



The challenges of an education about Europe in Germany - Summary

THE PROJECT

As part of the project "MEGA: Make Europe Great Again", a study was conducted with the aim of capturing the position, context, implementation and challenges of education about the European Union in German secondary schools. The results of the research were published in the publication "The challenges of an education about Europe in Germany". This summary presents the research methodology, the main findings and recommendations for improving the teaching of EU-related topics in the education system.

METHODS

The project partners of the MEGA project analysed national curricula and conducted questionnaires and focus groups with head teachers, teachers, pupils and other educational stakeholders from December 2020 to June 2021. For Germany, a total of 140 questionnaires from students and 45 questionnaires from teachers were analysed. In addition, several focus groups and interviews were conducted with teachers, head teachers and institutional educational stakeholders. The participants came from public and private secondary schools, general education schools without specialisation as well as vocational schools and training centres.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The white paper provides an overview of European education in Germany. It shows that there is broad support from the political and administrative side for the topic of European education in schools. The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (Kultusministerkonferenz), for example, continues its recommendations on Europe in the school curriculum and explicitly recommends its inclusion in lessons. Furthermore, it can be stated that the European Union is represented in adequate broadness and depth in the framework curricula of Bremen, NRW and Berlin that have been analyzed here. However, there are losses in the transfer of the contents of the framework curricula into the curricular specifications of individual schools, because here, among other things, the respective school profile with specific focal points plays a role and the framework curricula leave relatively large leeway in implementation. Further losses occur in the translation of the school curricula into the specific lesson plans of the teachers, because here specific preferences and didactic competences of the respective teacher play a strong role.

In addition, the topic can only be adequately taught with a great amount of effort in view of the abundance of material to be taught and the few school hours available at the same time. Furthermore, teachers sometimes feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the topic, even though they consider their own knowledge of the European Union to be relatively secure. In addition, teachers are confronted with a wide range of materials on EU education, which they have to research, evaluate and prepare on their own. Most teachers consider this difficult to do. On the level of the pupils, it is shown that they feel well informed on average about the EU in general, but that they partly notice deficits in their own knowledge regarding specific EU institutions, historical personalities or other EU member states. A positive finding, however, is that the overwhelming majority of the students would like to learn more about the EU. Languages and the impact of the EU on their personal lives were identified as the most attractive topics for the pupils.

This is in line with the fact that the pupils named excursions and trips as the most prominent methods of teaching about the EU. In addition, there are many support options for schools and teachers in Germany for European education. These range from offers of the EU Commission to offers of the federal states to a market of different external education providers who bring their offers for EU education to schools. The latter is appreciated and also accepted by teachers, while the institutional offers are used, but more support is demanded and needed. In addition to better equipping teachers with time and administrative resources, possible improvements for European education were identified as an expansion of teacher training on the topic of the EU, an expansion of European schools, the development of a structured and user-friendly range of learning and teaching materials, and the increased use of external education providers.

TAKE PART!

The project is open to **all teachers, head teachers, working groups and stakeholders from the world of education** who are interested in this topic. If you have any questions and/or are interested, please feel free to contact us by email or phone.



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