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COMMON GROUND – ACROSS BORDERS

PARTNER: ENCRE

COUNTRY: Belgium



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1. Introduction

This informal training activity tackles Euroscepticism by encouraging participants to explore and articulate **what unites Europeans beyond national borders**, using cultural elements as a point of convergence. By contrasting shared European features with those of a **non-European country selected at random**, participants are guided to reflect on what it means to belong to a European cultural space.

This practice is particularly suited for **multinational groups**, ideally including adult learners from at least **three different European countries**. It fosters **critical thinking, group cohesion, and intercultural dialogue**, while setting the stage for deeper reflection on **European identity**.

Target group: Mixed-gender adult learners from three or more different European countries

Inclusion dimension: Focus on equitable group formation and inclusive visual tools (post-its, boards) to allow all participants to contribute regardless of language skills

Estimated duration: approx. 1 hour and 30 minutes

2. Activity Implementation

2.1 Activity Objectives

- Counter stereotypes and simplistic national narratives
- Identify and articulate elements of a shared European culture
- Develop intercultural awareness and mutual respect
- Encourage collaborative analysis through group work

2.2 Activity Description and Methodology

Participants are divided into small groups (4–6 people), ensuring that **each group contains at least one participant from each represented European country** in the room.

Each group randomly draws the name of a **non-European country** from a prepared set (e.g. Brazil, Japan, Canada, Egypt, etc.).

Each group then:

1. Discusses what **the countries represented by its members have in common** culturally, historically, or socially.
2. Then, contrasts these features with those of the **non-European country drawn**, using prior knowledge or general perceptions.
3. Organises their ideas into a **two-column poster**:
 - Left column: “Things we share as Europeans”
 - Right column: “Things we do not share with [Non-European Country]”
4. Each point is written on a **separate post-it note** and placed on the poster.

Once completed, the groups hang their posters and prepare a brief **presentation of their findings**.

The session concludes with a **guided discussion**, inviting participants to:

- Compare their observations across groups
- Question generalisations and assumptions
- Discuss the value of a shared European cultural framework

2.3 Tools and Resources

- 📄 Set of **non-European country cards** (pre-prepared or drawn digitally)
- 📄 Blank **poster boards** or flip-chart sheets (1 per group)
- 📄 **Post-it notes** (two colours, optional)
- 🖋️ Markers and pens
- 📄 Optional: map of Europe and world to aid comparison

2.4 Suggested integrations

This activity pairs well with:

- Any module on European values or intercultural education
- A museum visit on migration, Europe's heritage, or contemporary history
- Comics-based workshops where groups could turn their “common ground” ideas into visual narratives or symbolic strips.

3. Debriefing and Feedback

Suggested questions:

- Were you surprised by what your group identified as “European”?
- Did discussing a non-European country help clarify your views on Europe?
- Did you find points of disagreement within your group? How did you handle them?
- How do you think your cultural background influenced your choices?
- Can we speak of a European identity without falling into clichés?

Feedback collection:

- Use colour-coded post-its to anonymously express: something learned, something questioned, something appreciated
- Optional oral feedback round or digital form

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This publication was carried out with the financial support of the European Commission under Erasmus + Project “ONE Culture - Overcoming Nationalism and Euroscepticism through Culture”, N. 2024-1-BE01-KA220-ADU-000243645.



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