

# European antibullying guidelines? *Guide for four lessons*

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Suggestions for online lessons plan replacing the national and European ABC multiplier meetings





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## Introduction

The ABC-project ends in May 2020. The project aimed to develop a self-assessment procedure with quality guidelines for antibullying policy in schools and to establish a quality certificate. The participating schools were planned to join in the last week of April in Brussels to discuss the project results and the possibility to advise the European Community on ways to set standards to raise the quality of antibullying policy in schools. Because of the COVID-19 quarantine measures, this travel cannot take place and are replaced by online efforts. The online efforts consists of offering the participating schools e-lessons and of online discussion. This document offers the schools an outline for suggested lessons and references to the online spaces where the discussion will take place.

## Didactic guide to the program

We developed a program of four lessons. Each lesson consists of an introduction (supported by a PowerPoint presentation), an activity that students can do on their own or through online small group work, and by reporting or participating on the discussion forum or on one of the social media platforms of the ABC-project.

### Presentation, activity, discussion

**Presentation:** You can decide to do the presentation in an online class meeting, or to send the PowerPoint to the students and to allow them to ask questions and give them answers. If students don't have Microsoft Office and PowerPoint, you can use the PDF version. All the documents can be found on <https://www.gale.info/en/projects/abc-project#final-discussion>.

**The activities** usually contain a brainstorm, research and / or a small group discussions. If your regular online activities with the class includes plenary virtual sessions, you can replace the small group activity with an online plenary class activity.

**The final discussions** can be done on an online school forum, or if you don't have this, to a WhatsApp subgroup of the class, or to the close Facebook page/community you can create for the purpose. In part, you can also use the ABC-discussion forum or the ABC social media to report or discuss experiences with students and teachers from other countries. On the ABC-discussion forum (<https://www.gale.info/en/how-to-combat-bullying>), you can click "Add



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your story >>” to create a new strand in the discussion and ask your students to respond to that strand/story.

### **Logic of the program**

The four lessons start with a review of what we learned in the ABC-project. Then we go into the national antibullying policies of the partner countries, because EU policy proposals have to be initiated by member states. After this, we explain how the EU works in its decision processes and make clear how complicated it is to agree on joint proposals. In the last lesson we discussed the ABC-recommendations for European policy.

### **Timing**

The intention is that the lessons and discussions take place between 27 April and 15 May. It may be that schools don't have the time to implement all the lessons. In that case we advise to focus on lesson 1 and 4 or even only do lesson 4.



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## Program suggestions

### Preparation

As a preparation for the lessons, please ask the students (and the teachers) to fill in the short evaluation survey (if you did not do this already). This should be done as soon as possible and preferably before 25 April. The discussions in lesson 1 and 4 will partly be based on the results of this research.

### Lesson 1: What we learned in the ABC-project

#### Introduction

In the PowerPoint presentation, we give a summary of the results of the ABC-project, a list of so-called effective elements of school level antibullying policy and we present a number of dilemmas we faced in the project. The dilemmas are:

1. Should we score a school on the quality of antibullying policy?
2. If we score, what do we base the score on?
3. If we score, should it be an adequate/inadequate assessment or an assessment with levels like in energy label (A-D)?
4. If we find a reliable way to score schools, should it be only a self-evaluation, or an externally visible quality label?

The PowerPoint presentation will contain some key results from the ABC-evaluation research on these dilemmas, which is the view of others think of these questions.

#### Activity

The activity focuses on collecting arguments for each of the positions on the dilemmas and exploring if the opinions of students, teachers, school managers, parents and politicians would be different in their arguments. The teachers can ask subgroups of students to look for these arguments. Teachers can check where the students find their information. Students can do this by brainstorming, googling, asking their parents, or asking their teachers. Make sure that the students have a critical discussion in which they empathize with the different views of different stakeholders. For example, arguments may be:



**Students** may want to hold the school organization accountable for good policy, new students may want to use an external label to choose a friendly school.

**Teachers** may have mixed arguments because they want to create a good atmosphere in class, but they may feel they need more training on antibullying. They also may feel they are unable to be held responsible for schoolwide antibullying policy, and they may fear criticism by students of their performance.

**School managers or principals** may have mixed arguments, because they of course want to create a good atmosphere in the school, but at the same time it is crucial for them to upkeep a good image of the school externally. Publishing antibullying data that are not excellent may pose a risk for their PR.

**Parents** may like an external label because it helps them to select a good school, and good antibullying policy can help prevent violence towards their children. At the same time, intolerant parents may object to some types of non-discrimination measures and abusive parents may feel threatened by school reporting procedures.

**Politicians** may like the idea to hold schools accountable for their antibullying policy, but at the same time they may feel hesitant to monitor the quality of schools because of (neoliberal) decentralized or privatized government policies, or they may dislike non-discrimination measures if their party is socially conservative or populist.

After doing this groundwork, the students can formulate their own position (individually or as a small group).

This matrix can help the teacher to divide the students in small groups for their assignments. You can choose to ask five groups to score all the dilemmas, or make four groups that score all the arguments. An alternative is to make more but smaller groups and ask them to discuss only the arguments on some dilemmas by some of the stakeholders.

	Arguments by students	Arguments by teachers	Arguments by principals	Arguments by parents	Arguments by politicians
1. To score or not					
2. What do we based the					



score on?					
3. Score adequate or inadequate, or levels A-D?					
4. Internal or external?					

### Discussion

Ask students to report their findings and opinions on the ABC-forum or on one of the social media of the project:

- Forum: <https://www.gale.info/en/how-to-combat-bullying>
- [Public Facebook page "How schools combat bullying"](#)
- [Instagram page "Students join against bullying"](#).

## Lesson 2: National antibullying policy

### Introduction

In the PowerPoint presentation, we give examples of national policies. We also give a slide of key elements in national policies as advised by the NESET II report and the ABC-self-assessment guide. One slide is kept blank and can be filled in with a summary of the national policy of the partner country. The summaries of country assessments can be found under <https://www.gale.info/en/projects/abc-project#final-discussion>.

### Activity

Ask the students individually or in small groups to discuss the policy. Guiding questions can be:

1. Does the national policy contain all the elements of national policy?
2. Do you think the national policy is excellent, good, adequate, or inadequate?



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3. Why?
4. What could be improved?

### Discussion

Ask students to report their findings and opinions on the ABC-forum or on one of the social media of the project:

- Forum: <https://www.gale.info/en/how-to-combat-bullying>
- [Public Facebook page "How schools combat bullying"](#)
- [Instagram page "Students join against bullying"](#).

## Lesson 3: How the EU works

### Introduction

In the PowerPoint presentation, we give a short overview of how the European Union is organized and how decisions are made. Teachers can read (or share) page 7-8 of the [Prodemos Guidebook for EU Class Activities](#) for an explanation of Who is who in the EU. We attached this pages as an annex on <https://www.gale.info/en/projects/abc-project#final-discussion>.

We also explain the subsidiarity principle, which rules that “education” is not an area that the European Union wants to make decisions about. We also point out that if you want to influence European Union policy on antibullying, we have to avoid the impression that we are “regulating schools” and focus on effective ways to prevent violence.

If you would like to expand this lesson into more activities, you can have a look at the [Prodemos Guidebook for EU Class Activities](#) (for the supporting materials: <https://prodemos.nl/english/activities/prodemos-for-schools/eu-lesson-materials/>). These do not focus on antibullying but are more general.

### Activity

This activity is an online game loosely based on the Prodemos exercise “Tough Decisions”.





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Divide the students into five different groups. They represent the 5 partner countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, the UK, and the Netherlands). Although the students represent only six countries, we pretend these countries are currently the entire European Union and that the representatives make decisions in the Council of the European Union.

The students are told that they get some dilemmas that they to discuss among themselves first, and then enter into a negotiation in the Council of the European Union to set a European standard on antibullying.

The dilemmas are listed in the PowerPoint presentation, they are:

1. School bullying is a serious problem in the Union. How would be we deal with this in the view of the subsidiarity principle?
2. Can we establish a European antibullying energy label to make visible what the quality of antibullying policy in schools is?
3. Can we make this label, or at least some of the general guidelines for antibullying policy mandatory for all European countries to implement in their legislation?

The student / country groups must first think of their position and arguments to convince the other countries. Then they formulate a proposal for a European guideline or directive: “The Council of the European Union has decided that all the member states will make a law in which they regulate the following: ... (the proposal of the students)”.

### Discussion

If possible, organize an online class meeting during which you do a virtual role-play of Council of the European Union. If a real-time virtual meeting of the class is not possible, you can ask each group to make a proposal and post them to an online school forum.

In the online space, you can ask “the other countries” to respond to the proposals of the others and negotiate a proposal that is acceptable to all. It may be that you don’t succeed in doing this, this is not a problem. This is exactly what can happen on the European level.

### Debriefing

Ask the students in an online class meeting or message what they learned from this exercise. One of the main learning aspects is probably that it is pretty complicated to negotiate a proposal that all five partners agree on. In reality this is even more difficult with



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28 (27 without the UK) partners and all having a veto. This is what happens in a democracy, and although the effort to make joint decisions is great and may take a lot of time and negotiation, it secures that all the partners are agreeing to some extent and committed to implementing joint solutions.

## Lesson 4: The ABC-European recommendations

### Introduction

In the PowerPoint we summarize our (ABC) analysis of the European Union policy and give the six recommendations the ABC-project formulated in which have been adopted by the European Antibullying Network (EAN). We also offer the results of the evaluation survey among European stakeholders which included questions about the recommendations.

### Activity

Ask the students what they think about the recommendations. You can ask them to score each recommendation as excellent, good, adequate or inadequate and think of arguments for the position.

### Discussion

Ask students to report their findings and opinions on the ABC-forum or on one of the social media of the project:

- Forum: <https://www.gale.info/en/how-to-combat-bullying>
- [Public Facebook page "How schools combat bullying"](#)
- [Instagram page "Students join against bullying"](#).



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## Colophon

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