# UNITED IN ACTION, UNITED IN DIVERSITY

## THE EUROPEAN UNION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Waterford Sustainable Living Initiative (SLí) is an independent development education nongovernmental organisation and registered charity.

All images related to the Sustainable Development Goals are courtesy of the United Nations.

# Contents

# About this Resource

*United in Action, United in Diversity* is a resource for educators working with young people both in the for-mal and non-formal sectors. It is important for our future that young people are invested in the European Project and to make that happen, we need young people to be more aware of the vital role that the EU plays in the global crisis facing us as the unprecedented year of 2020 draws to a close. The EU also plays a critical role in our day-to-day economic, political and social lives.

*United in Diversity* is the official motto of the European Union which translates to Irish as Aontaithe san éag-súlacht. We also used this in the title because we value diversity both here in Ireland and throughout Europe and the world and having the promotion of diversity as a motivation for action is a really positive thing.

The resource is designed to help educators build workshops for young people that demonstrate the im-portance of the EU with a specific focus on climate action and global health. It also provides information on how young people can engage more directly with the European Union as political, social and economic ac-tors. We encourage you to mix and match the activities contained herein depending on the needs and inter-ests of your students or learners.

The activities are designed to be used either in the formal sector or in the non-formal youth sector for ages 13-18 but are easily adaptable for other target groups. We also use the term 'students' to refers to all learn-ers potentially working with this resource and it should not be seen as only applicable to the formal sector.

# Section I          Why Union?

The European Union is still a young project that continues to evolve every day.  And this is precisely why we need to reach out to young people because they are the ones who will be carrying this work forward.

The flag of the European Union is meant to signify unity, solidarity and harmony (although the number of stars is not representative of anything in particular) and dates back to the 1950s when it was in use by the Council of Europe.

At the end of 2020, the European Union is made up of the 27 countries seen below, this of course follows the departure of the United Kingdom earlier in that same year. There are currently 7 countries hoping to become part of the EU including:  Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia and most notably in terms of population, Turkey with nearly 80 million citizens. (*Source:  European Council*)

Member States of the European Union (2020)

Candidate countries and potential candidates

# Activity 1
# What's In A Flag

The purpose of this activity is to think about how we choose to represent and give meaning to our communities via flags. The actual origins of flags is unknown but the oldest one is most likely the Danish flag which can be dated as far back as 1219 A.D.

The flag of the European Union is meant to signify unity, solidarity and harmony (although the number of stars is not representative of anything in particular) and dates back to the 1950s when it was in use by the Council of Europe.

This activity can be used as an art project or as the basis for a group discussion. Also this can be done as an individual project or as part of group work.

Have students imagine that they are in charge of designing a flag for a new island nation. In order to design their flags, they need to identify some key features of their country, including, but not limited to:

∗  Key values

∗  Political structure

∗  Geography

∗  Weather

∗  Culture

∗  Economic system

Once students have an understanding of the nature of their country, ask them to design their own flag complete with explanation of what symbols and colours were used and why.

It can also be done as a discussion-based activity (or both) around the following questions:

∗  If you were designing a new flag for your fictional island nation, what values or meaning would you like to have represented? How would you represent those values?

∗  Do you think the EU flag is representative of the European Union? Why or why not? What would you change or what would you include?

∗  Why do you think countries all have flags? What are some good things about flags? What are some bad things about flags?

∗  Are flags necessary? Would any thing change for countries or for the world if there were no flags?

# Activity 2
# What Do You Know?

The aim of this worksheet is to activate existing knowledge about the European Union.  Most people know more about any given topic than they realize and it helps the learning process for students to be able to connect.  Talking about what they already know will help them retain new information.  Each 'trivia' question should be used as a discussion starter.

**In what year was the European Union founded?**

1993.  The EU was established in 1993 with the Maastricht Treaty with 12 countries (including Ireland) signing the original treaty.  Before the EU was official there was the European Coal and Steel Community and then the European Economic Community.  The number of European countries grew until it reached a total of 28.  With the United Kingdom's 'Brexit', that number has fallen to 27 but despite this action the EU remains remarkably stable. Nineteen of the countries in the European Union are members of the Euro Zone.

**Why was the European Union founded?**

Peace. The initial 'union', the European Coal and Steel Community, emerged from the horrors of World War II. Every step toward solidifying the Union since then has been based on the belief that allies do not go to war which is historically accurate.

**How many languages are spoken in Europe?**

There are over 200 languages spoken in Europe with English being the most common (38% of Europeans speak English). Of those 200 languages, only 24 are recognised by the European Union.  Irish became an official language of the EU in 2005.

**What percentage of the earth does Europe cover?**

2%, which is really small compared to the influence of the European Union. It is the second smallest continent only behind Australia. It also has the smallest country (Vatican City) and the largest country (Russia).

**How many countries are in Europe?**

There are 50 countries in Europe but only 27 of them belong to the European Union.  Five of those countries are partially in Europe and partially in Asia (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey). 47 of the 50 countries in Europe belong to the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe generally has oversight over human rights issues and no country has ever become part of the EU without first being involved in the Council of Europe.
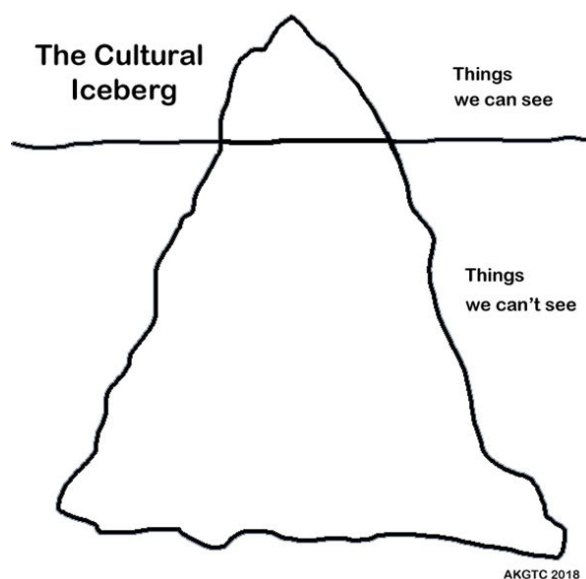
# Activity 3
# Cultural Iceberg

There is a lot going on in the EU: lots of languages, lots of religions, lots of laws, lots of culture. It is important, however, to remember that there is more that unifies us than there is that divides us.  This activity demonstrates how the outward appearances of culture, those areas where differences manifest themselves (language, music, etc.) are surface but what lies beneath the surface serve as the bedrock for Union.

You will need either a white board and markers or flip chart paper and markers for this activity.

Directions:

∗    Draw a blank iceberg on the white board/flip chart paper.

∗    Ask learners to brainstorm examples of culture (you can get them started by suggesting a few like music, religion, gender roles – you want to encourage a mix) and write them down next to the iceberg.  This activity works best with a good amount of suggestions so give students enough time to develop their ideas.  Depending on your group, you could start them off in small groups of 2 to 3 and ask them to compile a list of 15 things and then come back to big group to fill in the iceberg. The top part should reflect behaviour and the bottom should reflect beliefs and values.

The Cultural Iceberg

Things we can see

Things we can't see

AKGTC 2018

*Source: https://akgtcanada.com/if-i-really-knew-you/*

* As you are filling in the Cultural Iceberg, put the things that are readily apparent differences such as language, music, etc. in the top part of the Iceberg and put the items that less apparent, gender relations, attitudes toward work, etc. As you separate the list, explain that only about 10% of what makes up a culture is readily visible, and the other 90%, like the base of an iceberg remains out of sight. Generally, our differences like language are visible and our values like solidarity, tolerance, freedom are things that lie below the surface.

* For more information on how to use the Cultural Iceberg check out this explanation: https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/125/iceberg_model_3.pdf

Discussion Questions:

* What is culture? Is it possible to have a personal culture?

* Why do you think so much of what makes up culture remains out of sight?

* Do you think the things below the line are common to Europeans?



*Source: https://www.bridgestogether.org/*

# Section II
# The EU and Youth

The EU has a particular responsibility to protect and promote the rights of children and young people.  The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989 and is considered part of the Declaration on Human Rights.  All European Union nations are bound by treaty to uphold all of these rights.  Full text available here: https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf.

There are 42 specific Rights of the Child articulated and shown on the next page in poster form. This format is specifically designed to use when working with young people.  These rights guarantee young people a range of rights from education to protection to freedom of expression to healthcare.



*Source:  UNICEF (https://www.unicef.org/rosa/reports/convention-rights-child*

The EU also has a number of specific programmes designed to help young people from employment to education including:

**European Solidarity Corps:**  This programme is designed for young people aged 18 to 30 who wish to work, train or volunteer here in Ireland or in other parts of Europe.  The programme is administered through Léargas (www.leargas.ie or www.europeansolidarity.ie).



**Youth Guarantee:**  The EU passed a resolution in 2013 that ensures that all young people under the age of 25 receive either a decent job offer, an educational opportunity or training, an apprenticeship or work experience within 4 months of leaving school or employment.  For more information contact the Department of Social Protection.

**Erasmus+:**  Erasmus+ is the European programme to support education, training, youth and sport throughout the Union.  A key aspect of this programme for young people is that it supports education and training taking place in other parts of the EU.  The programme is administered through Léargas (www.leargas.ie or www.erasmusplus.ie) and the Higher Education Authority.

**Blue Star Programme:**  The Blue Star Programme is designed to increase knowledge and understanding about the EU and its many cultures and is linked to the Irish primary curriculum. https://www.bluestarprogramme.ie/

**Soapbox Competition:**  The Europe Direct Soapbox is a public speaking competition with a categories for 18 and under and 19 and over.  Contestants are given 3 minutes to persuade the judges on a pre-determined motion.  In 2020, the motion was 'Everyone Wants to go Back to a Pre-Covid Way of Life'.

# Activity 4
# Celebrate Europe Day

**EU Day:** Europe Day takes place each year on the 9th of May to celebrate peace and unity and commemorates the Schuman Declaration of 1950. The Schuman Declaration, named for then French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, is seen as the first concrete step in bringing together the countries of Europe after a half century of conflict. The Schuman Declaration established the European Coal and Steel Community, an economic treaty, which is seen as the direct ancestor of the current European Union.

This is a great opportunity to explore the values that underpin the EU with any number of civic projects that work well with young people.

Suggestions for Action Projects:

**Essay/Speaking Contest**: An essay contest or speaking contest is a nice way to allow young people to express their opinions. It allows those who do not wish to speak in public to write and those that may not be comfortable with their writing skills to speak. This could also dovetail with the Europe Direct Soapbox Competition giving the speakers some extra preparation time. Sample topics:

* The EU should open its borders to migration.
* All European countries should be allowed entry into the EU.
* The EU should enforce their ban on single-use plastic

**EU Jeopardy** (Trivia Game): Have players both research and write questions as well as play the trivia game. Since all players will have contributed, for example, 3 questions, all players have the same advantage. Put players into small groups and set up the trivia by category.

**Mock Youth Parliament**: Participate in the European Youth Parliament (http://www.eyp.ie/). There are a total of 36 Youth Parliaments throughout Europe and they meet for both national and pan-European events.

# Section III
# The EU & the Global Goals

The countries of the European Union, along with the rest of the members of the United Nations, passed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or the Global Goals, in 2015. The Global Goals are designed to serve as a framework for the international development work that takes place throughout the world ensuring that countries with more resources help those with less resources reach the Goals by 2030. The Goals are designed to end poverty and hunger, protect human rights and build an inclusive and sustainable future for everyone.

Ireland played a central role in the process of agreeing to the SDGs. Ireland, co-chaired with Kenya, the international negotiations that led to the agreement. There are a total of 17 Goals and 169 indicators (these determine whether we are making progress toward the Goal). Imagine getting all 193 countries in the United Nations to agree to 17 Global Goals with 169 indicators.

The EU is working on all 17 of the Global Goals and progress is being made. This resource focuses on Climate Change (Goal 13) and Health & Well Being (Goal 3) but it is clear even from a shallow look at the SDGs that they are all important and inter-related, for example, we can not address Global Poverty (Goal 1) without looking at Income Inequality (Goal 8).

To check the progress on the Goals at an EU level, go to the Eurostat SDG site (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi) and to look at Ireland's progress, go to Ireland's official monitoring site:https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/.

# Activity 5
# Defining Sustainability

In the past few years, sustainability has taken on an increasingly important role in our society. A 2020 poll revealed that a company's eco-friendly practices was the most important factor in determining whether or not to purchase from that company (https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/global-survey-asks-30-000-consumers-about-views-on-sustainability-301003468.html).

But what exactly is sustainability?  We hear it quite often: sustainable development, sustainable living, sustainable consumption, sustainable business, etc.  This activity looks at the standard definition of sustainability that comes to us from a 1987 United Nations publication called The Brundtland Report:

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

The definition appears below broken into segments.  Copy these and cut them for your students (and mix them up) and their job is to put the pieces back together to match the definition .  By engaging with this definition (or any other difficult definition or concept) in this manner, students are more likely to really connect with its meaning. If they are having trouble, point out the capital letter to start the sentence and full stop to end it.

| | |
|---|---|
| Sustainable development | is development |
| that meets the needs | of the present |
| without compromising | the ability |
| of future generations | to meet their own needs. |

# Activity 6
# Futures Think

Although all of the Sustainable Development Goals are important, for this activity we would like your learners to think about which one are most relevant to their own lives and their own concerns.

Working in small groups, ask your learners to think about their lives and their future and to decide together what 5 things they would like to see more of in the year 2030 and 5 things they would like to see less of in 2030. When doing a Futures Think exercise, encourage your learners to think big, outside the box, not to limit themselves to what they already know, encourage them to use their imaginations and be innovative in their approach to problem solving.

Provide each group with a copy of the Sustainable Development Goals from the next page and have groups identify which of the SDGs is most relevant for the type of world they would like to see for 2030. Ask each group to feedback to everyone about what they want and how they think we can get there.

If you would like to do more work with your students on the Sustainable Development Goals, there are a number of resources and activity ideas available free of charge on The Wordl's Largest Lesson (https://worldslargestlesson.globalgoals.org/) and The Global Goals (https://www.globalgoals.org/). This activity is adapted from the World's Largest Lesson.

**1** NO POVERTY

**2** ZERO HUNGER

**3** GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**4** QUALITY EDUCATION

**5** GENDER EQUALITY

**6** CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

**7** AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

**8** DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES

**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**12** RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

**13** CLIMATE ACTION

**14** LIFE BELOW WATER

**15** LIFE ON LAND

**16** PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

**17** PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

# Section IV
# EU & Climate Change

The time for debating whether climate change is real and whether or not it will have devastating impacts is over. The conversation and the work must now turn to what we can do to reverse the current climate trends, mitigate its impacts and build community resilience.

The current President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced in December of 2020 that the EU has set an ambitious and targets from 40% to 55% carbon emissions reductions by 2030:

*That is now indeed Europe's calling card. I am glad that the 27 European Leaders have signed up to the European Commission's proposal for taking climate action to a new level of ambition. Together with the agreement on our next 7-year-budget, the 55% agreement is the go-ahead for scaling up climate action across our economy and society.*

*We have already started. From boosting renewable energy, creating hydrogen valleys and producing the most sustainable batteries to launching a wave of building renovation, decarbonising transport and protecting and restoring our nature. We are serious about getting our economy on a more sustainable path. - https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_2403*

Much of the discussion around climate action is focused on what individuals and communities can do and the changes that we need to make. And yes, these efforts are incredibly important. But so much of what needs to change is at the policy and corporate level so it should be noted that the most important thing that we as individuals can do is to vote in people who take climate change seriously and pressure those already in office to follow through on commitments.

If the young people you are working with are or coming up to voting age, encourage them to register and to vote (https://www.vote.ie/register/).

If there is an environmental issue that you want your voices heard on, let your representatives know. They can be contacted here:

∗ MEPs: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/ireland/en/your-meps

∗ TDs & Senators: https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/members/

∗ City and County Councils: https://foi.gov.ie/city-and-county-councils/#

# Goal 13  Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts

*"We are clearly the last generation that can change the course of climate change, but we are also the first generation with its consequences,"* said Kristalina Georgieva, the CEO of the World Bank.

*(Guardian, 3 December 2018* https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/dec/03/we-are-last-generation-that-can-stop-climate-change-un-summit*)*

Climate change has been getting a lot of attention recently and for very good reason.

The EU has been a clear voice in the fight against climate change.  The work that the EU is currently undertaking with the European Green Deal supports Goal 13:

* A reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 55% by 2030
* An increase of 32% in the amount of energy that comes from renewables
* Carbon neutrality by 2050

These are tough but achievable targets.

In addition to putting pressure on those in power to take the urgent action that the European Union and the United Nations among many others are calling for, we can all do our part. And while these actions may seem small to us, together with the other nearly 8 billion people living on the planet, small actions really do make a difference.

We are all consumers and there is a certain amount of power that comes along with our ability to purchase and we are all responsible for how we use that power.  When we make responsible and sustainable choices we are contributing to a better world for everyone.

*Source: European Committee of the Regions*

# Activity 7
# Design Our Way
# to Sustainability

One of the key ingredients of the EU's Green Deal is the promotion of the circular economy (through the Circular Economy Action Plan) which simply strives to keep materials and resources in use rather than throwing them away. Reuse, repair, recycle, and repurpose are all tools of the circular economy. This activity is designed to encourage young people to think circular by applying Design Thinking processes to an identified problem.

Directions:

∗ With your full group, brainstorm the climate related problems and issues that are facing your community (you can think of community as local or global) and choose one area to focus on (single-use plastic, too many cars on the road, opposition to wind energy).

∗ Divide the group in four. Each small group is going to get assigned an 'identity' and they are to approach the problem as if they are:

⇒ Irish MEPs

⇒ Youth Group

⇒ Local Council

⇒ National Media Outlet

Each group should apply Design Thinking Processes to the identified issue or problem by brainstorming Circular Economy Solutions:

∗ Design the Prototype (this is the plan for how to solve the problem, make sure that all the steps are laid out)

∗ Test: For the testing stage, have groups swap their prototypes and make comments. Remind students to be nice but this is a critical exercise and is designed to point out any flaws or holes in the plan in order to make it better.

∗ Deliver the Solution: After making the suggested changes, have each group deliver their solution to the whole group making sure they stay in the perspective of their assigned identity.
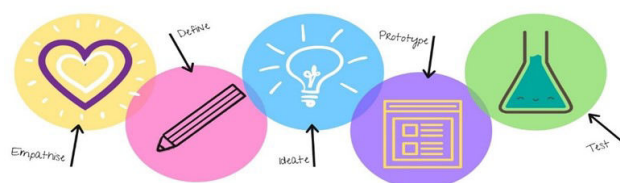
*Source: Campus Start Up*

# Section V
# EU & Health and
# Well-Being

Global Goal 3 is about Health and Well-Being which is very relevant as we close out 2020. The COVID Pandemic has made clear more than ever that coordinated responses and working through multilateral organisations (like the EU and the United Nations) is critical to our health and well-being.

The EU is doing a lot to keep both European and global citizens healthy in the face of the 2020 pandemic but also planning and preparing for any future threats. There is not a direct causal link between climate change and COVID-19 but the root causes of climate change increase the risk of pandemics so we need to address climate change as part of our pandemic mitigation strategy. We do know, for example, that communities with higher rates of air pollution also have higher rates of death from COVID-19.
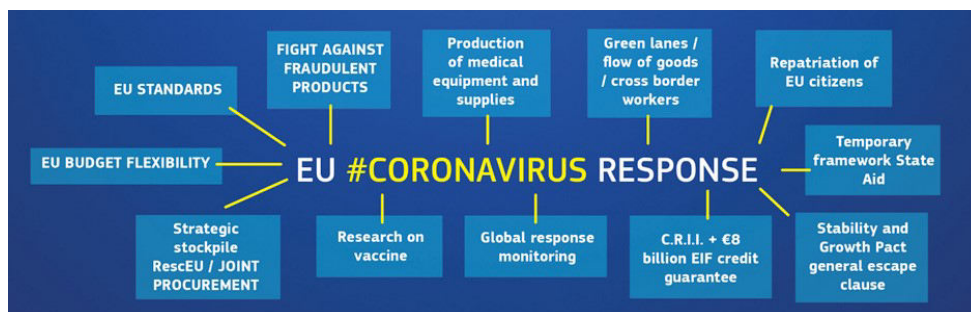


*Source: European Commission*

Climate change needs to be acknowledged as a threat to our health and well being. It is also going to put a strain on our existing health infrastructure. Specific climate events, like wildfires, floods and other natural disasters, cause immediate health impacts. Long-term climate changes result in forced migration, food insecurity, air pollution, etc., which all come with their own associated health problems. And we do know, from previous research, that climate change in general helps spread infectious diseases like Lyme Disease, Malaria and Dengue Fever.

# Activity 8
# Pathways

This activity is designed to demonstrate the multiple ways that climate change can impact our health and well-being. Using the cards on the following page (you should copy and cut them out prior to the activity), and placing Global Warming at the start of the Pathway and see how many cards can be linked. Note: Students should be encouraged to add in more steps so provide students with blank cards that they can use to fill in their own steps for their Pathway.

For example:

**Global Warming** leads to

**Melting Glaciers** leads to

**Floods** leads to

**Loss of Land Mass** leads to

**Food Insecurity** leads to

**Malnutrition**

This should be done in small groups with each group reporting back to the full group. Groups should be able to explain the connections that they have made between each step on the Pathway making the connection between Climate Change and Health clear.



*Source: Royal Irish Academy*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Rising Sea Levels** | **Melting Glaciers** | **Wild Fires** |
| **Deforestation** | **Floods** | **Respiratory Diseases** |
| **Air Pollution** | **Heatwaves** | **Mold** |
| **Heatstroke** | **Malaria** | **Migration** |
| **Food Insecurity** | **Mental Health Issues** | **Water Pollution** |
| **Conflict** | **Crime** | **Malnutrition** |
| **Forced Migration** | **Natural Disasters** | **Loss of Land Mass** |

# Global Warming

# Section VI
# Taking Action

We want to encourage people to be active Irish, European and Global citizens and the first step in doing this is get informed.

⇒ Start here with Citizens Information's page on voting, https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/government_in_ireland/elections_and_referenda/national_elections/the_general_election.html, it explains how to register, what types of elections are held in Ireland, and also what to do if someone wants to run for an elected office

⇒ Work for Change. Join Comhairle na nÓg which provides a forum for young people to express what issues are important to them and operates throughout Ireland. https://www.comhairlenanog.ie/?redir=1

⇒ There are a number of NGOs that give political voice to young people include EcoUnesco, Amnesty International, BeLong To, The Y Factor and many more.

⇒ Get involved with the European Youth Parliament (https://eyp.org/)

⇒ Support the implementation of EU initiatives at local level, for example, the ban on single-use plastics.

# Media Literacy
# Checklist

We recognise that young people get their information online and so it is very important that we equip them with the tools they need to discern between what is real and what is fake.

We need to train ourselves and the young people we work with, to answer the following questions prior to believing a news source.  There are news sources, with international reputations and rigorous fact checking procedures, that are generally considered trustworthy in terms of whether their stories are factual: CNN, BBC, RTE. This list is not exhaustive, just examples of sources of news that are generally considered reliable. Any one, regardless of whether or not they are qualified can publish information on the internet that can look and sound factual.  It is hard sometimes to be sure. Young people more than ever need to look behind the headlines to make sure that their information is accurate.

In order to determine whether a story is real, the following considerations are a good place to start:

- Is there an author listed for the story and what are the qualifications of the author?

- Where was the story originally published?

- Does the story look professional? Are there grammar or spelling errors?

- Remember that images are not necessarily a reliable source of information, they can be altered just as easily as words.  Google reverse images will tell you if the photograph originated as a digital one (which means that it was put together rather than capturing a real event).

- If in doubt, check Snopes or The Daily Dot, websites that archive fake news stories after verification

- Use your common sense. If something sounds suspicious, investigate.

# Resources

European Commission. 2020. *2030 Climate and Energy Framework.* Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2030_en.

European Commission. 2020. *The European Union: What It Is and What It Does.* Luxembourg: Office of European Publications. Available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ac0a88a6-4369-11ea-b81b-01aa75ed71a1/language-en.

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National Youth Council of Ireland, 2019. *Climate Justice.* Available at: https://developmenteducation.ie/app/uploads/2019/12/OWW_2019_Climate_Revolution.pdf.

Social Justice Ireland. 2020. *The Sustainable Progress Index Ireland.* Available at: https://www.socialjustice.ie/sites/default/files/attach/publication/6248/measuringprogress-thesustainableprogressindex2020new.pdf?cs=true.

UK Climate Change and Migration Coalition. 2012. *Communicating Climate Change and Migration.* Available at: https://developmenteducation.ie/media/documents/Climate_and_migration_UKCCMC.pdf.

United Nations. 2015. *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf.

For more resources on these and many other topics, we recommend developmenteducation.ie which is the clearinghouse for global education resources in Ireland.

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