

Quick wins in teaching EU matters

1. Basic information

Title/name of the quick win: **Team Europe guest lectures**

Country/region of origin: **Estonia**

Institution/organization implementing the practice: **VET schools, schools, EU institutions**

Target audience: **students aged 16-19**

Duration of the activity: **2 hours**

Accessibility: **Lectures can be freely invited, they are funded by European Parliament**

Year of implementation: **2025**

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2. Description of the quick win

Description of activities:

The European Commission Representation in Estonia (and similar bodies in other EU member states) operates a "Team Europe" program that provides guest lecturers to schools on various EU-related topics. This initiative aims to bring expertise directly into the classroom, enriching students' understanding of the EU and its impact.

In Estonia there is a pool of experts who can cover various topics from EU history and institutions, different policies (foreign policy, environment and climate, cyber security, etc), NATO, disinformation, youth info, etc. There are teachers, researchers, journalists, even one previous member of European Parliament.

Guest lectures are scheduled flexibly to align with the school timetable. Schools can contact the Commission Representation to request a lecture on a specific topic and arrange a suitable date and time.

These lecturers can be invited to schools. Our lecturer decided to offer his services to VET schools, and we accepted it. Over the period of one year, he had given 40 lectures and workshops.

The topics were NATO, EU and argumentation. The lecture and accompanying argumentation workshop gave students overview of the role of NATO and EU for Estonia as democratic country.

The lecture covered basic facts like the accession of Estonia in these international organisations. Also, the EU impact in terms of financial support and project funding.

He taught students on how to validate critically information they google on the internet, also oral expression and public speaking – all skills important for being active and responsible EU citizen.

Why is this approach useful to teach EU matters?

Team Europe guest lecturers offer schools free access to subject matter experts who can provide in-depth knowledge and perspectives on EU-related issues.

The diversity of experts allows for a wide range of EU topics to be covered, catering to different student interests and curriculum needs.

VET programs often lack specific courses dedicated to EU topics; guest lectures bridge this gap, ensuring students receive essential information about the EU.

Guest lecturers can offer a fresh perspective and utilize engaging teaching methods that may differ from traditional classroom instruction.

Why is it a quick win?

Inviting a guest lecturer is a cost-free way for schools to enhance their EU education offerings.

Guest lectures can have a significant impact on student knowledge, engagement, and critical thinking skills in a short amount of time.

How to make this approach successful?

Inviting school must be flexible to find common time that is suitable for both the school and the expert. For the experts the guest lectures are additional activity to their main job.

Engage the students to attend and participate. Simply scheduling a guest lecture isn't enough as the lecture on EU might not be inviting for all.

Active promotion and strategies to motivate student attendance and participation are crucial for success: sending e-mails, using social media, engaging mentors and teachers who will talk about the upcoming event beforehand.

The goal is to make students see the value and relevance of the lecture.

If possible, make attendance a mandatory component of a related course, although all motivations that seem like punishments have to be used carefully.

Choose a time slot that minimizes conflicts with other classes or activities.

Related resources

Information in Estonian https://estonia.representation.ec.europa.eu/elamine-tootamine-oppimine/opetajatele_en#team-europei-k%C3%BClalisesinejad-tundidesse

Search for European Commission Representation in your country and their education program.

Additional notes:

Commission Representation in Estonia offers also other possibilities for schools and teachers: video lectures on EU policies, teaching materials, activities related to EU and misinformation that classes can book in Tallinn.