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DEMOCRACTICS TOOLKIT

Using Member States game to explore democracy, participation and active citizenship.

Educational toolkit for youth workers, educators and facilitators

Democractics: Echo your voice with every choice

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ABSENTIA EXPLORING THE ABSENCE

PEDRA

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ELEKTRĖNŲ KULTŪROS CENTRAS

DEMOCRACTICS

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

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CHAPTER

01.

ABOUT DEMOCRACTICS

The project behind Member States, how the game works and how to use this toolkit.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Democracy is part of our everyday lives in how it shapes the decision-making, how communities work and how much influence we have over the things that affect us. But understanding democracy and knowing how to take part in it are not always the same thing.

Many young people are interested in what happens around them, yet they don't always know how to get involved or feel that their opinions can make a difference. Learning about democratic values is important, but so is having opportunities to discuss, make decisions, work with others and see what happens as a result. This is where Democractics: Echo your voice with every choice comes in.

Democractics is an Erasmus+ project bringing together four organisations from Poland, Italy, Bulgaria and Lithuania. Its main goal was to make learning about democracy more engaging and accessible to young people, while giving youth workers and educators new ways to explore these topics with their groups.

The project focused on several important elements:

- Helping young people better understand democracy, civic rights and decision-making, especially in the European Union.
- Encouraging young people to take a more active role in their communities.
- Developing skills such as critical thinking, communication, cooperation and negotiation.
- Supporting youth workers and educators in using interactive, non-formal education methods.
- Creating an educational board game that could be used in different countries and learning environments.

What did we do during the project?

We started by exploring how young people understand democracy and what encourages or prevents them from taking part in civic life. Through research and focus groups in the four partner countries, we collected their experiences, opinions and ideas about learning through games.

These findings helped shape Member States, an educational board game where players experience some of the challenges of democratic decision-making.

The project also included an international Training Course for youth workers. Participants explored democracy and active citizenship through non-formal education activities, including exercises about creating democratic societies and reflecting on unequal opportunities to participate.

The project then moved to local activities, designed to introduce the game to young people, educators and youth organisations in the partner countries.

Together, these activities brought us to the main educational resources of the project: the Member States board game and this toolkit, created to help educators use the game and explore democracy with young people.

So, what is Member States actually about?

In this board game, players step into the roles of European Union Member States. Each country has its own interests and objectives, but everyone also has to deal with challenges that affect the whole Union.

During the game, players face decisions related to the economy, society, environment and international security. They discuss different solutions, negotiate with other countries, build alliances and vote on what should happen next. Of course, not everyone wants the same thing. A decision that benefits one country might create problems for another. Sometimes players need to compromise, while other times they have to decide whether to protect their own interests or support the wider Union.

And there is a catch: if the Union collapses, everyone loses. This balance between individual goals and shared responsibility is at the heart of the game.
Member States is not meant to be an exact simulation of how EU institutions work. Instead, it offers a simplified setting where young people can experience negotiation, cooperation, voting and the consequences of collective decisions. It can be played as a standalone educational activity or included in a longer workshop about democracy, European values or active citizenship.

How to use this Toolkit?

In NFE, playing the game is only one part of the activity. The discussion and reflection afterwards are equally important because they help participants look at the decisions they made, understand why things happened the way they did and connect their experience to real-life situations.

- Why did someone refuse to cooperate?
- Who had the most influence over a decision?
- Was everyone heard?
- Would the same situation play out differently in real life?

Discussing questions like these helps participants reflect on their choices, understand different perspectives and connect what happened during the game to real democratic processes.
This toolkit was created for youth workers, educators, facilitators and organisations that want to use Member States in their educational activities.
This toolkit was developed for youth workers, educators and facilitators who want to use Member States in their educational activities. It builds on the research carried out during the Democractics project and provides practical guidance on using the game to explore democracy and civic participation.
Inside, you'll find:

- An explanation of the game's educational potential, including the skills participants can practise and how its mechanics relate to democratic processes.
- Different topics you can explore through the game, including negotiation, cooperation, power, solidarity and shared responsibility.
- Four workshop scenarios for using Member States with different learning objectives.
- Four adaptable non-formal education activities that can be used alongside the game or independently.
- Reflection questions, simple evaluation methods and suggestions for adapting activities to different groups and making them more inclusive.

Adapt the contents to your needs

You don't need to use everything in this toolkit. You can follow one of the workshop scenarios, choose individual activities that suit your group or use the reflection questions after playing the game.
The materials are flexible, so you can select and adapt them depending on your learning objectives, the participants and the time available.
The official Member States instructions explain how to play the game. This toolkit focuses on how to use it in educational settings, facilitate discussions and help participants relate their experience to democracy and civic participation in everyday life.

CHAPTER

02.

EDUCATIONAL POTENTIAL OF *MEMBER STATES*

Exploring how Member States supports learning about democracy, decision-making and civic participation through gameplay.

WHY USE BOARD GAMES IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION?

Board games can be useful in non-formal education because they give participants a chance to experience situations rather than only discuss them. When a workshop focuses on cooperation, negotiation or decision-making, talking about these topics is important, but actually practising them can help participants understand how they work.
Games provide an opportunity to do exactly that. Players have to make choices, respond to others and deal with the consequences of their decisions. They become part of the situation they are exploring, which gives the group a shared experience to discuss and reflect on afterwards.

Learning through experience

One of the main advantages of using board games in education is that participants can practise different skills while working towards a goal. They may need to explain their position, listen to others, compare possible solutions or convince someone to support their idea. Sometimes they also have to reconsider their strategy when things don't go as planned.
These situations bring together several competences, including communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem-solving. Rather than practising each skill separately, participants use them together as the game develops.
Games also help participants understand how decisions can affect other people. For example, a player might choose an option that benefits them individually but creates difficulties for the rest of the group. In another situation, reaching a shared objective might require players to cooperate even when they have different priorities. The rules and mechanics of a game make these relationships easier to observe. Participants can see how their choices influence what happens next and how individual decisions contribute to the overall result.

Experimenting and learning with others

Another advantage of board games is that they allow participants to try different approaches without facing the same consequences they would in real life.
Players can take risks, test strategies, disagree with others or make decisions that turn out to be unsuccessful. When something doesn't work, they can consider why it happened and what they might do differently next time.
This is particularly useful when working with topics that involve conflicting interests or difficult choices. Not reaching an agreement, for example, doesn't necessarily mean that an activity has failed. It can provide an opportunity to discuss what prevented cooperation, whether everyone had a chance to express their opinion and what might have helped the group reach a decision.
Interaction between participants is also an important part of the learning process. During a game, players need to respond to different personalities, opinions and ways of approaching problems. Some may take the lead, while others prefer to observe before contributing. These situations can help the group explore how communication, influence and cooperation work in practice.
Research on board game-based learning has highlighted its potential to support communication, collaboration, engagement and experimentation (Sousa et al., 2023). Other studies have explored how board games can contribute to problem-solving and the development of social and cognitive skills, although results depend on the game, participants and educational context (Assapun and Thummaphan, 2023; Hofmann, 2025).

The role of the facilitator

Although board games can create many opportunities for learning, playing a game doesn't automatically mean that participants will understand everything it is intended to teach.
This is where the facilitator comes in.
Before starting, it is useful to think about what participants should explore during the activity. Is the focus on communication, cooperation, decision-making or something else? Having a clear objective helps the facilitator choose the right activity and decide which aspects of the experience deserve attention.
During the game, the facilitator can observe how participants interact, make decisions and respond to challenges. It is not always necessary to intervene. Sometimes, allowing participants to work through a disagreement or deal with an unexpected situation can be part of the learning process, as long as the activity remains respectful and inclusive.
Afterwards, reflection gives participants time to look at what happened. They can discuss the choices they made, the strategies they used, the difficulties they encountered and how others experienced the same situation. The facilitator can then help them connect these observations to the topic of the workshop and to situations outside the game.
For this reason, board games are particularly useful when they are part of a wider educational process that includes preparation, gameplay and reflection. Each part serves a purpose: preparation introduces the activity, gameplay gives participants something to experience and reflection helps them examine and learn from it.

HOW MEMBER STATES SUPPORTS LEARNING?

Member States uses some of the challenges of European decision-making as the basis for its gameplay. Players represent different EU Member States, respond to shared problems and try to achieve their own objectives while keeping the Union functioning.

What makes the game useful in education is the relationship between its rules and the decisions players have to make. Negotiation, voting, cooperation and conflicting interests are not simply topics discussed during the activity. They are part of how the game works.

Let's look at how different elements of Member States can support learning.

Making decisions and dealing with consequences

Each round begins with an Agenda Card presenting a challenge affecting the European Union. The issue might concern the economy, society, environment or international security. Players have to consider three possible responses and decide which one to support. The available options have different consequences, and there is not necessarily a solution that satisfies everyone. Participants therefore need to compare priorities, consider possible outcomes and make decisions even when they do not have an ideal option.
The consequences of these decisions affect four shared indicators: Economy, Society, Environment and International Security. This helps players see how a decision in one area may have implications for the wider Union.
For educators, these mechanics provide a starting point for exploring how collective decisions are made, why different priorities can create disagreements and how political choices involve trade-offs.

Different roles and competing interests

In Member States, participants do not simply play as themselves. Each player represents an EU Member State and receives a Hidden Goal that influences their strategy.
Although everyone belongs to the same Union, players may have very different priorities. Some decisions may support one country's objectives while creating difficulties for others.
This creates opportunities to explore perspective-taking and the tension between individual interests and shared responsibilities. Participants may find themselves defending a position they would not normally support or trying to understand why another player is unwilling to compromise.
Hidden Goals also introduce uncertainty. Players do not necessarily know what others are trying to achieve, so they have to interpret their actions, build trust and decide how much information to share.
These situations can help participants reflect on how different interests shape discussions and why reaching an agreement is not always straightforward.

Negotiation, voting and influence

Before voting, players have an opportunity to discuss the Agenda, negotiate agreements and build alliances. They can explain their positions, offer support and try to persuade others to vote in a particular way.
This gives participants a chance to practise communication, argumentation, listening and negotiation. They may need to change their approach, make concessions or find common ground with someone whose priorities differ from their own.
Influence Points and the different ways players can use their resources add another dimension to these interactions. Players are not only considering which decision to support but also how to strengthen their position within the game.
The Presidency Player has an additional role in managing the round and the voting process. This offers another opportunity to observe how different responsibilities can affect the way a group makes decisions.
When negotiations end, players vote on the available options. The result determines which decision is adopted, while a repeated tie can lead to a failed vote and consequences for the Union.
For educators, these situations can open discussions about the difference between having a vote and having influence. Who managed to persuade others? Did everyone participate equally? Were decisions based on arguments, alliances or individual interests?

Individual success and collective responsibility

One of the most important features of Member States is that players are competing and cooperating at the same time.
Each participant wants to achieve their Hidden Goal and collect Influence Points. However, all players also depend on the survival of the European Union. If one of the shared indicators reaches the collapse threshold and the Union cannot be saved under the game's rules, everyone loses.
This means that focusing only on individual success can put the entire group at risk. Players may need to support a decision that does not directly benefit them, help another country or change their strategy to protect the Union. At other moments, they may decide that pursuing their own interests is worth the risk.
This tension provides an opportunity to discuss solidarity, interdependence and shared responsibility. It can also help participants consider how individual decisions contribute to collective outcomes.

Connecting the game to reality

Member States is inspired by European decision-making, but it is not an exact simulation of EU institutions or legislative procedures. The game simplifies political processes to make negotiation, voting and competing interests accessible within one activity.
This distinction is important when using it in education.
The facilitator can use what happened during the game to introduce wider questions about democracy and participation, while also helping participants understand where the game differs from reality.
The aim is not to teach that European institutions function exactly as they do in Member States. It is to use the situations created by the game to explore how decisions are influenced, why cooperation can be difficult and what happens when individual and collective interests do not align.

WHAT CAN PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

Member States can be used to explore different aspects of democracy and civic participation. What participants learn will depend on the focus of the workshop, their previous experience and how the facilitator guides the discussion afterwards.

The game offers opportunities to develop knowledge, practise skills and reflect on attitudes related to democratic participation. These areas often overlap during gameplay.

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRATIC PROCESS	DEVELOPING PRACTICAL SKILLS	REFLECTING ON ATTITUDES AND VALUES
Through the game, participants can explore how collective decisions are made when different actors have different priorities. They can observe why reaching an agreement is not always straightforward, how individual interests influence decisions and what happens when cooperation breaks down. The game also introduces the idea of interdependence. Players may pursue their own objectives, but their decisions affect the wider group. This can help participants better understand the relationship between individual interests, shared responsibilities and collective outcomes.	During Member States, participants have opportunities to practise skills that are relevant to democratic participation and everyday group work. They may need to communicate their opinions, explain their reasoning, listen to different perspectives and negotiate with others. They also have to compare options, consider possible consequences and adapt their strategies as situations change. These skills are connected. For example, reaching an agreement may require participants to understand another player's priorities, present an argument and decide what they are willing to compromise on.	Beyond knowledge and skills, the game can encourage participants to consider how they approach cooperation, disagreement and shared responsibility. They may reflect on their willingness to listen to others, accept different perspectives or make compromises. Situations involving competing interests can also raise questions about fairness, solidarity and the influence that different players have over collective decisions. The aim is not to tell participants which attitudes they should adopt. Instead, the facilitator can help them examine their own choices, understand how others experienced the game and consider how these situations relate to democratic participation outside the activity.

EIGHT THEMES TO EXPLORE

Member States can be used to explore a wide range of topics related to democracy, the European Union and active citizenship. The themes below are not separate game modes. Facilitators can choose one or two depending on the groups' interests and the learning objectives of the session.

01.
EU and decision making

How different priorities shape collective decisions at the European level.

02.
Democracy and participation

Who participates, who is heard and who has influence in the decision-making.

03.
Active citizenship

Taking responsibility for decisions affecting a community.

04.
Cooperation, Common Good

Working together when interests differ.

05.
Negotiation and compromise

Finding agreements and dealing with disagreements.

06.
Conflicting Interests

Making difficult choices when no option is ideal.

07.
Power and representation

Understanding how influence works within a group.

08.
Shared responsibility

Balancing individual success with collective needs.

FROM RESEARCH TO GAMEPLAY

Before developing Member States, the Democractics partners explored how young people understand democracy, what makes participation difficult and what they expect from educational games. The research combined surveys, focus groups and reviews of existing studies in Poland, Italy, Bulgaria and Lithuania. Although the methods differed between countries, several common themes emerged: young people want to express their opinions, take part in decisions and feel that their involvement matters. They also value activities that are interactive, accessible and connected to real-life situations.

PARTICIPATION AND REAL INFLUENCE

One of the strongest findings was the importance of meaningful participation.
In Italy, 75% respondents felt that young people lacked sufficient opportunities, spaces or support to participate in democratic life. Meanwhile, 62.5% chose doing something useful with real impact as their main motivation to get involved.
Similar concerns appeared in Poland, where 63.2% identified feeling that their participation had no impact as a barrier to civic engagement.

LEARNING BY DOING

The Polish research revealed a difference between understanding democracy in general and knowing how decisions are made in practice. Respondents rated their understanding of democracy at an average of 3.53 out of 5, compared with 3.11 out of 5 for their knowledge of decision-making processes. This highlights the value of activities that allow young people to practice discussion, negotiation and decision-making.

Participation should make a difference.

75%

Reported a lack of opportunities or support for youth participation.

62.5%

Chose a real impact as their main motivation to participate.

Source: Italian Democractics Survey, questions 9 and 10. Separate single-choice questions.

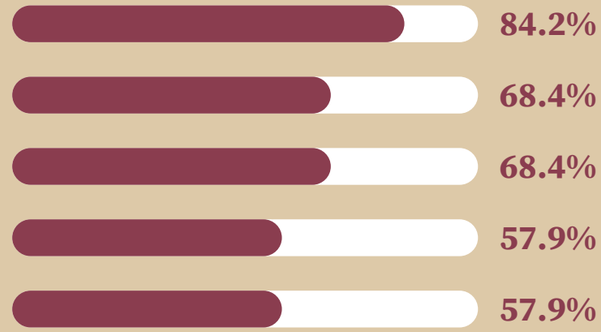
Knowing democracy is not the same as knowing how decisions are made.

3.53 / 5
Understanding democracy

3.11 / 5
Knowledge of decision making processes

Source: Polish Democractics Research, section 4.1. Average self-assessment on a five-point scale.

What would players like to do?



Source: Polish Democractics Research, section 4.6. Multiple answers were possible so the percentages are independent.

DIFFERENT NEEDS, DIFFERENT APPROACHES

The research also showed that young people do not all have the same experience of democracy in their countries.

BULGARIA

Highlited institutional distrust and concerns about whther young people's opinions influence decisions.

LITHUANIA

Two focus groups showed different needs: accessible introductions for younger participants and more complex dilemmas for older ones.

POLAND

Emphasised discussion, clear rules and opportunities to defend their ideas.

ITALY

Preferred practical activities, accessible language and informal environments.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR FACILITATORS?

- They need to give participants a real say and show the consequences of their decisions.
- Keep the activity accessible, with clear and simple instructions.
- Adapt the session and the game itself to the group's needs, experience and interests

CHAPTER

03.

FROM GAME TO WORKSHOP

Practical guidance, workshop scenarios and activities to help educators use Member States with young people.

PREPARING AND FACILITATIONG A SESSION

The following recommendations are based on our experience developing and testing Member States, the international training course held in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in April 2026, and the project's work with in local educational settings. Throughout these activities, we had opportunities to introduce the game, observe how participants approached its rules and challenges, practise different facilitation methods and collect feedback. These experiences helped us identify what educators should pay particular attention to when preparing and running a session.

The suggestions below are not a strict set of instructions. They are practical recommendations that you can (and should) adapt depending on your group, their needs, learning objectives and educational setting. We are, however, going to introduce some sessions and activity examples to make it a bit easier for you.

STANDARD GAME	3-6 players *	6 rounds	~60 minutes of gameplay

BEFORE THE SESSION

Chose your learning focus	Decide what you want participants to explore, for example negotiation, voting and representation or solidarity. You don't need to cover everything in one session.
Get familiar with the game	Read the instructions carefully and, if possible, play at least one round yourself. In Plovdiv participants first played an introductory round with support from the trainers, then played again among themselves.
Prepare the space and the group	Arrange the space so everyone can see the materials and take part in the discussions. Consider the participants' age, experience and familiarity with the EU. Agree on a few basic principles for communication.

* the game also has a 2-people and larger groups variant, so the number of players can be adjusted from 2 to 18. You can read more in rules and additional file available in the Google Drive.

DURING THE GAME

Explain the rules clearly	Introduce the objective, indicators, roles and voting process. Avoid too much information at once and check understanding. The rules are always a bit difficult in the beginning, even if we tried to make them simple.
Observe and support	Pay attention to how participants communicate, negotiate and make decisions. Sharing facilitation responsibilities (rules explainer, timekeepe, observer) as we did in Plovdiv, can be useful for larger groups.
Keep the session on track	A full game involves six rounds. Allow enough time for discussion and decisions, and remember to plan time for introducing the game and reflecting afterwards.

AFTER THE GAME

Make time for reflection	Give participants a chance to share their experiences and decisions. You can then explore how they approached negotiations, responded to disagreements or balanced individual or collective goals.
Connect the experience to real life	Discuss whether similar situations can occur outside the game, for example competing priorities, compromise or representation. Remember that Member States is a simplified educational game, not an exact simulation of EU institutions.
Collect feedback	Ask participants what they enjoyed, found difficult or would change. You can use a short discussion or a simple evaluation form. Their feedback can help you improve future sessions.

Facilitating Member States involves finding a balance between supporting participants and allowing them to make their own decisions. The game creates situations in which players may disagree, form alliances, pursue individual interests or make choices that negatively affect the Union. These experiences are part of its educational value. The facilitator does not need to resolve every disagreement or guide players towards a particular outcome. Their responsibility is to maintain a respectful environment in which different opinions can be expressed and participants feel comfortable contributing.

It is also important to distinguish between the roles participants adopt during the game and their personal views. A player may defend a position because it serves their Hidden Goal, even when they would not support that position outside the game. Facilitators should avoid making assumptions about participants' beliefs based on their gameplay.

Finally, remember that the success of an educational session is not determined by whether the Union survives or which player wins. What matters is how participants engage with the experience, examine different perspectives and reflect on the decisions they make.

On the next pages, you can see 4 different workshops which can be used when preparing a workshop using the game. Check them out and use them as they are or adjust them to your needs.

WORKSHOP SCENARIO 01

EVERY VOTE COUNTS?

Exploring voting, representation and influence in democratic decision-making.

Having the right to vote does not necessarily mean having the same influence over a decision. Some people may be more persuasive, have access to more information or be better positioned to build alliances. This workshop uses Member States to explore the relationship between voting and influence. Participants experience how decisions are shaped through negotiation, competing interests and strategic choices, then examine how these dynamics relate to democratic participation outside the game.

Learning objective	• Explore the relationship between voting, representation and influence. • Recognise how arguments, alliances and competing interests affect collective decisions. • Reflect on the importance of fairness and transparency in democratic processes.
Target group	Young people aged 15 and above.
Group size	6-18 participants, organised into groups of 3-6 players.
Duration:	Approximately 120 minutes.
Materials:	Member States game sets and rulebooks, paper, pens, flipchart or whiteboard.

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTIONS

01 — Who influences a decision? (15 min)

Ask participants to identify a decision that affects young people. Discuss who makes the decision and who can influence it. Introduce the question: Does having a vote mean having equal influence?

02 — Introducing Member States (15 min)

Divide participants into groups of 3–6 and introduce the game's objectives, voting process, Presidency Player and Influence Points. Demonstrate an introductory round if needed.

03 — Playing the game (60 min)

Play according to the official rules. Ask participants to pay attention to how agreements are reached, how players influence one another and whether alliances form.

04 — Looking back at the decisions (10 min)

Ask participants to recall one important vote. Discuss what influenced the outcome and whether anyone changed their position during negotiations.

05 — Debriefing (20 min)

Bring participants together to reflect on their experiences, using the questions below.

1. How did you decide which option to vote for?
2. What influenced your decisions during negotiations?
3. Did everyone have the same opportunity to influence the outcome?
4. Was there a difference between having a vote and having influence?
5. Where do you see similar situations in real democratic processes?

CONNECTING THE GAME TO REALITY

Explain that voting is an essential element of democracy, but it is not the only way decisions are influenced. Public discussions, advocacy, participation in organisations and opportunities to communicate with decision-makers can all play a role. However, access to these opportunities may differ. Invite participants to consider how young people can influence decisions in their schools, communities or local institutions, including situations where they do not have formal voting power.

ADAPTING THE SCENARIO

For less experienced groups: use familiar examples, such as school councils or youth-centre decisions, and spend more time explaining the voting mechanics.

For more experienced groups: explore the distinction between legitimate advocacy and unfair influence. Participants can discuss how transparency, representation and access to information affect democratic decision-making.

For larger groups: use multiple game sets and compare how negotiations and voting developed at different tables.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

Look for whether participants can identify the different ways people influence collective decisions and distinguish formal voting power from informal influence.

During reflection, pay attention to whether they can explain their observations using examples from the game and connect them to situations outside the activity.

WORKSHOP SCENARIO 02

THE ART OF COMPROMISE

Negotiating different priorities and finding common ground..

In democratic decision-making, different groups often have competing priorities, and reaching an agreement is not always straightforward. Negotiation requires people to defend their interests, listen to other perspectives and consider what they are willing to compromise on. This workshop uses Member States to explore how players negotiate when their individual objectives conflict with those of others, and how their ability or refusal to compromise can affect the whole Union..

Learning objective	• Practise negotiation, active listening and compromise. • Explore how competing interests affect collective decisions. • Reflect on the difference between cooperation and giving up individual priorities.
Target group	Young people aged 15 and above.
Group size	6-18 participants, organised into groups of 3-6 players.
Duration:	Approximately 120 minutes.
Materials:	Member States game sets and rulebooks, paper, pens, flipchart or whiteboard.

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTIONS

01 — Finding common ground (15 min)

Present a simple dilemma, such as deciding how to spend a limited community budget. Ask participants to identify different priorities and suggest how people with conflicting interests might reach an agreement?

02 — Introducing Member States (15 min)

Divide participants into groups of 3–6. Introduce the game's objectives, Hidden Goals, negotiation process and shared indicators. Explain that players will need to consider both their own priorities and the Union's stability.

03 — Playing the game (60 min)

Play according to the official rules. Encourage participants to notice when they negotiate, make concessions, form alliances or refuse to compromise.

04 — Examining a negotiation (10 min)

Ask each group to recall one negotiation that was particularly successful or difficult. Discuss what each player wanted and how the situation was resolved

05 — Debriefing (20 min)

Bring participants together to reflect on their experiences, using the questions below.

1. Which decisions were the hardest to agree on, and why?
2. What helped you persuade others or understand their priorities?
3. Did you ever compromise on your Hidden Goal or preferred outcome? Why?
4. Were there situations where refusing to compromise affected the whole Union?
5. How do similar negotiations happen in real communities or democratic institutions??

CONNECTING THE GAME TO REALITY

Democratic decisions often require agreements between people or groups with different priorities. Compromise can help them move forward, but it does not mean that every interest can always be satisfied. Encourage participants to consider when compromise is useful and when important principles should not be negotiable.

ADAPTING THE SCENARIO

For less experienced groups: begin with a familiar dilemma and explain the difference between compromise and simply accepting another person's decision.

For more experienced groups: explore situations where agreements involve unequal bargaining power or where compromise may conflict with fundamental rights.

For larger groups: compare negotiations across different game tables and discuss why some groups reached agreements more easily than others.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

Pay attention to how players approach negotiations, which arguments help them reach agreements and what they are willing to compromise on. Notice whether they consider other players' priorities or focus mainly on their own Hidden Goals.

Observe what happens when negotiations fail and whether players change their approach when the Union's stability is at risk..

WORKSHOP SCENARIO 03

MY COUNTRY, OUR UNION

Exploring shared responsibility, competing priorities and the common good.

In democratic decision-making, countries and communities often have to balance their own priorities with responsibilities towards others. A decision that benefits one group may create difficulties for another, while focusing only on individual interests can put shared objectives at risk. This workshop uses Member States to explore these tensions. Participants work in small delegations, discuss their country's priorities and make decisions that affect the entire Union.

Learning objective	• Explore the relationship between individual interests and collective responsibility. • Practise collaborative decision-making within small teams. • Reflect on how shared resources and priorities affect the wider community.
Target group	Young people aged 16+
Group size	12–24 participants, divided into 4–6 country delegations.
Duration:	Approximately 110 minutes.
Materials:	Member States game sets and rulebooks, paper, pens, flipchart or whiteboard.

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTIONS

01 — Whose priorities matter? (10 min)

Present a situation where several communities must agree on shared priorities, such as public transport, environmental protection or security. Discuss why different groups might favour different solutions.

02 — Forming country delegations (10 min)

Divide participants into 4-6 teams, each representing one member state. Distribute the game materials and allow players to discuss their country's position and Hidden Goal privately. Each delegation makes decisions together and acts as one player during the game.

03 — Playing the game (60 min)

Play following the official rules, with each delegation controlling one country. Ask teams to consider how their decisions affect both their own position and the four indicators.

04 — Comparing priorities (10 min)

After the game, ask each delegation to identify one decision that benefited its country and one that affected the Union as a whole. Compare whether these interests supported or conflicted with each other.

05 — Debriefing (20 min)

Bring participants together to discuss the decisions made during the game and their wider consequences.

1. How did your delegation decide which interests to prioritise?
2. Were there moments when your country's interests conflicted with the needs of the Union?
3. Did your delegation ever support a decision that benefited others more than itself? Why?
4. What happened when players focused mainly on their individual goals?
5. How do countries or communities balance their own priorities with shared responsibilities in real life?

CONNECTING THE GAME TO REALITY

Countries and communities often depend on one another when addressing issues such as economic stability, environmental protection and security. Decisions made by one actor can affect many others. Encourage participants to reflect on why cooperation and solidarity may be necessary even when different groups have competing priorities.

ADAPTING THE SCENARIO

Smaller groups: play the standard version with 3-6 individual players instead of country delegations.

More experienced groups: ask each delegation to briefly explain how it balances its national interests with the wider consequences of its decisions.

Limited time: use a selected number of rounds as a learning exercise, without presenting the shortened game as a complete official match.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

Pay attention to how delegations make decisions internally and whether all team members contribute. Notice how players respond when shared indicators become unstable and whether they change their priorities to protect the Union.

Observe whether delegations consider the consequences for other countries or focus mainly on achieving their own Hidden Goals..

WORKSHOP SCENARIO 04

DEMOCRACY UNDER PRESSURE

Exploring difficult decisions, competing priorities and democratic responsibility during crises.

Democratic decision-making can become particularly challenging during emergencies. When time is limited and the consequences are uncertain, decision-makers may face pressure to act quickly, sometimes at the expense of discussion, transparency or participation. This workshop uses selected rounds of Member States to explore how participants respond to difficult choices, manage competing priorities and balance urgent action with collective responsibility.

Learning objective	• Explore how time pressure affects collective decision-making. • Practise assessing different options and their possible consequences. • Reflect on the importance of democratic principles during crises.
Target group	Young people aged 16+
Group size	6-12 participants, divided into two groups of 3-6 players.
Duration:	Approximately 75 minutes.
Materials:	Member States game sets and rulebooks, paper, pens, flipchart or whiteboard.

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTIONS

01 — Making decisions under pressure (10 min)

Introduce a fictional crisis, such as an environmental emergency or a threat to public security. Ask participants what should take priority when urgent decisions are needed and whether democratic procedures should change during a crisis.

02 — Preparing the game (10 min)

Divide participants into two groups and introduce the game's objectives, shared indicators and voting process. Explain that the workshop will use a shortened, three-round version of Member States.

03 — Three rounds under pressure (30 mi)

Play three rounds using the official mechanics, but limit the discussion phase to five minutes per round. Ask participants to pay attention to how time pressure affects negotiations, cooperation and voting decisions.

04 — Examining a negotiation (10 min)

Ask both groups to share one particularly difficult decision. Compare how they approached

the situation, which priorities influenced their choices and whether they were satisfied with the outcome.

05 — Debriefing (20 min)

Bring participants together to reflect on their experiences, using the questions below.

1. How did limited discussion time affect your decisions?
2. Did you prioritise your own Hidden Goal or the Union's stability when faced with difficult choices?
3. Were there moments when acting quickly seemed more important than reaching an agreement?
4. What risks can arise when democratic decisions are made under pressure?
5. How can democratic institutions respond to emergencies while protecting participation and accountability?

CONNECTING THE GAME TO REALITY

During emergencies, governments and institutions may need to make decisions quickly, but these decisions can have significant consequences for citizens and their rights. Discuss why transparency, accountability and democratic oversight remain important, particularly when ordinary decision-making processes are under pressure..

ADAPTING THE SCENARIO

For less experienced groups: allow more discussion time and explain the possible consequences of each Agenda option before voting.

For more experienced groups: introduce an additional reflection task in which participants identify which democratic principles should remain protected during an emergency.

For larger groups: use one game set with 3–6 players and compare different decisions within the same group.

WHAT TO OBSERVE

Pay attention to whether participants rely on quick agreements, follow more influential players or make decisions without fully discussing the alternatives. Notice how they respond to consequences and whether their priorities change as the shared indicators become more vulnerable..

The following five activities offer additional ways to explore democracy, participation and decision-making. They can be used independently, before or after playing Member States, or combined with other exercises to create longer workshops.
For more ideas, educators can also consult the **Democractics Facilitator's Handbook**, an additional project resource featuring 66 participatory methods with instructions, adaptations and reflection questions.

ADAPTABLE ACTIVITY 01

BUILD YOUR OWN DEMOCRACY

Designing a fictional country and its democratic system.

How would you organise a country if you could decide how everything worked? In this activity, participants create their own fictional country, establish its institutions and decide how citizens can participate in public life. By designing their own democratic system, they explore how political decisions are made, how rights are protected and how different approaches can work in practice.

Aim	Explore the main elements of a democratic system, including institutions, elections, rights and citizen participation.
Target group	Young people aged 14+.
Group size	8-20 participants, divided into groups of 3-5.
Duration:	60 minutes
Materials:	Flipchart paper, markers, pens and optional country profile templates.

HOW IT WORKS

01 — Create your country (10 min)

Divide participants into small groups. Each group invents a fictional country, choosing its name, population and main characteristics.

02 — Design your democracy (20 min)

Ask groups to establish how their country works. They should decide who makes laws, how representatives are elected, which rights citizens have and how young people can participate in decisions.

03 — Test the system (15 min)

Present a challenge, such as a government trying to restrict freedom of expression or making an important decision without consulting citizens. Ask groups how their democratic system would respond.

04 — Present and compare (15 min)

Each group presents its country and explains its main decisions. Compare the different systems, paying attention to how power is distributed and how citizens can influence decisions.

Debriefing questions

- Which decisions about your country's democratic system were the most difficult?
- How did your group decide who should have political power?
- What opportunities did you create for young people to participate?
- How did your system respond when democratic principles were challenged?
- What similarities or differences can you identify between your fictional country and real democratic systems?

ADAPTABLE ACTIVITY 02

STEP FORWARD: WHO GETS TO PARTICIPATE?

Exploring unequal opportunities, social barriers and access to democratic participation.

Not everyone has the same opportunities to participate in society. Personal circumstances, financial resources, social background and access to information can affect how easily people make their voices heard. In this activity, participants take on fictional roles and respond to statements about everyday opportunities and participation. As they move forward or remain in place, differences between their characters become visible, providing a starting point for discussing inequality and inclusion.

Aim	Explore how different circumstances affect access to opportunities, rights and democratic participation.
Target group	Young people aged 15+
Group size	10-25 participants
Duration:	45-60 minutes
Materials:	Fictional role cards, prepared statements and an open space where participants can move.

HOW IT WORKS

01 — Take on a role (10 min)

Give each participant a fictional role card, such as a young refugee, an unemployed parent, a student from a wealthy family or a young person with a disability. Allow time to imagine their character's circumstances without revealing their role to others.

02 — Take a step forward (15 min)

Ask participants to stand in a line. Read statements about opportunities and participation, such as „You know where to find information about local decisions" or „You feel that your opinions are taken seriously". Participants take one step forward whenever they believe the statement applies to their character. Otherwise, they remain in place.

03 — Observe the differences (5 min)

When all statements have been read, ask participants to look at their positions and notice the differences between them. Allow them to share their fictional roles, then invite everyone to step out of character.

04 — Group reflection (15-30 min)

Bring participants together to discuss the differences they observed and the barriers that may prevent some people from participating.

Debriefing questions

- How did you feel when you could move forward or had to stay behind?
- What differences did you notice between the characters?
- Which circumstances made participation easier or more difficult?
- How can unequal opportunities affect whose opinions are heard in democratic decisions?
- What could schools, youth organisations or public institutions do to reduce these barriers?

ADAPTABLE ACTIVITY 03

THE COMPROMISE CHALLENGE

Exploring negotiation, conflicting interests and finding common ground.

Reaching an agreement is not always easy, especially when people have different priorities and expectations. Sometimes, finding a solution means making concessions, considering other perspectives or accepting an outcome that does not fully satisfy everyone. In this activity, participants represent different interest groups and negotiate a shared solution to a community issue. They explore what makes compromise possible and how disagreements can be addressed through discussion.

Aim	Practise negotiation, active listening and finding agreements between groups with competing interests
Target group	Young people aged 15+
Group size	9-24 participants, divided into 3-4 stakeholder groups
Duration:	45-50 minutes
Materials:	Fictional scenario, stakeholder role cards, paper, pens and flipchart

HOW IT WORKS

01 — Introduce the challenge (5 min)

Present a fictional situation: the local council wants to transform an empty public space. Some residents want a park, young people want a sports area and local businesses prefer a commercial space.

02 — Prepare your position (10 min)

Divide participants into stakeholder groups. Each group discusses its priorities, identifies what matters most and decides which aspects it could compromise on.

03 — Negotiate a solution (15 min)

Bring the groups together and ask them to agree on one proposal for the public space. Encourage participants to explain their positions, consider alternatives and negotiate possible compromises.

04 — Present the agreement (5 min)

Ask participants to present their final proposal and explain which interests were included. If no agreement was reached, discuss what prevented the groups from finding common ground.

05 — Debriefing (10-15 min)

Reflect on the negotiation process using the questions below.

Debriefing questions

- What was the most difficult part of reaching an agreement?
- Which arguments or approaches helped the negotiation move forward?
- What did your group have to give up to reach a compromise?
- Did the final solution consider everyone's interests fairly?
- When might compromise be necessary in democratic decision-making, and when might it be inappropriate?

ADAPTABLE ACTIVITY 04

THE UNFAIR GAME

Exploring fairness, unequal power and the rules of democratic participation.

Having the right to participate does not always mean having the same influence. When some people have more votes, resources or opportunities to speak, the outcome of a decision may favour them even when everyone follows the rules. In this activity, participants take part in a voting game where some have more power than others. They experience how unequal rules affect collective decisions and explore what makes a decision-making process fair and legitimate.

Aim	Explore how unequal voting rights and privileges affect participation, fairness and the legitimacy of decisions.
Target group	Young people aged 15+
Group size	10-24 participants
Duration:	40-45 minutes
Materials:	Voting slips or tokens, two sets of voting rules, paper, pens and a flipchart.

HOW IT WORKS

01 — Introduce the vote (5 min)

Tell participants they will vote on how to use a fictional youth centre's budget. Present two options: purchasing sports equipment or organising cultural activities.

02 — The unequal vote (10 min)

Divide participants into two equal groups. Give one group two voting tokens per person and the other group only one. Hold a short discussion and vote, counting all tokens equally.

03 — Examine the result (5 min)

Announce the winning option and reveal how voting power was distributed. Ask participants whether the result represents the preferences of the whole group.

04 — Redesign the rules (10 min)

Ask participants to propose fairer voting rules. Agree on a new procedure, repeat the vote and compare the results.

05 — Debriefing (10-15 min)

Discuss how the voting rules influenced the outcome and what this reveals about fairness in democratic processes.

Debriefing questions

- How did you feel about the voting rules and the result?
- Did everyone have the same opportunity to influence the decision?
- Can a decision be considered fair if everyone follows rules that give some people more power?
- What changed when you redesigned the voting system?
- How can democratic institutions ensure that citizens are treated fairly and have meaningful opportunities to participate?

ADAPTABLE ACTIVITY 05

FROM DECISIONS TO ACTION

Turning democratic participation into action in the local community.

Democratic participation does not end with voting or discussing political issues. Youth can also influence decisions in their schools, neighbourhoods and communities by identifying problems, proposing solutions and engaging with the people responsible. In this activity, participants choose an issue that matters to them and develop a simple action plan to address it. They explore how ideas can become initiatives and what steps are needed to make their voices heard.

Aim	Identify opportunities for civic participation and develop a realistic plan for addressing a local issue.
Target group	Young people aged 15+
Group size	6-24 participants, divided into groups of 3-6
Duration:	60 minutes
Materials:	Flipchart paper, markers, pens and optional action-planning templates

HOW IT WORKS

01 — Identify an issue (10 min)

Ask participants to identify problems affecting young people in their school or community, such as limited public transport, a lack of recreational spaces or insufficient opportunities for youth participation. Each group selects one issue to address.

02 — Explore the possibilities (15 min)

Ask groups to identify who is responsible for the issue, who is affected and what opportunities exist to influence decisions. Encourage them to consider local institutions, youth councils, community organisations or other relevant stakeholders.

03 — Develop an Action Plan (20 min)

Each group prepares a simple plan describing what they want to change, which actions they could take, who they need to contact and what resources or support they would need.

04 — Redesign the rules (10 min)

Groups present their plans and receive suggestions from other participants. Ask them to identify one realistic first step they could take after the workshop

05 — Debriefing (10-15 min)

Discuss what participants learned about turning ideas into action and which opportunities they could explore in their own communities.

Debriefing questions

- Why did you choose this issue, and who is affected by it?
- What opportunities do young people have to influence decisions about this issue?
- What barriers might prevent your plan from being carried out?
- Who could support your initiative, and how could you involve others?
- What would be the first step towards putting your plan into practice?

CHAPTER

04.

REFLECTION, EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION

Practical ways to reflect on learning, evaluate activities and adapt them to different groups.

MAKING REFLECTION MEANINGFUL

Playing Member States gives participants opportunities to negotiate, make decisions and experience the consequences of their choices. However, the educational value of the game also depends on what happens afterwards. Reflection helps participants understand their experiences and connect them to democratic processes outside the game. Evaluation allows educators to identify what participants have learned, which parts of the session worked well and where additional support may be needed.

Rather than looking only at who won or lost, educators should encourage participants to explore how decisions were made, which interests influenced them and what consequences followed..

This chapter introduces simple approaches for reflecting on learning, collecting feedback and adapting future sessions.

A useful reflection process can follow three stages:

01 — What happened?

Begin with the participants' experience. Ask them to recall important decisions, disagreements, negotiations or unexpected outcomes.

02 — WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

Encourage participants to examine the reasons behind their decisions. Explore how different interests, alliances, information and opportunities to influence others shaped the result.

03 — WHAT DOES IT MEAN BEYOND THE GAME?

Connect the experience to situations in schools, communities and democratic institutions. Discuss where similar dynamics appear and how young people can participate in decisions that affect them.

CREATING SPACE FOR DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Participants may interpret the same experience differently. Someone who felt influential during the game may have overlooked another player's difficulty in expressing an opinion.

Educators should make space for these different interpretations, encourage participants to explain their views and avoid treating any single experience as representative of the whole group.

Reflection does not need to produce unanimous agreement. Its purpose is to help participants better understand democratic processes, question assumptions and recognise the value of different perspectives.

EVALUATING LEARNING

Evaluation helps educators understand what participants have learned, how their understanding has developed and whether the session achieved its educational objectives. In non-formal education, evaluation does not need to involve formal tests or grades. It can be based on participants' reflections, observations during activities and short discussions about the learning experience.

When using Member States, evaluation should consider more than participants' knowledge of democratic institutions or their ability to follow the rules. The game creates opportunities to practise negotiation, express opinions, consider different interests and experience the consequences of collective decisions. These experiences can help participants develop skills and attitudes that are relevant to democratic participation.

A useful evaluation therefore considers three areas:

1. **Knowledge and understanding:** what did participants learn about democratic decision-making, representation, negotiation and shared responsibility?
2. **Skills:** how did participants practise communication, critical thinking, cooperation and decision-making?
3. **Attitudes and confidence:** did participants become more aware of different perspectives, more willing to listen to others or more confident expressing their opinions?

Not every change will be visible during a single workshop. Evaluation should focus on identifying learning experiences and possible areas of development rather than expecting immediate or measurable changes in every participant.

A SIMPLE ASSESSMENT

One way to explore learning is to ask participants to complete a short self-assessment before and after the session. Using the same statements at both points allows educators to compare how participants perceive their knowledge, abilities and confidence.

Ask participants to rate each statement from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

- **I understand how collective decisions can affect different groups in different ways.**
- **I can explain why negotiation and compromise are important in democratic processes.**
- **I can recognise how power and influence affect decision-making.**
- **I feel confident expressing my opinion during a group discussion.**
- **I can identify ways young people can participate in decisions affecting their communities.**

Allow participants a few minutes to complete the assessment individually. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers and that their responses will be used to understand the learning experience, not to assess their personal performance.

When reviewing the results, educators can look for changes in individual responses and overall patterns. For example, participants may report greater confidence in discussing different perspectives while still feeling uncertain about opportunities for participation in their own communities.

An increase in ratings can suggest perceived learning, but it does not automatically demonstrate that knowledge or skills have improved. Similarly, a lower rating after the activity does not necessarily indicate a negative outcome. Participants may have developed a more realistic understanding of how complex democratic decision-making can be.

LOOKING BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Self-assessment provides useful information, but participants' explanations often reveal more about what they actually experienced. At the end of the session, ask participants to complete three short statements:

One thing I learned...

Identify an idea, concept or skill that became clearer during the activity.

One thing that challenged my thinking...

Describe a situation, decision or perspective that made them reconsider an assumption.

One question I still have...

Identify something they would like to understand or explore further.

These reflections can be completed individually on paper or discussed in small groups. Participants should be free to decide how much they wish to share. Educators can review the responses to identify recurring themes, unexpected learning outcomes and topics that may require additional attention.

OBSERVING LEARNING DURING THE GAME

Educators can also gather information about participants' learning by paying attention to how they interact during Member States. The aim is not to judge individual players, but to identify situations that reveal how the group approaches democratic decision-making.

During the game, educators can focus on four areas:

1. **Decision-making.** You can notice how participants choose between different options. Do they explain their reasoning, consider possible consequences or change their position after hearing other arguments?
2. **Participation.** You can pay attention to who contributes to discussions and how decisions are reached. Does everyone have an opportunity to speak? Are some participants more influential than others?
3. **Negotiation.** You can observe how players respond when their interests conflict. Do they try to persuade others, look for compromises or refuse to change their positions?
4. **Shared responsibility.** You can notice what happens when the Union's indicators are at risk. Do players continue pursuing their Hidden Goals, or do they adjust their decisions to protect the Union?

Educators can make brief notes about one or two significant moments during the game, such as a difficult vote, an unexpected agreement or a situation where some participants struggled to influence the discussion.

These examples can then be used during the debriefing to help participants examine their decisions and consider how similar situations arise in democratic life.

Observation should focus on what participants do and say, rather than assumptions about what they have learned. For example, remaining quiet during a discussion does not necessarily mean that someone is disengaged or has not understood the activity.

After the session, educators can review the information collected and consider three questions:

1. Which learning objectives appear to have been achieved?
2. What difficulties, unanswered questions or unexpected learning outcomes emerged?
3. What should be maintained or changed in the next session?

The answers can guide decisions about the amount of time allocated to negotiation, the complexity of game explanations, the structure of group discussions and the support offered to participants with different needs.

Evaluation is most useful when its findings influence future practice. Its purpose is not to demonstrate that every participant learned the same thing, but to understand what the educational experience made possible and how it can be improved.

ADAPTING FUTURE SESSIONS

Every group approaches Member States differently. Participants may have different levels of familiarity with democratic processes, different communication styles or different needs when it comes to understanding rules and taking part in discussions.
Evaluating a session helps educators recognise these differences and decide what to adjust in future activities. The aim is not to change the game every time, but to make the learning experience more accessible, engaging and relevant to the people taking part.

WHAT CAN BE ADJUSTED?

- **Introducing the game**

If participants struggle to understand the rules, allow more time for explanations and demonstrate how a round works before starting. Focus on the main mechanics first, then clarify additional elements as they become relevant.

- **Supporting participation**

If discussions are dominated by a few players, encourage more balanced participation. Give participants time to consider their positions before negotiations and invite those who have spoken less to contribute, without putting them under pressure.

- **Managing time and complexity**

Some groups may need longer discussions or additional breaks to follow the decisions and their consequences. Adjust the workshop schedule where possible, particularly when introducing the game to participants with less experience.

- **Making the experience accessible**

Consider the language, communication and accessibility needs of the group. Use clear explanations, provide written reminders of important rules and offer different ways to contribute to discussions and reflection.

- **Connecting to participants' realities**

The relevance of the activity may depend on participants' experiences and interests. During reflection, use examples from their schools, communities or issues they recognise, rather than relying only on abstract political situations.

COLLECTING FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

Participants can offer valuable insights into aspects of the session that educators may not notice themselves. For example, a facilitator might consider the game explanation sufficiently clear, while some participants may have struggled to understand certain rules or follow the negotiations.
Collecting feedback provides an opportunity to identify these differences and understand how participants experienced the activity.
Feedback does not need to involve a lengthy questionnaire. At the end of the session, educators can invite participants to respond anonymously to three questions:

1. What worked well? Which parts of the game or workshop did you find particularly interesting or engaging?
2. What was difficult? Were any rules, discussions or activities confusing, uncomfortable or difficult to follow?
3. What would you change? What could make the experience better for future participants?

Feedback can be collected through short written responses, an online form or a group discussion. Anonymous responses may help participants feel more comfortable sharing difficulties or criticism.
It is important to distinguish feedback about the educational experience from evaluation of learning. Participants may enjoy an activity without necessarily achieving all its learning objectives, just as they may learn something valuable from a challenging experience.

LEARNING FROM EACH SESSION

After the workshop, educators should review participants' feedback alongside their own observations and evaluation results.
Look for recurring issues rather than focusing on isolated comments. If several participants report that negotiations moved too quickly, more discussion time may be needed. If participants felt excluded from decisions, the facilitator might reconsider how speaking opportunities are managed.
A simple way to record improvements is to answer three questions:

- What should we keep? Identify elements that supported participation and learning.
- What should we change? Note difficulties that affected the experience.
- What will we try next time? Choose one or two adjustments to test in a future session.

Keeping a short record of these decisions can be particularly useful when delivering several workshops or working with different groups.
Adaptations should preserve the main learning objectives of the activity. When using the official Member States game, educators should also distinguish changes to the workshop format from changes to the game's rules.
The purpose of collecting feedback and adapting activities is not to create a perfect session, but to improve the learning experience based on what participants and educators have observed.

CHAPTER

05.

EXTRA RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Useful publications and references for further exploration.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following publications and educational tools offer further approaches to exploring democracy, youth participation, active citizenship and game-based learning. They include practical activities, facilitation methods and guidance developed by European organisations and initiatives, which educators can use to complement Member States or develop their own non-formal education workshops.

CIVIX and Udruga Prizma (2026) Youth-Friendly Forms of Democratic Participation: Toolbox. Democracy for Youth. Available at: https://democracyforyouth.eu/

A collection of European practices and participatory methods exploring youth engagement, deliberative democracy, digital participation and creative approaches to active citizenship.

Council of Europe (2025) Europe Matters – A Question of Values: An Interactive Game. Available at: https://school-education.ec.europa.eu/en/teach/teaching-materials/europe-matters-question-values-interactive-game

An educational game exploring European values, rights and democratic principles through interactive activities, offering another example of how games can support citizenship education.

EUROBOX ETS, European Youth Press and Ayuntamiento de Alzira (2024) Engage & Report: A Toolkit of Participatory Methodologies for Youth Engagement. Available at: https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/tool/engage-report-toolkit.4169/

A collection of non-formal education methods and participatory activities designed to encourage young people's involvement in civic life and community initiatives.

European Committee of the Regions and European Youth Forum (2022) Charter on Youth and Democracy. Available at: https://www.youthforum.org/policy-library/charter-on-youth-and-democracy

A policy document outlining recommendations for strengthening youth representation, democratic participation and access to decision-making at different levels of government.

European Movement International and European Youth Forum (2026) European MOSAIC: How to Engage Citizens. Available at: https://www.youthforum.org/policy-library/european-mosaic-how-to-engage-citizens

A practical guide to organising citizen consultations, facilitating discussions and creating opportunities for people to contribute to decisions affecting their communities.

European Youth Forum (2016) Inspiring! Youth Organisations' Contribution to Citizenship Education. Available at: https://www.youthforum.org/policy-library/inspiring-youth-organisations-contribution-to-citizenship-education

Examines how European youth organisations use non-formal education to develop citizenship competences and encourage democratic participation.

Grace, J. and Grace, P. (2017) Youth Participation Handbook. Available at: https://participationpool.eu/resource/youth-participation-handbook/

Introduces youth participation models, case studies and group activities, including the 360 Participation Game, to help educators explore participation in practice.

IncludeYOU (n.d.) IncludeYOU Toolkit. Available at: https://includeyou.eu/toolkit/

Offers participatory exercises and guidance for identifying barriers to inclusion and supporting young people with different backgrounds and opportunities to engage in democratic life.

Prager, L. (n.d.) Teaching with the VAL-YOU Game: VAL-YOUs in Play – Exploring European Values. VAL-YOU. Available at: https://democracy-education.eu/toolkit/game-based-learning/

A teaching guide combining a digital educational game with decision logs, classroom discussion and reflection to explore European values and the consequences of political choices.

SALTO Participation & Information (2021a) Youth Participation Toolkit: Module 04 – Learning by Doing. Available at: https://participationpool.eu/toolkit/

Explains how experiential learning and reflection can be used to support meaningful learning through youth participation activities.

SALTO Participation & Information (2021b) Youth Participation Toolkit: Module 06 – Creating Change with Projects. Available at: https://participationpool.eu/toolkit/

Provides guidance for developing youth-led initiatives and connecting participation activities with changes in schools, organisations and local communities.

SALTO Participation & Information (2025) Participation in Democratic Life and Elections Poster. Available at: https://participationpool.eu/resource/participation-in-democratic-life-and-elections-poster/

A visual educational resource introducing different forms of democratic participation and offering a starting point for discussions about civic engagement beyond elections.

SALTO Participation & Information (2026) Quality Standards for Meaningful Youth Participation in Democratic Life. Available at: https://participationpool.eu/resource/quality-standards-for-meaningful-youth-participation/

A framework for examining the quality of youth participation, particularly whether young people have opportunities to influence decisions and whether their involvement is meaningful.

Social Innovation Centre (2018) How to Succeed with Digital Gamification for Youth Engagement. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/4e475d8c-dca1-4c59-8f37-eb0563ebd51e/GAMI-ENG-fullversion_small.pdf

A handbook exploring gamification in youth work, including motivation, civic participation, non-formal education, practical examples and guidance for designing gamified activities.

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub (2026) Conversations That Matter: A Toolkit for Civic Dialogues. Available at: https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Toolkit-for-civic-dialogues.pdf

A toolkit offering guidance for facilitating civic conversations, encouraging active listening and helping participants engage with different perspectives on complex social and political questions.

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