



Activity sheet 3 International co-operation

The European Union was founded on the need for nations to co-operate with each other in the aftermath of World War II. These days, EU co-operation is wide ranging and goes beyond its own borders to include roles in international development and defence matters.

This activity sheet helps students to understand the basis of European co-operation, and considers the EU's role in defence and global poverty.

Why co-operate?

GCSE WJEC, English – Non-fiction reading tasks (extension activity)
For general curriculum links, see the Teachers' Introduction

The idea of countries working together underpins the whole of the EU. Why is this?

- The European Union grew out of the **European Coal and Steel Community**, founded in 1951 with 6 members: Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, West Germany, France and Italy. Its purpose was to pool the countries' coal and steel resources. Because these were important wartime industries, it was thought that uniting them could prevent another world war.
- The Coal and Steel Community was later joined by the **European Economic Community** and the **European Atomic Energy Community**. Both were based on four 'freedoms': freedom of movement of goods, services, capital and people.
- The **European Union** was formed in 1993, combining the three Communities with a common foreign policy (see below) and co-operation in criminal matters.

Activity: What's the point?

Divide the class in two. Using flipchart sheets, one half of the class should brainstorm all the different reasons why *people* might decide to work together in groups. The other half should brainstorm reasons why *countries* should work together. Are the reasons for co-operation similar?

Now switch the two sides of the class. Using new flipchart sheets, brainstorm any fears or doubts that people/countries might have about co-operation. Display the flipchart sheets on the classroom wall, and use them as a stimulus for discussion.

Further discussion points:

- Why do people or countries feel the need to co-operate?
- Is it sometimes better just to come up with your own solution?
- Is it possible for rich and poor countries to achieve genuine co-operation?
- What sort of rules might be needed in order to co-operate effectively?

Extension activity:

Ask students to gather newspaper clippings or web-based print-outs which mention the EU (if possible, these should include news from sources outside the UK). Do the clippings/print-outs give the impression of a Union in which countries co-operate effectively?

The EU – making poverty history?

GCSE
A2

WJEC, Geography – Global Citizenship and Interdependence
WJEC, Economics – Trade and Development

To what extent does Europe help developing countries to reduce poverty?

- Taken as a whole, the EU and its member states represent the world's largest donor of development aid to poor countries (\$42.9 billion in 2005). It has signed up to the United Nations' **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs), which aim to reduce global poverty significantly by 2015.
- The EU puts special emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa, the region most lagging behind in achieving the MDGs.
- In helping very poor countries to develop, the EU supports the use of **Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers** – documents which the International Monetary Fund requires countries to produce before their debts can be cancelled. Critics say that such Strategies are often used to force poor countries to liberalise service industries – in other words, to enable private companies to bid for government-controlled utilities such as water and electricity.
- 15 of the EU's 25 members are committed ultimately to giving **0.7% of their income** to international development. Only Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands have already met that target. The UK currently gives 0.36%, while Italy gives 0.15%. The average is 0.46%. In 2005 the European Council set an intermediate target of 0.56% by 2010, with 0.7% to be reached by 2015.

Activity: Mini EU Summit

Each pair of pupils should play the part of one of the 15 EU countries committed to reaching the 0.7% target. These are: Austria (currently 0.24%), Belgium (0.41), Denmark (0.84), Finland (0.35), France (0.42), Germany (0.28), Greece (0.23), Ireland (0.39), Italy (0.15), Luxembourg (0.85), Netherlands (0.74), Portugal (0.63), Spain (0.26), Sweden (0.77), UK (0.36). If they have time, each pair should do some additional research on the internet, finding out how their country's aid is spent, and what its priorities are.

The Summit will consider how to reach 0.7% by 2015. Consider questions such as:

- How much more is your country prepared to give?
- Is it fair that the more generous countries will be 'subsidising' other countries to give less?
- Should each country give assistance to specific areas (e.g. environmental issues, food security, improving governance), or should the money go into a collective EU 'pot'?

Further discussion points:

- Should the EU set targets on what to give to poor countries, or should it be up to each individual country?
- Is there equality between countries in the EU, let alone between Europe and Africa or Asia?
- Should the EU focus on poverty within its own members first?
- What can *you* do to help combat poverty?

How effective is the EU in helping to resolve conflict?

- The EU works with **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) to prevent armed conflicts in Europe and beyond, and to resolve them when they do occur. Important tasks at the moment include tackling terrorism and stopping the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- The **European Security and Defence Policy** (ESDP) is under the control of the EU, and includes countries which are not NATO members. In 2002, the EU and NATO jointly declared that they would consult each other, work together, and respect each other's independence.
- Some say that the ESDP makes NATO an outdated organisation. Others say that NATO is necessary because it includes the USA, Turkey and other non-members of the EU; perhaps it is the ESDP that is unnecessary.
- In 2003, the EU worked with the UN, the USA and Russia on a '**road map for peace**' designed to solve the Israel-Palestine situation. The 'road map' has met with limited success so far.

Activity: Research and presentation

Divide the class into groups of 4 to 6. Each group should research one of the following areas of conflict: Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Israel/Palestine.

Each group should prepare a presentation covering the roles (both historic and current) being played in their area by (a) the EU, (b) NATO, (c) individual EU member states, and (d) other bodies such as the UN. What has been achieved, and what more could be done? What difference would be made if the EU did more/less?

Further discussion points:

- Is it better for European conflicts to be dealt with by the EU or by NATO?
- To what extent should the EU get involved in conflicts *outside* Europe?
- Does EU membership mean that a country is less vulnerable to conflict?
- 6 EU states (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden) are not members of NATO. What difference does this make?
- Should the EU have a full-time army?

About Citaware

Citaware aims to increase understanding in Wales of European citizenship, and to enable people of all ages to engage with EU institutions. It is funded by the European Commission and organised jointly by:



Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA)

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www.wcia.org.uk



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