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An activity of the Centre for European Studies, Carleton University
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LESSON PLAN

Title: The European Union and the Canadian Federation: Can they be compared?¹

Grade 10: CHV20- Civics

Time Requirements: 4 hours

Step 1: one hour

Step 2: one hour

Step 3: two hours

Description: In this lesson, students examine the European Union as a unique form of political organization, and compare its structure and function to the Canadian Federation. In learning about the European Union, students examine six key EU institutions (the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice, the European Court of Auditors, and the European Central Bank). By comparing these to similar Canadian institutions, students are able to draw conclusions about how the political organization of the EU differs from that of a federation like Canada.

¹ This lesson plan was inspired by the lesson plan “European Union Governance”, by Kimberly Ball (which can be found on the US European Union Centers of Excellence website at http://www.unc.edu/euce/resources/education/eu_lesson_plans/subjects.html). Worksheet B (below) has been taken directly from Kimberly Ball’s lesson plan (with a few minor updates and revisions).

The remainder of this lesson plan was developed to suit the Ontario civics curriculum by Larisa Droll, summer intern at the Center for European Studies. The creation of the lesson plan was supervised and reviewed by faculty in the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at Carleton University.

Ontario Curriculum:

Overall Expectations:

• **Informed Citizenship**

- Explain what it means to be a “global citizen” and why it is important to be one

• **Active Citizenship**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the various ways in which decisions are made and conflicts resolved in matters of civic importance, and the various ways in which individual citizens participate in these processes

Specific Expectations:

• **Informed Citizenship**

○ **Democratic Decision-Making**

- Identify similarities and differences in the ways power is distributed in groups, institutions, and communities (e.g., in families, classrooms, municipalities) to meet human needs and resolve conflicts.

• **Active Citizenship**

○ **Inquiry Skills**

- Organize information, using a variety of methods and tools (e.g., summaries, notes, timelines, visual organizers, maps, comparison organizers)

Materials:

1. Computers with internet access to locate:

- *The European Union: A Guide for Americans*, from the Delegation of the European Commission to the USA: <http://www.eurunion.org/eu/Guide-for-Americans/Guide-for-Americans.html>
- *EU Institutions and Other Bodies*, from Europa: http://europa.eu/institutions/index_en.htm
- *EU Learning: An Educational Website about the European Union*, hosted by the Centre for European Studies at Carleton University: <http://www1.carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/>

2. Attached worksheets A, B, and C.

Procedures:

Step 1: Basic background knowledge about the EU

First, the class might engage in a discussion of how to define the EU. One working definition of the European Union might be:

The European Union is an association of European countries, originally formed to further a common economic market, but since developed into a union to work toward a broader range of policies in the economic, social, and political spheres. Within the association, member countries retain their sovereignty as independent countries in all other areas not governed by the Union.

Students should also be introduced to the steps taken to form the European Union. For a concise timeline of the European Union, see the PowerPoint presentation provided by the Centre for European Studies at Carleton University at <http://www2.carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/EUtimeline.ppt>. Pages 2 to 5 of *The European Union: A Guide for Americans* also summarizes this process and can form the starting point for class discussion or comprehension questions.

Students should be familiar with the member countries, and can be asked to label them on a blank political map of Europe. A blank map is available at <http://www2.carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/colouringmap.pdf> or at <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/continents/Europe/label/label.shtml>. For help filling out the map, the EU-Learning Website hosted by the Centre for European Studies at Carleton University contains an interactive map of Europe at <http://www1.carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/eulearning/introduction/what-is-the-eu/activities-1-and-2-map/>.

Step 2: The EU as a Unique Form of Political Organization

The EU is a unique form of political organization: it is not a federation like Canada, nor is it simply an international organization. In order to facilitate this discussion, students should read over the section “What is the EU?” on the EU-Learning Website. While reading through this material, students should complete the comprehension questions included in the teacher section below (Worksheet A). A class discussion should follow.

The section starts on the following page: <http://www1.carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/eulearning/introduction/what-is-the-eu/>.

Step 3: EU and Canadian Institutions

1. Students conduct online research about the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice, and the European Court of Auditors.
2. Students complete attached Worksheet B (“Governing Institutions of the European Union: Structures and Functions”).
3. Students complete Worksheet C on Canadian institutions, using previous class material or independent research.
4. Teacher reviews assignment and students discuss the similarities and differences between the Canadian and EU institutions.

Assessment:

All work is informally reviewed together in class discussions.

Worksheets A, B, and C can be graded for completion and accuracy.

Ideas for written assignments include:

- A written reflection about the similarities and differences between a federation like Canada and the EU, a new form of political organization.
- A personal reflection about why it is important for Canadian citizens to be informed about world developments such as the creation and development of the EU.
- A research essay on any of the following topics:
 - Do countries give up more sovereignty in joining the EU than the Canadian provinces give up by belonging to a federation like Canada?
 - What would be the advantages and disadvantages of the EU becoming a federation in the future? Write an argumentative essay detailing your stance on this issue.
 - Discuss whether or not the EU provides a viable model for global political organization of the future. Should North America try to model itself after Europe’s experience?

Teacher Section:

[Worksheet A]

What is the EU?

These comprehension questions are based on the material from the EU Learning Website in the section entitled “What is the EU?” (under “Introduction”). The relevant material starts at <http://www1.carleton.ca/ces/eulearning/eu-learning/introduction/what-is-the-eu/>

1. List the ways in which the EU is similar and different from a country (such as Canada or the United States).

2. What is meant by the statement that the EU is between a 6 and an 8 on the integration scale, whereas a country (such as Canada) would be a 10 on the scale? In what area is the EU the most integrated: economically, or politically? What does this mean?

3. When talking about different types of international organizations, what is the difference between an intergovernmental organization and a supranational organization?

4. In what areas does the EU act like a supranational organization?

5. In what areas does the EU act like an intergovernmental organization?

6. What is the difference between a federation and a confederation? Why do we say that the EU is neither a federation nor a confederation?

[Worksheet B]

Governing Institutions of the European Union: Structures and Functions

Directions: Research the six main institutions of the EU in order to cut out the fact tabs and match each to its category on this worksheet. The following websites should be particularly helpful for this research:

- http://europa.eu/institutions/index_en.htm
- <http://www.eurunion.org/eu/Guide-for-Americans/Guide-for-Americans.html> (pages 6-11)

Governing Institution	Structure	Function
European Parliament		
Council of the European Union		

Governing Institution	Structure	Function
European Commission		
European Court of Auditors		
European Court of Justice		
European Central Bank		

[Worksheet B]

Makes sure money is spent properly	Negotiates treaties with other countries	Serve 6 year renewable term
May be dismissed by Parliament	Main decision-making group	Makes sure budget managed well
Implements programs and policies passed by Parliament and Council	Made up of 27 commissioners—president and 26 members	Controls the money supply in order to keep inflation down
Assures laws are written & used properly	Adopts new laws with Parliament	Adopts new laws with Council
Sets interest rates throughout the Euro area	Decides budget with EU Parliament	Decides budget with Council
Asks questions of Commission and Council	Settles disagreements between EU and other persons and groups	Proposes new laws to Parliament and Council
Runs day-to-day duties	Works to maintain price stability in the Euro area in order to protect the Euro's purchasing power	Coordinates economic policies of member states
Elected every 5 years by EU citizens	The executive branch of the EU	Forms part of the "eurosystem" (along with the national banks of the EU states that use the Euro)
Coordinate police and court efforts on criminal matters	Selected by member country governments & approved by EU Parliament	Develop Common Foreign and Security Policy in cooperation with other EU bodies
Goal is to act in best interest of EU	Makes sure EU acting democratically	27 judges—one from each member country
Judges appointed by Council	Appointed for 5 years	Serve 6 year renewable term
Works completely independently; may not ask for or accept advice from any other body	Decisions sometimes made unanimously, sometimes by vote—the bigger the country's population the more votes they get.	Sit in political party, not country sections
Currently approximately 736 members from every EU country	Ministers for every country meet regularly to discuss problems and solutions	

Answer Key for Worksheet B:

Governing Institution	Structure	Function
European Parliament	<p>Currently approximately 736 members from every EU country</p> <p>Elected every 5 years by EU citizens</p> <p>Sit in political party, not country sections</p>	<p>Makes sure EU acting democratically</p> <p>Decides budget with Council</p> <p>Adopts new laws with Council</p> <p>Asks questions of Commission and Council</p>
Council of the European Union	<p>Ministers for every country meet regularly to discuss problems and solutions</p> <p>Decisions sometimes made unanimously, sometimes by vote—the bigger the country’s population the more votes they get.</p>	<p>Main decision-making group</p> <p>Decides budget with EU Parliament</p> <p>Adopts new laws with Parliament</p> <p>Coordinates economic policies of member States</p> <p>Develop Common Foreign and Security Policy in cooperation with other EU bodies</p> <p>Coordinate police and court efforts on criminal matters</p>
European Commission	<p>Appointed for 5 years</p> <p>May be dismissed by Parliament</p> <p>Made up of 27 commissioners—president and 26 members</p>	<p>Proposes new laws to Parliament and Council</p> <p>Goal is to act in best interest of EU</p> <p>Runs day-to-day duties</p>

	<p>Selected by member country governments & approved by EU Parliament</p>	<p>Implements programs and policies passed by Parliament and Council</p> <p>Negotiates treaties with other countries</p> <p>The executive branch of the EU Assures laws are written & used properly</p>
Court of Auditors	<p>Serve 6 year renewable term</p>	<p>Makes sure money is spent properly</p> <p>Makes sure budget managed well</p>
Court of Justice	<p>27 judges—one from each member country</p> <p>Serve 6 year renewable term</p>	<p>Settles disagreements between EU and other persons and groups</p> <p>Judges appointed by Council</p>
European Central Bank	<p>Works completely independently; may not ask for or accept advice from any other body</p> <p>Forms part of the “eurosystem” (along with the national banks of the EU states that use the Euro)</p>	<p>Controls the money supply in order to keep inflation down</p> <p>Sets interest rates throughout the Euro area</p> <p>Works to maintain price stability in the Euro area in order to protect the Euro’s purchasing power</p>

[Worksheet C]

Canadian Federal Institutions: Structures and Functions

Governing Institution	Structure	Function
House of Commons		
Prime Minister and Cabinet		
Senate		
British Monarch (represented by the Governor General)		
Supreme Court		
Office of the Auditor General of Canada		
Bank of Canada		