



Resource Information and Registration Pack for Teachers

School Year 2014 - 2015

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We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Blue Star Programme! Following a highly successful pilot phase of the Programme from 2011-2014 where over 200 schools from every corner of Ireland participated, we are delighted that the programme is rolling out for another three years from 2014-2017.

What is the Blue Star Programme?

As you may know, the Blue Star Programme is a primary school initiative that aims to foster better knowledge and understanding of the European Union and how it affects our lives amongst Irish primary pupils through classroom projects and activities. The Programme introduces participants (pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community) to the EU, what it means and how it works. The goal of the Programme is to foster a strong sense of citizenship and leadership among participants that goes far beyond the school walls and into the wider community.

This is done by examining four key areas relating to the EU - **historical, geographical, cultural and creative** and **institutional** in an extremely curriculum friendly manner.

The programme has gone from strength to strength since the pilot year in 2011/2012 and has resulted in over 200 schools being awarded their 'EU flag and Blue Star certificates.' The schools that completed the programme came from across Ireland, ranging from small, two teacher, rural schools with 30-40 pupils to large, urban schools with an enrolment of over 500 pupils.

How does it work?

Teams of pupils of all ages, from primary schools all over Ireland, are challenged to get creative and think about Europe by carrying out projects in relation to four key elements: the history, geography, culture and creativity, and Institutions of the EU. Each participating school is required to carry out projects and tasks, incorporating elements that include information about:

- The foundation and development of the European Union
- The cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe
- What the European Union does and how its work affects the lives of citizens

Above all, the programme is designed to be as **curriculum friendly** as possible for teachers so it can fit in with lesson plans already in place.

Once schools have registered to participate in the Programme, they are provided with a resource pack and resource materials (e.g. booklets, posters, pamphlets, wall charts, etc.) to offer tips on the types of projects the pupils can undertake. The resource packs also help guide the teachers in how best to facilitate the pupils and all resources are available in Irish and English.

A curriculum guideline has also been developed in cooperation with previous Blue Star Champion Teacher's which serves as a useful aide for teachers participating in the Programme for the first time.

This year, we are hoping for even greater uptake of the programme throughout the country and look forward to working with you in promoting awareness about the programme in your school.

The Blue Star Programme is a venture of the "Communicating Europe Initiative," supported by the office of the Minister of State for European Affairs, the Department of the Taoiseach, the European Commission Representation in Ireland and the European Parliament Information Office in Ireland. European Movement Ireland is the National Implementation Body/Coordinator for the Programme.

All schools that have successfully completed the Blue Star Programme will be awarded an EU Flag and a Blue Star certificate of achievement signed by the Minister of State for European Affairs.

The purpose of this information pack is to provide you, our Blue Star Teachers, with a comprehensive guide to the programme. This pack consists of three sections:

1. A **Guide and FAQ Section** to give you the logistical information you will need for the programme with key dates for your diary
2. **Resources** – a very useful guide to the resources that are available for all aspects of the Blue Star Programme
3. **Registration Form** – to be completed and returned to the National Coordinator

We look forward to working with you over the coming months and to getting your feedback on this exciting Programme. If you have any queries at all do not hesitate to contact me, the Blue Star Project Manager at bluestar@europeanmovement.ie or on 01 642 4925 / 01 662 5815

Kind regards,



Joe Bishop
Project Manager, Blue Star Programme



Background

Who we are

The Blue Star Programme will be run by European Movement Ireland in conjunction with the Department of the Taoiseach's Communicating Europe Initiative, the office of Minister of State for European Affairs, Paschal Donohoe TD, the European Commission Representation in Ireland and the European Parliament Information Office in Ireland.

Minister of State for European Affairs

Dara Murphy TD, the Minister of State for European Affairs, is the Patron Sponsor of the programme.

Department of the Taoiseach

www.taoiseach.gov.ie

The Department of the Taoiseach is committed to building public understanding and knowledge about Ireland's EU membership and as part of this, the Department administers the Communicating Europe Initiative. The Communicating Europe Initiative awards funding to projects that are aimed at deepening public awareness of the role that the EU plays in our daily lives and the Blue Star Programme comes within this remit.

European Commission Representation in Ireland

www.euireland.ie

The European Commission Representation in Ireland is part of the Commission's network of representative offices throughout the EU. It acts as the Commission's voice in Ireland and aims to communicate EU affairs at both national and local levels.

European Parliament Information Office in Ireland

www.europarl.ie

The European Parliament Office in Ireland provides information on the European Parliament's role and powers, on the Irish MEPs and their activities and on issues currently being considered by the Parliament which are of significance for Ireland and for Europe as a whole.

European Movement Ireland, National Implementation Body

www.europeanmovement.ie

European Movement Ireland is the National Implementation Body for the Blue Star Programme. EM Ireland is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation working to make the connection between Irish people and the EU and campaigning for every Irish person to get involved with the EU. EM Ireland will coordinate and administer all aspects of the programme, providing a point of contact for schools. Our job is to support the rollout and delivery of the programme. For information please contact bluestar@europeanmovement.ie or 01 642 4925 / 01 662 5815.



FAQ Guide

What is the programme all about?

The Blue Star Programme is a creative primary schools initiative. The objective of the Programme is to encourage primary schools to undertake a module of tasks and projects related to the EU. We are challenging primary schools to get creative and think about Europe by carrying out projects in relation to the History, Geography, Culture and Institutions of the EU.

Above all, the programme is designed to be as curriculum friendly as possible for teachers so it can fit in with lesson plans already in place and be tailored to suit the needs of pupils. It should be noted that it is the decision of each individual school whether they want the programme to be completed on a school-wide basis or whether they just want particular classes to participate.

How does it all work?

Each participating school will need to carry out projects and tasks that include information about:

- the foundation and development of the European Union;
- the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe;
- what the European Union does and how its work affects the lives of European citizens.

Once registered, each school will then submit an Action Plan to the National Implementation Body outlining how each of the four key elements (outlined below) will be explored.

The National Implementation Body will then liaise with schools throughout the year to gauge how the school is progressing, possibly seeking to coordinate a visit to give the students a chance to show off all their hard work.

In May, teachers are required to submit a Final Report detailing what was achieved; schools must also accompany the Final Report with photos or videos of the various projects and events.

We want the Blue Star Programme to have creativity at its core and that's why there are lots of options for our teachers to tailor the programme to your classroom.

The elements outlined above will centre around four key areas. The four key areas are as follows:

- 1. Historical**
- 2. Geographical**
- 3. Cultural and Creative**
- 4. Institutional**



1. Historical

For this area, pupils could pick an event or person pivotal to European history and complete a project on them. For example this project could focus on World War II, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Leonardo da Vinci or Anne Frank – there are so many options to choose from.

Ideally when researching their historical project, the pupils will use technological means such as computers and the internet to research, compile and present their finished product. For example, a presentation could be made in PowerPoint format or through the production of a short film.

2. Geographical

For this section pupils could prepare a short project on an EU country. Examples of elements that could be included in this project are describing or illustrating a country's flag, capital city, population, language, what it is famous for, and its similarities and differences to Ireland. If there are pupils from a different European country in the class it might be an idea to pick their country so that they can share their own experiences.

We would like pupils to work on their own project for this section and again the use of technology is to be encouraged.

3. Cultural and Creative

In this module, pupils should explore the places, food and art of Europe. Ideas might include pupils experiencing food from different European countries, developing a play or song about the different peoples and countries of Europe or each pupil in a class picking a European country, drawing a picture representing it and holding an art exhibition. For this module we ask that the pupils promote their work in the local community, through an exhibition, or in the local press for example. This aspect of the Programme could involve the whole school, including junior classes.

This section will be assessed according to the level of creative input of the students. It is recommended that classes cooperate together to this end. We would like pupils to experience working in a team and you, as teacher, will know best whether the pupils should be divided into separate teams or work together as an entire class.

4. Institutional

In this section, pupils should learn about how the EU works, how the different institutions cooperate with each other and the impact of the EU on their lives. We would like the work in this section to be activity based. For example, pupils could complete a project on a day in the life of an MEP, hold a mock parliament session or run a simple election. Given that the European Parliament elections are taking place in May 2014, we would like schools to include a study of these elections as part of this Institutional module.

As part of this section, we would ask schools to write to their local MEPs asking them to complete a questionnaire on their work and to invite them to visit the school. If it is not possible for an MEP to visit the school, we would encourage schools to contact other public representatives to invite them to come to the school to discuss European issues.

This element of the Programme will be teacher-led and more suitable for senior classes.



Resources

A designated information resource pack for teachers will be developed by EM Ireland and sent out to all participating schools. This will also be accompanied by background material and collateral for pupils in order to help stimulate ideas and provide guidance on suitable projects.

Again, we will also provide participating teachers with a Curriculum Guideline document which was created in conjunction with some of our Blue Star Champion Teachers. The Curriculum Guideline serves as a very useful resource for participating teachers as it outlines ways in which the teachers can integrate the programme into their curriculum.

The following is an overview of the resources we have provided teachers with over the last three years.

- **Ireland and the European Union DVD** – this DVD includes a chapter on the development of the EU which would be particularly useful for this section
- **Europe on the Move Wall Chart** – The Story of the EU. This timeline presents the most important events in the European integration process from World War II until today, together with glimpses of everyday life and other historical events from that period. You can also read about the same topics on a website. It can be used to tell pupils the story of where the EU started and how it got to where it is today and would also be a useful resource for students to develop ideas for their projects. More information on the history of the EU is available on this website: http://europa.eu/about-eu/eu-history/index_en.htm
- **Passport** – each resource pack will include an EU Passport for every pupil in the class. This Passport takes children on a tour of Europe, providing light-hearted insights into each country, including food, languages and famous people. Pictures introduce some of Europe's most well-known and lesser known sights, including a statue of a mermaid in Copenhagen harbour and the rock where Greek goddess Aphrodite is said to have been born. The booklet comes with stickers of monuments and coins.
- **Travelling in Europe** – It is fun to travel in Europe. This wall-chart gives you some information about how the EU has made it easier: you can freely cross borders; the euro makes it easier to shop around for bargains; you have access to health care should you need it; you can bring your pets and you can use your mobile phone everywhere. This wall chart

also includes links to the various tourist boards of other European countries which pupils might want to check out.

- **Countries in Europe** - This is a colour map of Europe that also features some basic facts about the EU, the flags of EU Member States and countries that wish to join.
- **Passport** – each resource pack includes an EU Passport for every pupil in your class. This Passport takes children on a tour of Europe, providing light-hearted insights into each country, including food, languages and famous people. Pictures introduce some of Europe’s most well-known and lesser known sights, including a statue of a mermaid in Copenhagen harbour and the rock where Greek goddess Aphrodite is said to have been born. The booklet comes with stickers of monuments and coins.
- **Let’s Explore Europe!** (website and booklet) – Europe has produced many of the world’s famous scientists, inventors, artists and composers, as well as popular entertainers and successful sports people. For centuries Europe was plagued by wars and divisions. In the last 60 years or so, however, the countries of this old continent have at last been coming together in peace, friendship and unity, to work for a better Europe and a better world. This book for children (roughly 9 to 12 years old) tells the story simply and clearly. Attractive photos and illustrations make the website and print products very appealing to children, while games and quizzes allow them to test their knowledge and compete with others. For more information, games and quizzes go to <http://europa.eu/europago/welcome.jsp>.
- **Link up with languages wall chart**
- **Let’s Explore Europe!** (Website and booklet) – Europe has produced many of the world’s famous scientists, inventors, artists and composers, as well as popular entertainers and successful sports people. For centuries Europe was plagued by wars and divisions. In the last 60 years or so, however, the countries of this old continent have at last been coming together in peace, friendship and unity, to work for a better Europe and a better world. This book for children (roughly 9 to 12 years old) tells the story simply and clearly. Children can explore a wide range of topics on the environment, history, languages, traditions and geography. It also explains what the European Union is and how it works. Attractive photos and illustrations make the website and print products very appealing to children, while games and quizzes allow them to test their knowledge and compete with others. For more information, games and quizzes go to <http://europa.eu/europago/welcome.jsp>.
- **Ireland and the European Union DVD** – this DVD includes a chapter on the EU institutions which will be particularly useful for this section
- **European Parliament Wall Chart** – this wall chart outlines the different EU institutions, their role and how they interact with each other.
- **MEP Info sheets** – These sheets include career and contact information for the MEPs in your European electoral region.

- **Fundamental rights mini booklet** – Mini booklet of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- We have been fortunate to have some great Blue Star Champions amongst our different Blue Star teachers. With their support, we have developed a curriculum guide which has been especially created to support our teachers who are participating in the Blue Star programme. It includes advice and guidelines on all elements of the programme and we hope that teachers will find it a useful resource and aide.
- Also to be included in your pack will be four short stories which explain what climate change is and how you can make a difference. These 20 page illustrated books follow Tom and Lila the fox as they go on adventures and discover how to respect and protect the environment.
- The first is **Hope for the Kayakos**. In this book Tom and Lila visit the Kayakos people who have lived in a tropical rainforest for thousands of years and discover that our way of life can be very harmful to the environment and to fellow human beings.
- The second is **Benny's a champion!** In this story, Tom and friends learn that building a new bike with used parts not only saves money and the earth's valuable resources, but can also be a lot of fun.
- Air pollution caused by heavy city traffic and wasteful driving habits are the focus of the third book, **Blossom Lane**. Tom and his friend Fleur learn about the environmental and personal safety dangers of road traffic.
- The fourth book, **A present for Timmy**, makes children more aware of toy safety and environmental protection.
- The European Commission Representation Office in Dublin also has a very useful website with lots of games relating to a wide variety of EU-related topics from children's rights and organic farming to the Euro. http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_en.htm
- Ministerial Questionnaire – this questionnaire completed by Minister Murphy can be used as a template for the questionnaire to be submitted to the MEPs, and as a useful tool in itself.



Europe Day

The completion and indeed highlight of the Programme should culminate in an event during Europe Week (**4-8 May 2015**) where the school community showcases and celebrates its achievements throughout the year. Ideally this will be promoted beyond the realms of the school community and once again, we are encouraging schools to participate in the 'Handshake for Europe.' This is where all pupils shake hands with each other in a spirit of solidarity and to celebrate the diversity in their schools. Evidence of Europe Day celebrations, such as videos or photos or art work, may also be supplied to the National Coordinator.

School Interaction & Visits

The Blue Star team hopes to get around to as many schools as possible during this year of the Blue Star Programme. This is a great chance for pupils and teachers to show off all their hard work from the Programme.

We will also be encouraging Ministers, TDs, Senators, MEPs and EU Ambassadors to visit Blue Star schools throughout the year for the same reason.

We also encourage schools to make contact with their MEPs and local TD's and Senators themselves to organise visits, but we would ask that you make us aware of these visits before they happen.

Assessment & Awarding of Blue Star Certificate of Achievement

Once each of the four areas, (historical, geographical, creative and cultural and institutional) have been completed to a satisfactory standard as approved by the National Coordinator and the Judging Panel, the school will be awarded their Blue Star Certificate of Achievement and European flag. We envisage that this will take place in late May/early June 2014 when we have received your Final Report.



Key Dates for your Diary

31 October	Registration Forms to be submitted to National Coordinator
28 November	Action Plans to be submitted to National Coordinator
4-8 May	Europe Day Celebrations
June	Awarding of EU flags and Blue Star Certificates

Insurance

Schools will be responsible for ensuring that insurance is in place for any activity that takes place outside school grounds for the purposes of this Programme and the Blue Star Programme Team will not take any responsibility in this regard.

What about Child Protection?

The Blue Star Programme team acknowledges it has a responsibility for the safety of children involved in projects, attending classes or otherwise under its temporary care. It is also recognised that good child protection policies and procedures are of benefit to everyone involved in the Programme. The Blue Star Team is committed to practices which protect children from harm.

All staff and volunteers who have access to or contact with children throughout the course of their work are required to:

- Recognise and accept their responsibilities
- Develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm
- Agree to the usual Garda vetting procedure
- Report any concerns immediately to the National Coordinator.

Any Further Queries?

We hope we have covered all your questions in this pack. However if you do have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact Joe Bishop, Blue Star Project Manager, at 01 642 4925 / 01 662 5815 or via bluestar@europeanmovement.ie



Registration Form

School Details

Name of School -

Address of School -

Contact Number for School -

Name of Coordinating Teacher -

Email of Coordinating Teacher -

Number of Pupils in your School –

Number of Pupils participating in Blue Star -

Participating Classes -

Number of Participating Teachers -

How did you hear about the Blue Star Programme? -

**Thank you very much for expressing an interest in the Blue Star Programme.
Please submit this registration form by 31 October 2014.**

Email to bluestar@europeanmovement.ie or post to Joe Bishop, Blue Star Project Manager,
European Movement Ireland, 8 Lower Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin 2

Feel free to call: 01 642 4925 / 01 662 5815 with any queries.



Blue Star

Programme