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Values and Attitudes Education for Inclusive Europe

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Topic	FREEDOM, FREEDOM OF RELIGION
Images	<div data-bbox="607 848 1131 1455" data-label="Image"> </div> <p data-bbox="269 1499 1487 1625">Religious symbols from left to right, top to bottom: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Bahá'í Faith, Eckankar, Sikhism, Jainism, Wicca, Unitarian Universalism, Shinto, Taoism, Thelema, Tenrikyo, and Zoroastrianism</p> <p data-bbox="570 1633 1240 1671">By Pass a Method - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,</p> <p data-bbox="423 1675 1382 1715">https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=25255735</p>
Title	FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN EUROPEAN UNION

Details:

Purpose:

The lesson aims to inform students about the EU legal provisions regarding the freedom of religion and to encourage attitudes of mutual understanding and religious tolerance.

Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- to know the EU legal provisions regarding the freedom of religion;
- to understand the role of freedom of religion in democratic societies;
- to cultivate themselves an attitude of respect, understanding and tolerance towards the religious beliefs and practices of the others, as freedom of religion is a basic human right in EU;

Relevant Vocabulary:

- Freedom of religion, faith, spirituality, secularism, human rights, European treaties

How to use this lesson:

Activities:

1) Preparation

- Before the lesson, the teacher could prepare worksheets for each student, with the quotations and blank spaces for comments;
- At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher will present the theme, the learning objectives and how the goals will be pursued and achieved;
- Present the material and web resources, instruct students how to use them
- Propose the main learning methods: studying on working sheets, exploration of media and e-learning resources, explanation, discussions.

2) Learning activities

- Students watch the pictures and identify what religions or spiritual movements the images represent;
- Students will read the quotations aloud and comment on the meaning of the words;
- Students read the text of VAEIE Module Freedom, 2.4 Legislative evolution - if it is the case - in EU laws and national laws (with extracts paragraphs)
- The teachers and the students discover together some important attitudes necessary for a harmonious and fruitful dialogue between all members of society, regardless of their spiritual beliefs or whether they belong to a religion or not

3) Ensuring retention and transfer

- The teacher suggests to the students that they look further into the subject of Freedom of religion and recommend appropriate reading sources.

Materials: 1) Images and quotes (stimulus of learning)

- *Watch and comment the following images:*



[St. James Church](#) - Own work, Christmas Eve 2004, St. James' Church (Episcopal), New York City



By Zakaryaamr at the English-language Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6949467>



By Steven Gerner - Flickr: Holi / Festival of Colors 2013, CC BY-SA 2.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=29394145>

- Read and comment the following quotations (from Wikiquote - Freedom of Speech:
https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Freedom_of_speech):

“When we, Constantine and Licinius, emperors, had an interview at Milan, and conferred together with respect to the good and security of the commonweal, it seemed to us that, amongst those things that are profitable to mankind in general, the reverence paid to the Divinity merited our first and chief attention, and that it was proper that the Christians and all others should have liberty to follow that mode of religion which to each of them appeared best; [...] And we thought fit to be thus special in the things committed to your charge, that you might understand that the indulgence which we have granted in matters of religion to the Christians is ample and unconditional; and perceive at the same time that the open and free exercise of their respective religions is granted to all others, as well as to the Christians. For it befits the well-ordered state and the tranquility of our times that each individual be allowed, according to his own choice, to worship the Divinity; and we mean not to derogate aught from the honour due to any religion or its votaries.”

Constantine the Great, Edict of Milan proclaimed religious tolerance in the Roman Empire, issued by Constantine and Licinius - As translated in The Ante-Nicene Fathers (1886) edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Vol. 7, p. 320

“I am for freedom of religion, & against all manœuvres to bring about a legal ascendancy of one sect over another, for freedom of the press, and against all violations of the Constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.”

Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Elbridge Gerry (26 January 1799); in The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Memorial Edition (ME) (Lipscomb and Bergh, editors), 20 Vols., Washington, D.C., 1903-04, Vol. 10, p. 78

“The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail but is a sacrilege. The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time.”

Mahatma Gandhi, as quoted in Madhya Pradesh (India), Goel, S. R., Niyogi, M. B. (1998). Vindicated by time: The Niyogi Committee report on Christian missionary activities. ISBN 9789385485121 (citing Religious Liberty, pp. 267-268: Bates.) PART III CHAPTER I. – RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN OTHER COUNTRIES

“If believers feel that their faith is trivialized and their true selves compromised by a society that will not give religious imperatives special weight, their problem is not that secularists are antidemocratic but that democracy is antiabsolutist.”

Ellen Willis, "Freedom from Religion," The Nation (19 February 2001)

2) Reading materials (learning resources)

- <https://vaeie.eu/ecourses/enrol/index.php?id=11>, VAEIE Module „Freedom“
- <https://vaeie.eu/ecourses/mod/page/view.php?id=175>, VAEIE Module „Freedom“, 2.4 Legislative evolution - if it is the case - in EU laws and national laws (with extracts paragraphs)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_religion#Early_laws_and_legal_guarantees_for_religious_freedom, Early laws and legal guarantees for religious freedom in Europe
- <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art.18 (right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion)
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12012P/TXT>, EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Art. 10 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion)

3) Worksheets, chalk or markers, black/whiteboard, notebooks and smartphones, optionally, smart board or projector

Category	Interchangeably (classroom / online / e-learning)
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Main target group	14-18 years old / secondary school students
Related school topics:	English, Ethics, Citizenship Education, European Studies, English as a Second Language, Human Sciences

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