it is boring for me to read more, let alone pupils. So it has to be something quite interactive. (teacher, grammar school) - [Neke knjižurde u kojima će pisati o EU ne znam šta o institucijama, o funkcioniranju, to je meni dosadno više čitati, a kamo li učenicima. Znači mora biti nešto dosta interaktivno. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Teachers see eTwinning as an extremely useful networking tool within Croatia and the rest of the EU because it significantly contributes to capacity development, while participation in Erasmus+ exchanges and projects is a good tool for creating teaching materials, experiential learning and exchange. Out of all, the EPAS program stands out as the most useful program for teachers and pupils.

In addition, teachers considers projects and project workshops in which they create digital content, pedagogical workshops, debate discussions, research work and travel as motivating for working with pupils.

## **Best Practices**

In our desk research and answers from the questionnaires, we identified two best practices. One of them originated from school, and the other one is an EU-wide initiative by the European Parliament.

### ***EU Classroom***

The EU classroom is the joint classroom of the Hrvatski kralj Zvonimir Secondary School in Krk and Grammar School Vukovar. Two schools implemented the project in the 2020/2021 school year. Krk's and Vukovar's young ambassadors are taking classes together in the United EU classroom on the Teams platform, which is conducted remotely and in real time. Nataša Vinković and Gordija Marijan, project leaders and senior ambassadors of the European Parliament, decided to turn the forced closure of schools, as well as the shortcomings of distance learning, the inability to travel and having a healthy social life, in favour of pupils. In a challenging school year, cooperation was developed from the Danube to the Adriatic Sea, called the EU classroom. The guiding thought of the EU classroom is like the motto of the EU - united in diversity - so they have united two different parts of Croatia. The project leaders decided on a creative project in which they encourage unity, new experiences and new friendships.

Pupils used a several digital tools to create a variety of interactive content. The content created is used for peer teaching. The young ambassadors are actively involved on social media (Instagram, Facebook, EU classroom website), in an interesting way to get closer to their peers and raise awareness of common European values.

### ***European Parliament's Ambassador School***

The European Parliament's Ambassador School program (EPAS) strives to enhance pupils' knowledge of European parliamentary democracy, the European Parliament's role, and European ideals. It also encourages pupils to participate actively in the democratic processes of the EU. It is intended for pupils with a variety of educational, social, and geographic backgrounds. There are 59 Croatian high schools participating in the EPAS program out of which 20 of them have participated in our research. Many of these schools, through our research, highlighted and shared a number of activities and projects they implement.

EPAS program has had a great impact in many schools due to its presence and activities which raised awareness of education about the EU. Moreover, the program encouraged teachers and students to participate more actively in celebrating important EU dates and other relevant events, as well as encouraged schools to create a number of creative projects. Teachers and pupils feel more competent and empowered with knowledge about European institutions, processes and values, which can help them in identifying better with European identity. By participating in the program, schools more apply for European projects, which results in richer education and more EU-related activities. The overall impact of EPAS role in EU education is in being an extended arm in the uncovered area of the national curriculum.



## PUPILS' INTEREST AND MOTIVATION

### *Is the EU interesting to pupils?*

Teachers' perceptions of pupils' motivation and interests related to EU topics are diverse and strongly depend on the school. On the positive side of the continuum, there are teachers who think that pupils are highly motivated and interested.

*[Pupils are] quite interested, they have various sources of motivations, from getting them out of class to doing something else with you. There are those who think very critically, who actually want to be active members of the EU because they increasingly perceive the EU as their state. (teacher, grammar school). - [Učenci su] dosta zainteresirani, razna im je motivacija, od toga da ih izvučete sa sata do toga da s vama rade nešto drugo. Ima ih koji jako kritički promišljaju, koji žele zapravo biti aktivni članovi EU jer sve više oni doživljavaju EU kao svoju državu. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

On the other end of the continuum, there are issues with the pupils' low interest.

*I would say that children are not too interested in the EU so that they learn too much about it. Teachers neither, so then it goes in a package. (teacher, grammar school) - [Ja bih rekla da djeca nisu nešto previše zainteresirana za tu EU, da bi oni o tome previše učili. Nisu ni nastavnici pa onda to ide u paketu. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*You know how motivated they are? As much as we are engaged and as much as we are motivated. (teacher, grammar school) - [Znaš koliko su motivirani? Onoliko koliko se mi angažiramo i koliko smo mi motivirani. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*When you go into it and start 'harassing' pupils with the EU, then there is no motivation but they look at you like you're crazy. What motivates them? They are motivated by travel, awards, filming, and absence from other classes because something is being done within something else, etc. That is the main motivation, they are always ready for that! (teacher, mixed school) - [Kad kreneš u to i počneš učenike maltretirati s Europskom unijom, onda tu motivacije nema nego te gledaju kao da si lud. Ono što ih motivira, motiviraju ih putovanja, nagrade, snimanje filmića, izostajanje s drugih satova jer se radi nešto u okviru nečeg drugog itd. to je glavna motivacija, za to su uvijek spremni! (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

*If something is obligatory, if it is necessary, the pupils are not motivated. We asked them, if they want to work more and learn about the EU, they all shouted NO out loud! (teacher, grammar school) - [Ako je nešto obavezno, ako se mora, učenici nisu motivirani. Pitali smo ih, djeca želite li više raditi i učiti o EU, oni su svi u glas viknuli ne! (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

The prevailing teachers' opinion is that pupils are primarily motivated by the possibility of mobility, exchange and travel.

*I would say that they are interested when it includes a trip. Socializing with pupils from other countries. This is how we win them over when we want to apply for Erasmus+. Because they will travel, not because they will learn what the difference is between the Commission and the Parliament. They don't care what's in there, you understand. It doesn't matter to them. If there is networking, then yes. (teacher, grammar school) - [Ja bih rekla da djeca nisu nešto previše zainteresirana za tu EU, da bi oni o tome previše učili. Nisu ni nastavnici pa onda to ide u paketu. Ja bih rekla da su oni zainteresirani u onom trenutku kad to uključuje neko putovanje. Druženje sa učenicima iz drugih zemalja. Tako mi njih pridobijemo kad želimo neki Erasmus. Zato što*

će putovati, a ne zato što će naučiti koja je razlika između komisije i EP. Baš ih briga što je tamo, razumijete. To njima nije bitno. Ako ima umrežavanja onda to da. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]

*When there is a trip involved, some creative expression and even absences from classes are involved in this issue, and then they are highly motivated. (teacher, vocational school) - [Kada je u to pitanje upleteno neko putovanje, neki kreativni izričaj pa čak i izostanci s nastave, onda su strašno motivirani. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*They got involved primarily because they could travel. I may have known it subconsciously, but I didn't want to admit it. (teacher, grammar school) - [Oni su se prvenstveno uključivali jer su mogli putovati. Ja sam to možda podsvjesno i znala, ali si nisam željela priznati. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*A colleague admitted to me that one day of travel is worth more to pupils than a whole year of English classes. (teacher, mixed school) - [Priznao mi je kolega, učenicima više vrijedi taj jedan dan putovanja nego cijela godina engleskog jezika. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

Some teachers see travel as a method of learning, but also as a kind of reward for effort and involvement in projects and activities.

*We travelled to the European Parliament, only then did the pupils understand what the Parliament is and what Europe really means. They learn best through experience, on their own skin. (teacher, grammar school) - [Putovali smo u EP, tek onda su učenici shvatili što EP je i što Europa zapravo znači. Najbolje se uči iskustvom, na svojoj koži. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*It's not the only reason. That is the crown of their work. (teacher, mixed school) - [To nije jedini razlog. To je kruna njihovog rada. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

Teachers agree that more and more pupils recognize the value of learning about the EU and participating in activities after leaving high school.

*When they finish school, it makes them very happy (participation in projects, etc.). They created a portfolio of all projects they have participated in. And afterward, when they get hired, they call us and they come to us, realizing the benefit of all experiences. They say to us: someone asked me that, they asked me about eTwinning, they asked me about Erasmus, etc.; at that moment, they figured out what they were doing at school. While they are in the school and while we 'harass' them with EU topics, they don't feel very lucky. (teacher, mixed school) - [Kada završe školu, to ih strašno veseli (sudjelovanja u projektima i sl.). Napravili su portfolio svih sudjelovanja. I onda kad se jave nakon što se zaposle, bude joj profa ovo mi je trebalo, to me je netko pitao, pitali su me za etwinning, pitali su me za Erasmus itd. onda tek skuže šta su radili u školi. Dok su u školi i dok ih maltretiramo, nije to baš neka sreća. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

As a positive consequence of pupils' involvement in activities related to the EU, the EPAS program and Erasmus+ projects are seen in the motivation for creative expression, but also in the overall improvement of attitudes towards school and better school success of some pupils.

*In general, even if they are bad pupils, but they are working on a project that requires some creativity (...) they later become better in other subjects, especially in your subject because they want to justify that trust and not to be ashamed. (teacher, vocational school) - [Općenito i ako su loši učenici, ali rade na projektu gdje se traži neka kreativnost (...) oni kasnije postanu bolji u drugim predmetima, posebno iz vašeg predmeta jer žele opravdati to povjerenje i bude ih sram biti loši. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*If there are some video clips, something creative, mostly pupils who I would say will never respond to anything, are the ones who engage the most. And it's amazing how much their relationship changes, towards the professor, the subject and that then starts to be reflected in other subjects. (teacher, mixed school) - [Ako su neki video isječci, nešto kreativno, uglavnom se javljaju učenici za koje bi rekao da se neće javiti na ništa nikad. I nevjerojatno je koliko se njihov odnos promjeni, prema profesoru, predmetu i to se onda počne preslikavati na ostale predmete. (nastavnica, mixed škola)]*

In the research, we asked pupils if they learn about the EU in their school. Almost four-fifths of pupils (78,3%) state that they learn about the EU in their school, and 21,7% state that they do not study. We also asked them how satisfied they are with the way they teach about the EU. To this question, 82,1% of pupils say they are satisfied or very satisfied, and 17,9% are dissatisfied with the way the EU is taught in their school.

School is the predominant source of information about the EU to pupils. In Table 14 we can see that pupils report that they learn about the EU more in school than outside of school.

		strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	average
...cultural and civic differences between EU member states.	in school	6%	33%	46%	15%	2,70
	outside of school	13%	36%	40%	11%	2,50
...different EU member states and their different cultures.	in school	4%	14%	55%	27%	3,04
	outside of school	11%	30%	44%	15%	2,64
...different European languages.	in school	4%	15%	55%	25%	3,02
	outside of school	8%	24%	52%	16%	2,75
...European stereotypes and prejudices.	in school	12%	36%	41%	11%	2,50
	outside of school	16%	35%	38%	11%	2,44
...important historical figures of the European Union.	in school	11%	43%	34%	12%	2,46
	outside of school	21%	48%	25%	6%	2,16
...the civic and social impact of the European Union.	in school	7%	22%	56%	16%	2,80
	outside of school	13%	34%	42%	12%	2,53
...the economic and political impact of the European Union.	in school	7%	21%	55%	17%	2,81
	outside of school	13%	33%	42%	12%	2,53
...the European Union in general.	in school	3%	8%	55%	34%	3,20
	outside of school	10%	29%	45%	16%	2,67
...the impact of the European Union in my own country (politics, funding, support, legal framework, infrastructure, etc.)	in school	4%	11%	56%	28%	3,09
	outside of school	9%	22%	49%	20%	2,80
...the origin and historical development of the European Union.	in school	5%	17%	56%	22%	2,94
	outside of school	18%	42%	31%	8%	2,30

Table 14 - Pupils' learning about the EU in and outside of school

We also asked pupils if they would like to learn more about the EU, and the topics that are the most interesting to them. Majority of 81% of pupils responded positively to this question that they want to learn more about the EU (see Table 15). They singled out different EU languages as the most interesting topic. Topics that also interest pupils are on how the EU affects Croatia, and about EU member states and their culture. The two topics of the lowest pupils' interest are economic and political impact of the EU and creation and history of the EU.



	Yes
Different languages of the EU	67%
EU impact on Croatia	63%
Member states and their culture	61%
Social and civic impact of the EU	56%
Cultural and social differences among member states	56%
Stereotype and prejudices about member states of the EU	47%
Economic and political impact of the EU	37%
Creation and history of the EU	28%

Table 15 - Pupils' interest in different EU related topics

### **Pupils' Self-confidence of Knowledge about the EU**

In general, pupils' view of their own knowledge of certain topics related to the EU as well as confidence in their own knowledge can be placed somewhere around the middle as can be seen from the table below. According to the data from the questionnaire, pupils express that they are familiar with the ways in which the EU affects Croatia, with different cultures in the EU and about what the EU is and what it does. They are divided in their assessment of knowledge of the history of the EU and why it was founded. On the other hand, most of the pupils who participated in the survey stated that they were not familiar with the purpose and operation of the European Parliament, the European Commission and that they were not sure that they could list European institutions.

	strongly disagree	disagree	agree	strongly agree	average
I know how the European Union affects my own country.	4%	26%	59%	10%	2,76
I know about different cultures in the European Union and cultural prejudices and stereotypes.	4%	34%	51%	11%	2,69
I know exactly what the European Union is and what it does.	4%	35%	53%	8%	2,65
I know how the European Union was created and how it developed over the years.	9%	44%	41%	6%	2,45
I know the purpose and work of the European Parliament.	9%	48%	38%	5%	2,39
I know the purpose and work of the European Commission.	12%	60%	23%	5%	2,20
I know most/all of the EU institutions and organizations.	16%	59%	22%	4%	2,14

Table 16 - Pupils' Self-Confidence in Knowledge about the EU



## CHALLENGES

In the headmasters and expert staff questionnaires on what obstacles your educational institution faces in incorporating education about the EU into everyday life, five of them answered it is the lack of teachers' interest, followed by four of them who think the reason is a lack of European knowledge by teachers and equally negligence of the EU in the national framework.

When asked about other schools, 26 headmasters and expert staff believe that other educational institutions do not include activities about the EU due to lack of teachers' interest. Eighteen of them think that this is the case because the teaching the EU is not a priority in a national framework. Also 16 of them believe that in other institutions there is a lack of knowledge on the EU among teachers.

Challenges and problems in teaching about the EU identified by teachers can be categorized into several categories: overlapping schedules, lack of support by the school staff, lack of systematic (local and national support), mostly volunteer work and insufficient financial support.

When we talk about challenges in teaching, the problem in lack of a formally prescribed number of hours and overlapping schedules for those implementing EPAS activities is primarily highlighted, which sometimes leads to overlapping obligations with regular teaching, and thus requires pupil absence. If pupils are not admitted *in absentia*, their further motivation to participate is called into question so that they are not further sanctioned, and this hampers enthusiasm for work.

Very few teachers deal with topics and activities related to EPAS and education about the EU. Consequently, the same teachers collaborate to gather mutual students and facilitate the occasional overlap of regular classes and EPAS activities. However, collision in teaching very often leads to misunderstanding and a lack of support from school colleagues.

*The problem is when in the middle of a lecture you want to invite a pupil to do something, because teachers and colleagues rarely cooperate and at that moment they need a pupil in the class. (teacher, grammar school) - [Problem je kad usred nastave želite nekog učenika pozvati da nešto odradi jer nastavnici kolege rijetko surađuju i upravo tada im je učenik nužan na satu. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Teachers also offer solution:

*Make sure you have teachers who teach in the same classes as you do so you can work with the same pupils or anticipate pupils who want to participate. You always work with the same pupils, so other teachers get angry when you take them out of class. (teacher, mixed school) - [Gledate da imate nastavnike s kojima imate paralelke u razredima pa da možete s istim učenicima raditi ili da pročitate učenike koji žele. Uvijek iste učenike uzimate najčešće pa se drugi nastavnici ljute kad ih uzmete s nastave. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

Although teachers note that every year the number of teachers joining various activities is increasing, there is still significant ignorance about what the EU is and what the role of European education is in today's Croatian context.

*Personally, I was attacked for running a sort of a "new Kumrovec school" [political school in Kumrovec where ex-Yugoslavia's Communist Party officials were trained, note added] while talking about the EU, so I do not know how our colleagues and the community perceive it all together, I would definitely say positively. The most important thing is the satisfaction of the pupils. (teacher, mixed school) - [Ja sam osobno imala i napad da provodim neku novu kumrovečku školu dok pričam o EU, tako da ne znam kako naši kolege i zajednica sve skupa to doživljavaju, definitivno bih rekla pozitivno. Ono što je najbitnije je zadovoljstvo učenika. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

Some teachers want to advance their knowledge so they engage in a number of extracurricular activities, including those related to these topics, without having enough knowledge and skills to teach. Although at the same time there are teachers who resist joining any activities for personal reasons.

*Inner motivation and those famous points for teachers and promotions, and then everyone has been grabbing lately. (teacher, vocational school) - [Unutarnja motivacija i ti naši slavni nastavnički bodovi i napredovanja, pa se onda svi u zadnje vrijeme grabaju. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

*At school, we also have problems with colleagues who do not have the will and desire, and they are all offered to get involved in various projects. I will not say that it is a dose of jealousy, but somehow they complain about everything, you are this, you are that. And they have the same opportunity, it is like they don't want to accept it. Then you have a handful of those who want to work, and then it works with the support of the headmaster. (teacher, mixed school) - [Mi isto imamo probleme u školi s kolegama, koji nemaju volje i želje, a bilo im je ponuđeno svima da se uključe u razne projekte. Neću reći da je to doza ljubomore, ali ono svim nekako prigovaraju vi ste ovo, vi ste ono, daj mi sad to pokaži. A imaju istu tu mogućnost, kao da ne žele to prihvatiti. Onda imate šaćicu onih koji hoće raditi, onda to ide uz podršku ravnatelja. (nastavnica, srednja škola)]*

It is immensely important to have a supportive headmaster that will raise awareness, provide support and engage about the importance of education about the EU. They are one of the key links of the school to be more strongly involved in European projects, activities and to promote European education among its pupils and teachers.

*We were lucky that our school authorities recognized and accepted our demands and wishes. (teacher, grammar school) - [Imali smo sreću da su naši nadležni u školi prepoznali i prihvatili naše zahtjeve i prohtjeve. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*Not all headmasters find work in social areas relevant, [nowdays] when STEM is so important. (teacher, grammar school) - [Nisu svi ravnatelji za rad u društvenim područjima, kad je stem tako bitan. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*There are many shortcomings. It means a lot if you have a headmaster who is welcoming to these projects, who encourages you and has your back. (teacher, grammar school) - [Postoje mnogi nedostaci. Puno znači ako imate ravnatelja ili ravnateljicu koja je blagonaklona prema tim projektima, koja vas potiče i koja vam drži leđa. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

As important as it is to have a stimulating school culture, it is more important to have support from local and national authorities. The presence of content in the national curriculum speaks volumes about recognizing the importance of the EU education. This leads to unequal work practices between schools, and the quality of teaching the EU topics, not supervised by anyone.

*Well, to make teaching a little more systematic, because each school operates in a different environment and each has its own policy. (teacher, grammar school) - [Dakle da to bude malo sustavnije, jer svaka škola radi u drugačijem okruženju i svaka ima svoju politiku. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*We should make our work more popular to get better support. (teacher, grammar school) - [Trebalo bi više popularizirati to šta radimo kako bismo dobili bolju podršku. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*Support is necessary if we want it to be done well, not at the level of improvisation. (teacher, grammar school) - [Podrška je nužna ako želimo da se to kvalitetno provodi, a ne na nivou neke improvizacije. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*If an approach had been agreed in our country, in all 21 counties, everything would have been much easier. (teacher, grammar school) - [Da je u našoj državi, u svih 21. županiji dogovoren neki pristup, bilo bi sve puno lakše. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

In order for their work to be rewarded and systematized, there must be some financial support.

*Financial problem. When it is no longer free, the school has to give its resources. It is not that there is a lack of support, but the school just has to put the brakes on and we have to focus on what we can do ourselves with the support of other institutions or our own private funds. (teacher, vocational school) - [Problem financija. Kad više nije besplatno, nego škola mora dati svoja sredstva. Nije da nedostaje potpora, nego škola jednostavno mora stati na kočnicu i moramo se fokusirati na ono što možemo sami izrealizirati uz potporu drugih institucija ili svoje resurse, privatne. (nastavnica, strukovna škola)]*

In addition, an unregulated number of working hours, lack of work structure and evaluation are extremely significant obstacles to work. Many teachers invest their free time in conducting activities with pupils, so it is not surprising that some teachers are not motivated to be involved in such activities.

*Everything we do is pro bono, so some of our colleagues don't get involved. (teacher, grammar school) - [To sve što mi radimo je pro bono, zato se neki naši kolege i kolegice i ne uključuju. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

*This work should be recognized as relevant work, it's not something that someone does pro bono all the time and it should be an integral part of the work. (teacher, grammar school) - [Trebalo se priznati taj rad, kao relevantan rad, to nije nešto što stalno netko radi pro bono i da to bude usustavljen dio rada. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*

Ultimately, one of the teachers has a comprehensive and clearly conveyed message stated in two key aspects.

*It turns out that we have two big problems. The first is that our work is not recognized, so it is based on our enthusiasm, that is, our volunteer work, for some it counts as the workload, for others not. I was in the Civic Education workload last year, this year I am not, I am volunteering for Civic Education this year, so it all depends from year to year. (...) If the younger generation wants to be acquainted with the EU processes, such as linguistic, cultural, political aspects, then we should start with the ministries, which should, in some way, give a systematic concept of learning the subject. Who will work, when will they work, will they be in the classroom, will they be through optional classes, etc. The second problem is precisely this, methodical preparation that actually remains on our enthusiasm and in our free time. We do not have any support, we do not have the monitoring of our ministry and we do not have professional preparation. So it all comes down to us. (...) We know it's a lot of work, we know the pupils are already bored when we come up with some ideas. (teacher, grammar school) - [Iz svega ovoga ispada da mi imamo dva velika problema. Prvi je taj što ovaj naš rad nije prepoznat, dakle on se svodi na naš vlastiti entuzijazam, odnosno naš volonterski rad, nekome to ulazi u satnicu, nekome ne. Meni je to prošle godine bilo u satnici Građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja, ove godine to nije, građanski odgoj ove godine volontiram, tako da to sve ovisi od godine do godine. (...) Ako se želi*



*mlađe generacije upoznati s procesima EU, bilo jezičnim, kulturološkim, politološkim onda bi se trebalo krenuti od ministarstva koje bi trebalo na neki način dati sustavnu nekakvu koncepciju učenja tog predmeta. Tko će to raditi, kada će to raditi, da li će to biti u satnici, da li će to biti kroz fakultativnu nastavu itd. A drugi problem je upravo ta metodička priprema koja ustvari ostaje na našem entuzijazmu i na našem slobodnom vremenu. Nemamo neku podršku, nemamo praćenje bilo resornog ministarstva i nemamo stručnu pripremu. Dakle to se sve svodi na nas. (...) Znamo da je to strašno puno posla, znamo da smo djeci već i dosadni kada dolazimo s nekim idejama. (nastavnica, gimnazija)]*



## CONCLUSIONS

- Majority of teachers and pupils have a positive view of the EU.
- Even some of those teachers with negative or neutral views of the EU see the potential and opportunities the EU offers to the new generations.
- The national curriculum framework has content regarding the EU but it cannot be said that it is a priority. This content is compartmentalized in social, humanistic, and foreign languages subjects with topics about EU languages, geography and history being the most present.
- Topics such as European cultural heritage, EU politics and institutions, social and civil impact of the EU, economic and legal impact of the EU, EU identity and citizenship as well as other non-working languages of the EU are only mentioned in subjects or subjects provide pupils with basic knowledge about these topics.
- In case of schools' curricula, it can be concluded that the status of the education about the EU is undefined and heavily relies on headmasters' openness to this topic as well as teachers' willingness, and motivation to involve in teaching the EU.
- Headmasters, expert staff and teachers express confidence in their knowledge of the EU. However, they feel self-taught and usually they are learning by doing. Teachers express the need for further professional development in more specific, deeper, and complex EU topics.
- Teachers and some stakeholders report that teachers need pre-service training in the topics about the EU and systemic support on all levels. They substitute the lack of support with heavy reliance on a network of peers.
- Compartmentalization of EU related topics could also be seen in schools that have activities related to the EU. Politics and Economics, Ethics, Geography and History are the subjects which can be seen as the focal points of the education about the EU.
- While grammar schools teach pupils about the EU in general, vocational schools, on the other hand, seek to teach by converging knowledge about different European funds, how to use European subsidies and funds e.g. for a family farm or similar. They also encourage pupils to go on internships through Erasmus+ to add value and acquire additional professional skills.
- In general, teachers of Politics and Economics, Ethics, Geography and History point out that they are most successful in permeating EU topics in the curriculum, but very superficially, while foreign language teachers can implement certain topics in more detail and thoroughly due to more teaching hours.
- Both teachers and pupils see experiential learning – mobility, internships, study visits, and excursions – as the best and the most interesting method to teach and learn about the EU.
- Teachers see the following as the most useful resources: EPAS teaching materials, eTwinning as an extremely useful networking tool, participation in Erasmus+ exchanges and projects is a good tool for creating teaching materials, experiential learning and exchange. Teachers also consider projects in which the goal is to create digital content, pedagogical workshops, debate discussions, research work and travel as motivating for working with pupils.
- Teachers also heavily rely on training and materials provided by civil society organisations.
- Pupils' motivation and interest vary significantly. The prevailing teachers' opinion is that pupils are primarily motivated by the possibility of mobility, exchange and travel.

- Majority of 81% pupils expressed interest to learn more about the EU, singling out different languages of the EU as the most interesting topic. Topics that also interest pupils are on how the EU affects Croatia, and about EU member states and their culture. The two topics of the lowest pupils' interest are economic and political impact of the EU and creation and history of the EU.
- In general, the pupils' view of their own knowledge of certain topics related to the EU as well as confidence in their own knowledge can be placed somewhere around the middle. Pupils express that they are familiar with the ways in which the EU affects Croatia, that they are familiar with different cultures in the EU, about what the EU is and what it does. On the other hand, most of the pupils who participated in the survey stated that they were not familiar with the purpose and operation of the European Parliament, the European Commission and that they were not sure that they could list European institutions.
- Headmasters and expert staff single out the following challenges when it comes to education about the EU: lack of teachers' interest, lack of European knowledge by teachers and the fact that the education about the EU is not a priority in the curriculum.
- Teachers emphasize these challenges: overlapping schedules, lack of support by the school staff, lack of systematic (local and national support), mostly volunteer work and insufficient financial support.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## *Curriculum*

- Educational authorities should introduce Civic Education as a compulsory subject together with Civic education as a cross-curricular topic as an appropriate basis for the development of civic competences which includes European dimensions.
- Civic Education, both as a compulsory subject and cross-curricular topic, should have an appropriate curriculum that includes the EU education dimension on all levels of education and should be oriented towards learning outcomes.
- Curriculum should encourage interdisciplinary approach to EU topics.
- The EU and democratic society have been declared as key policy areas in the Republic of Croatia, and, consequently, they should be included in the teaching and assessment of pupils.

## *Institutional support to schools and teachers*

- European education should become a mandatory dimension of teachers' pre-service training as well as supplementary pedagogical-psychological education for all professionals working in schools.
- Educational authorities should regularly map and record the needs of teachers for professional development in education about the EU and respond to those needs with systematic and continuous professional development.
- It is necessary to provide a stimulating environment for their professional development where every teacher can acquire the competencies needed to teach about the EU, as well as for its cross-curricular implementation.
- Introducing a system of identification and recognition of schools with good practice in EU education and a system for the dissemination of good practice to other schools.
- Activities implemented in school should be adequately included in teachers' workload.
- Encourage schools with financial and institutional resources to teach and implement the EU education.

## *Teaching materials*

- Provide conditions for the development of instructions, manuals, textbooks and other teaching materials according to the outcomes of the curriculum.
- Provide material support to schools, and teachers in the implementation of the curriculum, including the exchange of experiences between teachers who implement the curriculum and extracurricular activities.
- Provide a variety of digital and printed resources adaptable for learning and teaching about the EU in class.
- Encourage school libraries to become centers for the dissemination of information about the EU.



## **Implementation**

- Teaching about the EU should first and foremost emphasize values shared among EU nations which are the sole foundation of the EU: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law, human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, equality between women and men.
- When teaching about democracy and citizenship, European dimension should be emphasized, especially European citizenship.
- Teaching about the EU must be seen as one of the instruments for developing the democratic school which should not be omitted.
- Critically identify political indoctrination and mythology in defining the EU's role in everyday life.
- Conduct EU education using interactive, research and collaborative learning methods with an emphasis on research-project teaching, debate and extracurricular activities.
- Encouraging pupils to critically observe and analyze real social problems with an emphasis on different points of view. In this context, the EU itself should not be excluded from critical observation and constructive assessment.
- Teaching about the EU must be connected with the everyday life of pupils. They must be fully included in the teaching process from the planning to the implementation.



# APPENDIX I.: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

## Headmasters and Expert Staff

	minimum age	average age	maximum age
Headmaster	36	53,03	62
Expert Staff	26	45,80	60

Table 17 - Headmasters' and Expert Staffs' Age

	minimum	average	maximum
Headmaster	12	26	37
Expert Staff	2	16,81	32

Table 18 - Headmasters' and Expert Staffs' Work Experience

	headmasters	expert staff	Total
grammar school	10	6	16
mixed school	7	8	15
vocational school	13	8	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 19 - Headmasters and Expert Staff per School Type

	grammar school		mixed school		vocational school		Total
	headmasters	expert staff	headmasters	expert staff	headmasters	expert staff	
Bjelovarsko-bilogorska županija					3		3
Brodsko-posavska županija	2				4		6
Dubrovačko-neretvanska županija			1				1
Grad Zagreb	4				1		5
Istarska županija	1						1
Krapinsko-zagorska županija					1		1
Međimurska županija	1		1	1		4	7
Osječko-baranjska županija					1	1	2
Požeško-slavonska županija					1		1
Primorsko-goranska županija				1	2		3
Sisačko-moslavačka županija			1				1
Splitsko-dalmatinska županija		3		1			4
Šibensko-kninska županija			1				1
Virovitičko-podravska županija			2	1			3
Vukovarsko-srijemska županija	1		1	3		2	7
Zadarska županija	1	3					4
Zagrebačka županija				1		1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>52</b>

Table 20 - Headmasters and Expert Staff per School Type and County

## Teachers

	minimum	average	maximum
Age	23	43,09	64
Work Experience	<1	15,49	39

Table 21 - Teachers' Age and Work Experience (in years)

	grammar school	mixed school	vocational school	N/A	total
Bjelovarsko-bilogorska županija	1	12	79		92
Brodsko-posavska županija	6		8		14
Dubrovačko-neretvanska županija	1	4			5
Grad Zagreb	11	1	5		17
Istarska županija	8				8
Krapinsko-zagorska županija		2	8		10
Međimurska županija	11	1	15		27
Not answered				2	2
Osječko-baranjska županija	1	9	12		22
Požeško-slavonska županija			14		14
Primorsko-goranska županija		5	10		15
Sisačko-moslavačka županija		4	1		5
Splitsko-dalmatinska županija	13	2			15
Šibensko-kninska županija		9			9
Virovitičko-podravska županija	1	5	3		9
Vukovarsko-srijemska županija	8	13	14		35
Zadarska županija	9				9
Zagrebačka županija	3	5			8
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>316</b>

Table 22 - Teachers by Type of School and County

## Pupils

minimum age	average age	maximum age
14	16,87	20

Table 23 - Pupils' Age (in years)

	School Program			Total	
	grammar school	5-year vocational program	4-year vocational program		3-year vocational program
Bjelovarsko-bilogorska županija			107	6	113
Brodsko-posavska županija	14	1	28	1	44
Dubrovačko-neretvanska županija	10				10
Grad Zagreb	18			18	36
Istarska županija	16		2		18
Krapinsko-zagorska županija			17		17
Međimurska županija	12		45		57
Not answered			1		1
Osječko-baranjska županija	28	2	25		55
Požeško-slavonska županija			18		18
Primorsko-goranska županija	16		18		34
Sisačko-moslavačka županija	13				13
Splitsko-dalmatinska županija	39				39
Šibensko-kninska županija	13				13
Virovitičko-podravska županija	11				11
Vukovarsko-srijemska županija	19	39	4		62
Zadarska županija	21				21
Zagrebačka županija	9		7	3	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>581</b>

Table 24 - Pupils by School Program and County

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