

# A Europe of Human Rights

A teaching resource

## **A Europe of Human Rights**

Educational material to familiarize young children with the origin of Europe and of human rights

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Text and illustrations are made available by the authors of this resource.

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## Introduction

*"To make young people more aware of their European identity and to draw their attention to the values of European civilisation and the principles on which the European people presently want to base their development. In particular the protection of the principle of democracy, social justice and respect for human rights."*

*"To improve their knowledge of the historical, cultural, economic and social aspects of the European community and its members states. To make them realise the importance of co-operation between EU member states and other countries in Europe and the rest of the world."*

*Council of Ministers of Education, resolution adopted in 1988*

## A Europe of Human Rights

This story and education material is the result of a project conducted by a network, which brought together teacher trainers who are dealing with the European dimension in education, specifically concerned with the theme of human rights.

The European Commission, through the Réseau D'Institution de Formation (R.I.F.), to whom we owe a special word of thanks, funded this project.

The R.I.F. was a European research group of teacher trainers, who are focussing on the introduction and the shaping of the European dimension into education. R.I.F. seized to exist in 1996 when it was fully included in the Socrates programme of the EU.

We are of the view that social, cultural and physical changes in the European organisations must become more significant to the European citizens in other fields and professions.

The R.I.F. wanted to be at the heart of this process of change.

The authors,

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## The pictures and education material

With this simple and concrete story about the birth of Europe and human rights and the suggestions for lessons referring to several human rights, we hope to contribute to the promotion and dissemination of the important concepts dealing with human values and fundamental freedoms. Next to this goal we also believe that this material will contribute to the development of what we call a European identity, by young children. Discussions about daily life experiences can foster an attitude within children which promotes understanding, tolerance and friendship among all our nations and racial groups and contributes to the maintenance of peace.

### How to use the cards?

The pictures can be shown on paper. It is also possible to print or copy them onto transparencies/slides for projection with an overhead projector. Each picture is accompanied by a brief description. This description contains a short sentence referring to the story that is told by the 10 pictures. Picture and text are only giving some key ideas for the story, which you can complete according to your insight (group, situation, time...). We also give a short description of the concepts that could be discussed during the activity. It also contains a reference to the relevant article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Suggestions for possible activities are also given. For yourself you can make use of the full text of the UDHR or of a simplified version of it. See <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm> and <http://www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plain.asp>

1. At first you can show the picture to the children and tell them the story about the birth of Europe and human rights. You may also show the pictures to the children and have them tell what is on and relate it to the story of Europe. Do this in a very calm way and with attention for the details. Give the children enough time to look at the beautiful drawings.
2. After you have told the story, ask the children what they thought and felt while they were listening. Provoke some discussion amongst the children and take part in it yourself.
3. The suggestions we give are very short and leave a lot to your own discretion. The most important is to encourage children to participate by involving their own real life experiences and events.

Wishing you success and a lot of pleasure!

Note: If you may have any comments or suggestions on this material you may contact us at [mensenrechteneducatie@vormen.org](mailto:mensenrechteneducatie@vormen.org). Or if you want to know more about the activities of the RIF sub-network, please contact Jan Pouwels: [JAN.POUWELS@PN.HAN.NL](mailto:JAN.POUWELS@PN.HAN.NL).

## Picture 1

*"Once upon a time a continent was born: Europe"*

### **For the teacher**

The organisation of the world is very much linked with problems of identity.

Being white, negro or yellow ... can be the reason for not understanding each other, like being rich or poor, male or female.

(Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - hereafter abbreviated as UDHR)

### **Concepts**

World (continent)

Identity

Historical awareness

### **Suggestions for activities**

Celebrate a new beginning, the birth of something, for example sing 'happy birthday'.

Look at the globe and try to find your own country, Europe, other continents of our world.

Make greeting cards and send them to children in other countries.

## Picture 2

*"Many countries appeared in Europe. Some of them were big, some of them were small. There were men, women and children. They all looked quite different but they also had a lot in common."*

### **For the teacher**

The differences between countries and people who lived there were not necessarily a reason for conflict, but must be viewed mainly as a source of enrichment for everyone.

(Article 15 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

- Culture
- Identity
- Nationality
- Ethnocentrism

### **Suggestions for activities**

Use different languages to say 'hello' and 'good-bye' and play with these words.

Use pictures with different types of food from different countries. Make collages; bring some foreign foods to the class.

Look at your daily meal and find out what is originally native and what comes from other countries.

## Picture 3

*"And Europe was growing bigger. Houses, villages, towns, bridges and palaces emerged."*

### **For the teacher**

Don't pay too much attention to the political and economic aspects of the development of Europe, but stress that co-operation and the interdependency between the countries increased the welfare and prosperity.

(Article 25 and 29 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

Co-operation

Prosperity

Interdependency

Welfare

International treaties

### **Suggestion for activities**

Construct a puzzle of Europe. The puzzle can be homemade or bought.

Let the children 'create Europe' by means of a play (a group of children can be a country).

## Picture 4

*"But one day countries became enemies. War began. People killed each other and countries were destroyed. People felt very sad."*

### **For the teacher**

Why peace and not war? Because war brings an end to life. Peace education is not about just telling children how bad war is, but is about living in peace with each other in the classroom, and also to develop a creative way of solving problems and dealing with conflicts.

If you don't put your hope in children, what will become of the future?

**(Article 3 and 28 UDHR)**

### **Concepts**

Peace education

To deal with conflicts

### **Suggestion for activities**

Identify and open-up learning situations where conflict of interest between the children arises. Let them discuss, look for solutions, look for alternatives, look for strategies other than fight and the use of power to solve the problems.

Make contact with Amnesty International.

## Picture 5

*"It was necessary to be born again, to make a new start, finding a better way. It was necessary to remind the rights and duties of all the people."*

### **For the teacher**

To be born again and alive means mean that you need conditions to make life possible like basic needs, food, warmth, loving care, protection.  
(Article 22 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

Basic needs (primary provisions)

### **Suggestion for activities**

1. Experiment by planting seeds under five different conditions:

With water, air, warmth and light

Without water

Without air

Without warmth

Without light

Discuss the results and decide on what is needed to make growth possible.

2. Play a game with professions and make children reflect how useful all these professions are to our daily life.

## Picture 6

*"A document was written to remind everybody what was agreed upon."*

### **For the teacher**

Everyone has the right and freedom to claim their rights and duties which are presented in this document - without influence of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national or social background, economic situation, birth or any other condition.

(article 2 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

Human rights declaration (the 30 articles)

Equality

### **Suggestions for activities**

Make your own rules for behaviour in the classroom or at the playground.

Make a declaration or a document and discuss it.

Organise a ceremony to 'officially' adopt the document in the class.

## Picture 7

*"Children were allowed to go to school again. They were free, felt happy because they could live and play together. Every child had the right to learn."*

### **For the teacher**

Education is a process through which every person, from every social group, consciously learns how to develop their personalities, their capacities, their attitudes and their aptitudes.

(article 2 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

Education

### **Suggestions for activities**

Create a situation in which children have to reflect why they are going to school and why they are learning.

Discuss the situations in which children cannot go to school. Summarize the mentioned reasons. Try to make a priority list.

## Picture 8

*"But again, some people forget their duties resulting in others not enjoying their rights. This way Europe cannot develop further."*

### **For the teacher**

Our daily life forced us to have a new vision about the world. Real peace and a world without conflict seems a utopia. Nevertheless, we as human beings have the obligation to re-examine each time again how we can contribute to a better world.

(article 29 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

Responsibility

Citizenship

Rights and duties

### **Suggestions for activities**

Look at actual events on television and discuss them with the children.

Also discuss recent events at your school.

## Picture 9

*"We want a Europe that develops itself without boundaries, a Europe open to the whole world."*

### **For the teacher**

What are boundaries?

Boundaries are a reality, but the worst boundaries are those who you build in your mind and in your heart. How can these be destroyed?  
(article 13 UDHR)

### **Concepts**

Boundaries

Open mind, tolerance

### **Suggestion for activities**

Sing together some international songs.

Write letters to children in other countries or continents.

Play games in which boundaries are involved.

## Picture 10 (closing picture)

*"Come on, everyone!  
Lets build a Europe of Human Rights!"*



















