UNIT 2
DIVERSITY AND PLURALISM
Primary level

At home in Europe

2.1 What is Europe?

What I know about Europe and where I live

2.2 I am at home in Europe (building a physical map I)

The countries of Europe

2.3 I am at home in Europe (building a physical map II)

Rivers, mountains and landforms in Europe

2.4 Europeans are different and equal

What we have in common and what not

Unit 2: Key concept – "Diversity and pluralism" (for primary level)
Background information for teachers: what traces of Europe are present in students' daily lives?

Students at primary level have a different perception of time and spatial relationships than adults. Therefore, when tackling Europe as a topic at primary school level, it is essential to find age-adequate touching points where a didactical concept of European learning can be developed. Concepts of space and relations are different to those of students at secondary level. The students' prior knowledge, their current attitudes towards Europe and their interests, as well as different ways for them to gather information, should be reflected on by the teacher beforehand. How can primary school students learn about Europe? Not forgetting one of the key EDC/HRE questions relating to Europe: what is European identity? EDC/HRE is not a national concept. It is a concept that deals with the question of how people live together in different settings: in terms of family, neighbourhood, class, school, region, country, and in terms of Europe.

When looking at the reality of students' lives, it becomes evident that nowadays primary school students grow up with an international and therefore also a European dimension to their daily life. Students experience this in terms of internationality, multiculturalism and multilingualism in various contexts:

– through living together with children from different nations and cultures (in kindergarten, at school, in the area in which they live);

– through international products;

– through European and international references in media used by the students (books, magazines, television, CDs, the Internet, etc.); and

– through travelling.

Most of these contexts are taken for granted by students from an early age and are perceived unconsciously. For example, students are not conscious of the origins of foods such as spaghetti, pizza and croissants, as they have not actively experienced the slow process of integration of consumer goods within Europe. At the same time, stereotypes and simplified viewpoints of various parts of our continent are constantly appearing in the media. For students, these stereotypes can become prior "knowledge" about Europe that has somehow been "endorsed". In reality, these are attitudes or subjective beliefs rather than knowledge.

Thus, primary school students cannot be viewed as a *tabula rasa* when talking about Europe. What teaching about Europe can add is the dimension of sorting, systematising, expanding and objectifying any prior knowledge. Teaching and learning should therefore aim at reflecting present stereotypes, prejudices and opinions, as well as at focusing on raising awareness of a multicultural, multilingual and in itself diverse but equal European society.

In comparison to the secondary level, teaching and learning about Europe in primary school has to be experienced and lived actively. Teaching needs to encompass a very open-minded approach, which leans towards two disciplinary dimensions – the objective–neutral and the ideal – and which uses very concrete examples from students' daily lives. For this age group, real communication and friendship are the central didactical dimensions for teaching and learning. Where the group includes students with a migration background, this could be used as one of the starting points for teaching and learning about Europe and its people.

The aim of education for democratic citizenship and human rights is to support the development of competences in three areas. This unit has the following competence profile:

Competence in ...		
... political analysis and judgment	... the use of methods	... political decision making and action
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Toolbox support

In this unit the following tools from the students' toolbox will be used. The teacher must decide if some or all of the students need additional preparation to be able to work with these tools.

x   Researching in libraries

x   Researching on the Internet

0   Carrying out interviews and surveys

0   Interpreting images

0   Mind maps

0   Creating posters

0   Holding exhibitions

x   Planning and giving presentations

0   Preparing overhead transparencies or a PowerPoint presentation

0   Writing newspaper articles

x   Putting on performances

0   Holding debates

Unit 2: Diversity and pluralism
At home in Europe
What traces of Europe are present in students' daily lives?

Lesson title	Learning objectives	Student tasks	Resources	Methods
Lesson 1: What is Europe?	The students reactivate their knowledge about Europe and discover their view of the continent.	The students work with a map of Europe. They indicate where they come from, they write down what cities they know, which countries are familiar to them, and which flags and other important things they already know, etc.	Printed copies of the map of Europe, country portraits, pens, glue, scissors, atlas, books, Internet (if possible).	Individual and group work, plenary discussion.
Lesson 2: I am at home in Europe (building a physical map I)	The students "act out" Europe in the playground of their school. They develop a feeling for distance and closeness.	The students build a map of Europe in the playground of their school. They start off by laying out the countries and borders. They indicate where they come from.	Printed copies of the map of Europe as templates, country portraits, coloured paper, atlas.	Pair and group work.
Lesson 3: I am at home in Europe (building a physical map II)	The students become aware of all the different characteristics of Europe as a continent. They start to grasp the concept of spatial relationships by seeing where they come from.	After having laid out the borders and countries, the students continue with characteristics of landforms. They lay out rivers, mountains and other important things on the physical map. At the end a photo is taken of the physical map.	Printed copies of the map of Europe as templates, blue material for laying out rivers (paper, textiles, etc.), coloured material for laying out mountains and landforms (paper, textiles, etc.), atlas, camera.	Pair and group work.
Lesson 4: Europeans are different and equal	In a plenary discussion, the students understand that Europe has a variety of characteristics. They reflect upon the fact that Europeans have got some things in common but are also very different from each other.	The students look at the photo of the physical map. The teacher engages them in a discussion about similarities and differences in a) a geographical context, and b) a social context. The students discuss the social differences in Europe and try to find solutions for dialogue and mutual understanding.	Photo of physical map, country portraits, blackboard or flipchart, slips of paper.	Plenary discussion, group work.

Lesson 1
What is Europe?
What I know about Europe

Learning objectives	The students re-activate their knowledge about Europe and discover their view of the continent.
Student tasks	The students work with a map of Europe. They indicate where they come from, they write down what cities they know, which countries are familiar to them, and which flags and other important things they know, etc.
Resources	Printed copies of the map of Europe, country portraits, pens, glue, scissors, atlas, books, Internet (if possible).
Methods	Individual work, plenary discussion.

Lesson description

The students are given a printed copy of a blank map of Europe (ideally enlarged to A3 size). Their task is to re-activate what they know about Europe. They start to work on the different questions listed underneath the map.

The teacher then presents the information pack in the students' handout section (countries and capitals, flags, rivers, mountains and landforms). The students will work with this material but can also collect information using other resources, as far as these are available in the classroom (Internet, atlas, books, etc.).

The finished maps of Europe are displayed on the wall.

As homework, the students chose one European country to do research on at home. They fill in the "Country portrait" up to lesson 2. They also find a partner who they can work with in the following lessons and who ideally chose a neighbouring country to theirs.

Lesson 2
I am at home in Europe (building a physical map I)
What I know about Europe

Learning objectives	The students "act out" Europe in the playground of their school. They develop a feeling for distance and closeness.
Student tasks	The students build a map of Europe in the playground of their school. They work in pairs on two countries they did research on. They start off with laying out the countries and borders. They indicate where they come from.
Resources	Printed copies of the map of Europe as templates, country portraits, coloured paper, atlas.
Methods	Pair and group work.

Information box

The term "physical map" is used in two different senses. Firstly, a physical map in the context of cartography describes a map which shows identifiable landmarks such as mountains, rivers, lakes, oceans and other permanent geographic features. Secondly, the term physical map is also used in the context of genetics, where it describes how much DNA separates two genes and is measured in base pairs, as opposed to a genetic map.

In the context of this series of lessons about Europe we use the term "physical map" in the cartographic sense but also in a very active sense – with the students "acting out" the maps themselves. Only by doing so can the difficult spatial relationships, the concept of borders, the length of rivers and the height of mountains be grasped by students at primary level. This also helps students to understand the social aspects of living together on the European continent. By actually building and then "standing in" the countries, the students can physically perceive their neighbours and can understand boundaries and barriers such as foreign languages, culture and other country-related differences more easily. The concept of building a physical map ties in to aspects of learning by doing and concrete experiences.

Lesson description

The students work in pairs on the two countries they have done research on at home (the task received at the end of lesson 1). They bring to the lesson the country portraits and all the information they have collected about their countries. They also bring their maps of Europe.

The whole class gathers in the school playground. The teacher instructs the students to build a physical map of Europe using the different kinds of material available. Two students work on each country. The teacher sets the framework of the map by defining the area in which the students can work.

Next, the students start laying out the borders of the countries. They have to make sure that the right countries are next to each other. Then they can indicate the capital cities and the flags on the layout.

Having done this, every student should stand in his/her country and begin a dialogue with the student in the neighbouring country. They should exchange information about each other's countries. Invisible barriers might arise, such as having to speak a foreign language. As a result of the country portrait that every student has filled in, it should be possible for each student to exchange a few words with one another in "their" country's language. The rest of the dialogue can take place in their mother tongue. The students should try to have as many dialogues as possible with their classmates in neighbouring countries.

Lesson 3
I am at home in Europe (building a physical map II)
Rivers, mountains and landforms in Europe

Learning objectives	The students become aware of all the different characteristics of Europe as a continent. They start to grasp the concept of spatial relationships by seeing where they come from.
Student tasks	After having laid out the borders and countries, the students continue with characteristics of landforms. They lay out rivers, mountains and other important things on the physical map. At the end a photo is taken of the physical map.
Resources	Printed copies of the map of Europe as templates, blue material for laying out rivers (paper, textiles, etc.), coloured material for laying out mountains and landforms (paper, textiles, etc.), atlas, camera.
Methods	Pair and group work.

Lesson description

After having laid out the country borders and marked the capital cities and flags, the students continue to work on the rivers and landforms. Not all students will be busy as not all countries will have major rivers and landforms. The teacher might possibly wish to assign these students to new groups or to assign students who have already finished with their country to another group.

The students should use different materials, such as textiles, paper, etc., to lay out the rivers and landforms.

The students can also add other things to the physical map, but this should be voluntary. The students should decide whether or not to do this; it also depends on the information they collected during their country research (on food, famous people, etc.).

When the physical map is finished, photos are taken. Ideally, the map should be photographed twice – once with the students standing in "their" countries and once without the students, so that all the landforms, rivers, etc., can be clearly seen.

Lesson 4
Europeans are different and equal
What we have in common and what not

Learning objectives	In a plenary discussion, the students understand that Europe has a variety of characteristics. They reflect upon the fact that Europeans have got some things in common but are also very different from each other.
Student tasks	The students look at the photo of the physical map. The teacher engages them in a discussion about similarities and differences in a) a geographical context, and b) a social context. The students discuss the social differences in Europe and try to find solutions for dialogue and mutual understanding.
Resources	Photo of the physical map, country portraits, blackboard or flipchart, slips of paper.
Methods	Plenary discussion, group work.

Lesson description

The students sit in a circle. The teacher presents the photos that were taken of the physical map. It is the students' task to look at the photos and think about the similarities and differences on the map. They should try to answer questions such as:

– Which parts of Europe have high mountains?

– Where are the longest rivers?

– Which countries have similar landforms?

– In which countries do people speak the same language?

– Which countries share a sea?

They use their country portraits in order to gather information. They present their country in the form of a presentation or in the form of a performance.

As a second step, the teacher introduces another set of questions to start a new discussion. Apart from natural and geographical similarities and differences, there are other differences in Europe, such as social differences or phenomena like prejudice. The teacher motivates the students to voice their thoughts about the social differences in Europe by raising questions such as:

– Are there rich and poor countries in Europe? Which are rich? Which are poor?

– Is life more difficult in some European countries than in others? Why?

– Why do many people leave their country to live somewhere else? What are the reasons for this?

After having collected the students' thoughts about these non-geographical differences and similarities, the students should sit together in groups of four and come up with ideas on how to create an understanding of these social differences in Europe without denying national identities, thereby fostering intercultural dialogue. They write down their ideas on little slips of paper and present their ideas in front of the class. Then they stick the slips of paper next to the photos of the physical map (this helps with visualisation).