Environment Lesson Plan

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Learning Objective: Students will explore environmental issues in different European countries and compare and contrast country’s policy and politics on climate change.

Environment/Climate Change

* Students (or groups of 2-3) will select a country. Students should have a range of countries. The best comparisons can be made if, in addition to Western Europe, some students have countries in Southern Europe and others in East-Central Europe. Two other important countries to make sure are included: the Netherlands, which is facing sea-level rise, and Switzerland, which is facing melting glaciers.
* If there is time, students can design posters or be asked to put together a factsheet that they can put on the board.
* Students should spend the next 10 minutes researching the major environmental issues in that country.
  + Who/what are the major emitters?
  + What percentage of the country’s energy comes from renewable sources?
* How is your country addressing those issues?
  + What are the major policy priorities?
  + How much of its emissions has the country been able to cut?

**The Politics of Climate Change**

* **Students get another 5-10 minutes to research the following questions**
* What positions do the major parties take on climate change? Do they have different proposals on how to best combat climate change?
* Does your country have a Green party?
  + If so, how big is that Green party?
    - What is its vote share in the most recent election?
    - Is it in Parliament?
    - Is it in government?

**Class-wide presentations and discussion**

**Discussion Questions**

1. As a class, can we come up with a way to rank country’s progress on climate change? Is there a way to create a scale so we can compare apples to apples?
2. Does it seem like all countries in Europe are making the same progress on climate change?
3. Do all countries face the same challenges?
4. Do the countries with Green parties seem to be doing more? Is this the case even if the Green parties are not in government? *The presence of a sizeable Green party in parliament alone may be enough to bring about more conversations on climate change. Alternatively, other parties may try to out-maneuver Green parties by focusing on climate change.*