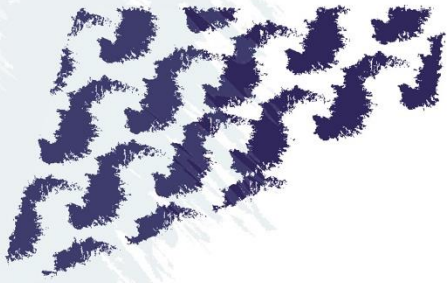


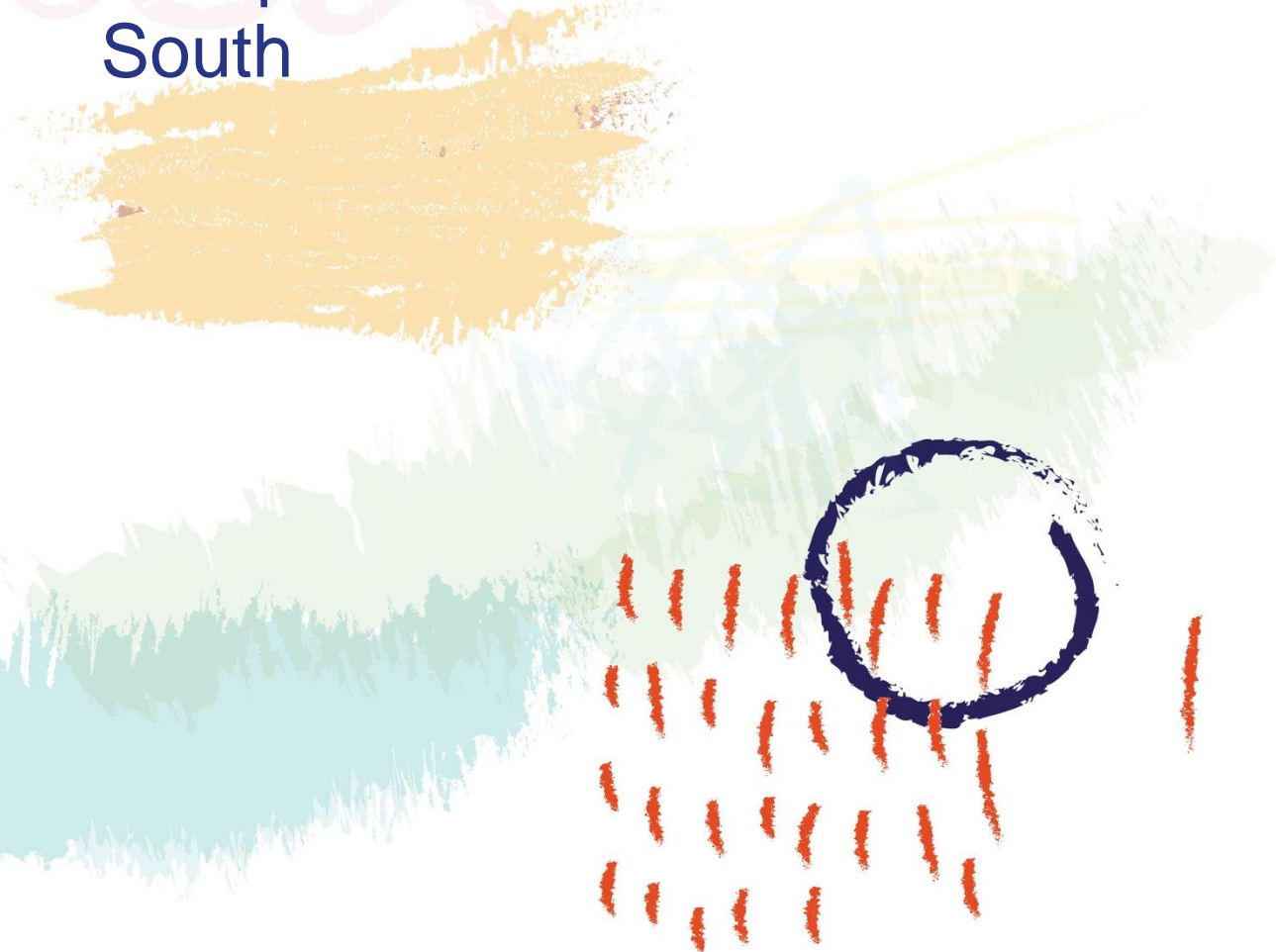
CULTURE is YOU



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Content Unit 3: European Culture – from East to South



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3 European culture – from East to South

3.1 Introduction

You have probably already gained impressions of different cultures in your daily experiences. Have you ever wondered why people in some countries express themselves differently, behave differently and communicate differently?



The expression of human culture in the European Union could not be more different, despite many similarities. Explore interesting cultural symbols, traditions, behaviours, and ways of participating and gain a better understanding of your European neighbours.

In this module you will learn about:

- the cultural symbols of the EU member states and, by way of example, the flags of AT; PL; ES and CZ
- the specific cultural rituals of some countries of the European Union
- the EU countries' own ways of expressing their culture
- Dos and Don'ts from AT; PL; ES and CZ
- low threshold offers of cultural education especially in AT; PL; ES and CZ
- Examples for the promotion of cultural participation in AT; PL; ES and CZ

3.2 Cultural symbols – from East to South

Cultural symbols are **significant elements of a culture**. The EU, as well as each individual member country, has its own cultural symbols. These include the flag and anthem.

Symbols accompany us every day in our lives. Surely you know the heart as a symbol of love, the cross as a symbol of the Christian faith or the dove as a symbol of peace.

But what are symbols? Symbols can be understood as simplified **symbols, signs or characteristics** that represent a certain meaning or a state of affairs. Symbols arise in communities and result from the communication and attribution of meaning by people. Symbols are therefore never fixed and valid forever. They change with time, people, and context.

Remember

Symbols are an expression of culture. They have a certain meaning, which is especially visible to people who belong to the same culture.

Cultural symbols include the **flag and the anthem**, but also **gestures and facial expressions, words, and items of clothing**.

While there are cultural symbols in the EU as a community of states, such as the flag, the anthem, and the motto of the EU, as well as Europe Day, the individual cultural symbols of the member states continue to exist.

Hint

Despite common EU cultural symbols, each country also has its own **country-specific cultural symbols**.

Cultural symbols in Austria

The Austrian flag consists of three horizontal stripes of equal width, of which the middle one is white, and the two outer ones are red.



The federal anthem was officially introduced in 1947 and dates back to the immediate period after the Second World War. Austria wanted to use the anthem "Land of mountains, land of rivers" to signify a new beginning for the state.

Cultural symbols in Poland

The flag of Poland consists of two horizontal stripes of equal width. The upper white and lower red stripe represent the Polish national colours.



The Polish national anthem is a song of praise to the national hero Jan Henryk Dąbrowski. The anthem is entitled "Mazurek Dąbrowskiego". The lyrics refer to the Polish liberation struggle and therefore have deep historical significance for Poland.

Cultural symbols in Spain

The flag of Spain consists of three horizontal stripes in the colours, red, yellow and red. The Spanish coat of arms is a yellow stripe. It is interesting to note that the current flag was only introduced in 1981.

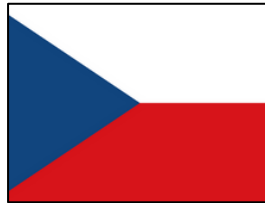


The national anthem of Spain was not officially called the "Marcha Real", translated as "Royal March", until the middle of the 19th century. Spain's national anthem is one of the few anthems that do not have lyrics.

Cultural symbols in the Czech Republic

The three Pan-Slavic colours blue, white, and red form the flag of the Czech Republic. This flag was already used by Czechoslovakia since 1920.

The national anthem of the Czech Republic, "Kde domov můj" translates as "Where is my home?"



3.3 Expressing culture – from East to South

When you think of cultural expression and tradition in your own country, what comes to mind first? Is it the visit of St. Nicholas, the tomato fight, Advent caroling, Halloween, Mother's Day, the raising of the Maypole or Wet Monday?

Expressing one's culture in customs, traditions and rituals is essential to cultural life. But what does tradition mean?

Remember

Traditions are historical traditions of cultural knowledge of **customs and traditions**.

They are communal activities that are passed on from generation to generation and thus become cultural heritage.

The following examples from Austria, Poland, Spain, and the Czech Republic show that traditions are as diverse as the people and cultures of the countries.

Traditions from Austria

A common tradition in Austria is the "**Ratschen**", where on Good Friday or Holy Saturday people are called to church service at 5 am with wooden rattling instruments called "Ratschen". The tradition dates back to the 15th century and was introduced because the church bells were not rung during this time for religious reasons.

The tradition of St. Nicholas and the Krampus is a spectacular event every year for tourists and residents as well. During the pre-Christmas period, there are numerous parades in



which St. Nicholas brings presents to the good children and the Krampus scares the naughty children. The Krampus is a scary figure who makes a lot of noise and scares the children with his costume of animal fur, bells, and chains.

The **celebration of midsummer's eve** on 21 June is also a special festival in Austria. The sun is at its northernmost point on this day and Austria has the longest day and shortest night of the year. Huge bonfires are lit all over the country, often with different motifs or symbols.

Yodelling and traditional clothes so called "Tracht" are also part of the centuries-old Austrian tradition and culture. Yodelling is an ancient form of communication that enabled people to communicate over long distances in the mountains. Nowadays, however, it is used for entertainment at festivals and competitions. The traditional costume is the "Lederhose" (leather trousers) and the "Dirndl" (dirndl dress). While historically worn as a simple work garment, the "Tracht" is now a traditional dress for festivities.

Important

Examples of significant traditions in Austria are yodelling and traditional clothing "Tracht", the celebration of the midsummer festival, "Ratschen" and the processions of St. Nicholas and Krampus.

Traditions from Poland

In Poland, traditions and customs also play a central role in people's lives. Have you heard of the wet T-shirt contest in Polish? Every year on Easter Monday there is a so-called **wet Monday** ("Lany poniedziałek"). This is a water fight where only women are splashed with water, by the men. Pretty women are hunted down with buckets, water bombs and water pistols. Women who stay dry on this day will, according to legend, spend the year unmarried.

In general, Easter is celebrated very festively in Poland. The **Polish Easter** is traditionally accompanied by many colourful events. These include Easter markets, church masses, processions, competitions for the most beautiful Easter palm tree, the blessing of decorated baskets and workshops on Easter egg painting.

Do you have a craving to feast until you drop without a guilty feeling? The people of Poland show how it's done. Every last Thursday before Lent begins, **Fat Thursday** ("tłusty czwartek") is celebrated. On the favourite holiday of Polish gourmets, high-calorie foods are consumed without any inhibitions. According to reports, about 100 million donuts are sold on this day.

The sinking of **Marzanna** is a great spectacle in which a colourful doll is drowned or burnt every spring. The doll, made of straw, linen and ornaments, symbolises the Slavic goddess



Marzanna. This was responsible for the death of nature due to the coming of winter. The drowning or burning of Marzanna marks the beginning of spring and stands for a new beginning and a good harvest.

Important

Exemplary traditions in Poland are the Polish Easter, Wet Monday, Greasy Thursday, and the sinking of the Marzanna.

Traditions from Spain

Is it customary in your country on 1 April to make jokes at the expense of others and then shout "April, April" loudly? If you were to do this in Spain, you would probably be looked at in a strange way. In Spain, jokes and nonsense are only made on 28 December. However, that's when the Spanish citizens really get into it. Be suspicious if you experience the following in Spain on 28 December:

- The newspapers publish nonsense and false news, such as that Spain has won the World Cup in football.
- Someone offers you something sweet and you discover it is filled with chilli.
- You see a coin on the street and try to pick it up, but it sticks.

After the prank comes up, people shout „**Inocente, inocente**“(innocent).

The **running of the bulls in Pamplona** is a great spectacle and a magnet for tourists, although it is a controversial event in Spain, both internationally and in terms of animal welfare. Based on a medieval tradition, "San Fermín" always takes place on 6 July at 6 am. For nine days, locals and visitors alike celebrate the dangerous festival in traditional red and white costumes.



If you want to see an entire town throwing tomatoes at each other, come to Spain in August. Every year, about a thousand kilos of tomatoes fly through the streets of Buñol, a town near Valencia, in the "Tomatina" **tomato fight**. Around 40,000 participants show off their throwing skills and enjoy this fun event.

In Spain, however, it is not only tomatoes that are thrown. In Haro, an annual **wine battle** takes place. Originating from a border dispute with a neighbouring town, this tradition always takes place on 29 June after the Holy Mass. All participants splash each other with red wine in hectolitres.

Important

Spanish traditions include the 28 December pranks, the wine battle in Haro, the tomato battle and the Pamplona bull run.

Traditions from the Czech Republic

Do you know the national treasure of the Czech Republic? If you were thinking of precious stones, you were a little off the mark. In hardly any other country is **beer** so tied to national identity as in the Czech Republic. With a brewing tradition dating back to 993, there are over 300 brands of this national drink. You will certainly know the names Pilsner and Budweiser.

The **setting up of a Maypole** is one of the most important spring traditions in the Czech Republic. The Maypole is a felled and colourfully decorated tree that is installed in the village on 1 May and is often stolen by men from neighbouring villages the night after it is put up.



If you long for everlasting love, then head for Valentine's Day, 1 May under a blossoming cherry tree in the Czech Republic. On one of the most popular holidays for loving couples, you will find numerous people kissing under the trees in the hope that their love will not wither.

Important

Significant Czech traditions are, for example, the long beer tradition, the setting up of a maypole, kissing under a cherry tree on Valentine's Day and Whip Monday.

3.4 Living culture – from East to South

Due to globalisation and advancing technological developments, we meet other cultures more and more often. As you will have noticed, we are not all the same. The culture you grew up in determines how you see the world and how you communicate. But how do people from other countries see the world and how do they behave?

This section is about building cultural awareness that will enable you to better deal with cultural differences. Whether at work, with friends or in the supermarket, there are certain dos and don'ts that are important along with mutual respect and understanding.

Dos and Don'ts in Austria

If you want to make an impression in Austria, be punctual. Lateness or last-minute cancellations are frowned upon and leave a bad impression in both private and business life.

Practical reference

Austrian **punctuality** also means that public transport is always punctual and reliable. For example, even if the train is 5 minutes late, an announcement with an apology is made at the station.

Have you ever mixed up or compared a person from Austria with people from **Germany** and not made a good impression? While it may sound strange, Austrians take their nationality very strictly despite similarities such as the German language. Therefore, respect the Austrian culture as a distinct one and avoid comparisons with Germany.

If you ever have the honour of being invited to a meal, you always wait for the words "**Mahlzeit**" or "Guten Appetit". This is usually how the host or cook introduces the meal.

Although you can generally enter **public transport** in Austria, from trains to buses, without showing a ticket, it is not recommended to take advantage of this situation. Controls take place again and again and the inspectors show no mercy when it comes to excuses for not having a ticket. Heavy fines can follow.

Dos and Don'ts in Poland

Although many people in Poland, especially the younger generation, speak English, knowing a few basic words or phrases in Polish is much appreciated. This shows those around you that you have tried to immerse yourself in the **language** and culture of Poland.

Example

Keywords in Polish are:

Hello and bye - *Cześć.*

Thank you - *Dziękuję!*

Excuse me – *Przepraszam.*

Polish people are very hospitable. Strangers are always greeted with a **handshake** and friends with a kiss on the cheek. Strangers are addressed with "Pani" (woman) and "Pan" (man) before their surname.

As a pioneer in hospitality, guests are gladly offered a richly laid table. The best way to show your appreciation and **gratitude is to praise** the host or hostess often and abundantly and to bring small gifts from their homes.

Also, be generous when it comes to **tipping** in a restaurant. 10% is given for average service and 15% for good service.

Winter in Poland can be as cold as minus 16 degrees. Due to the warm and sturdy footwear, it is therefore common to take off your winter shoes inside the house. You can either go barefoot or **ask for slippers**.

Be careful when it comes to drinking **alcohol in public**. In principle, this is prohibited. If you are caught, you can expect a fine, which would be better invested in one of the many attractions.

Dos and Don'ts in Spain

In Spain, you don't need to worry about punctuality or expect it from your fellow citizens. For example, an event may be scheduled to begin at 7 a.m., but not until 7.30 a.m. Allow for these **delays** and do not interpret them as disrespect or unfriendliness.

Practical reference

Greeting in Spanish:

A kiss on the left and right cheek is common in greetings between men and women and between women. Men greet other men with a handshake.

Simple phrases:

Hello - *Hola.*

How are you? - *¿Qué tal?*

Surely you have heard of the **siesta**? This refers to the fact that in Spain people like to lie down for a short nap after dinner. So, they might find shops closed in the afternoon. This tradition is particularly useful in the hot summer months when you are much fitter for the long nights.

Tapas are small bites and a coveted way to eat. Traditional dishes such as smoked ham, cheese, olives or "patatas bravas" (spicy potato), spreads and "dátiles con bacon" (dates wrapped in bacon) are served. These appetisers are typically served in bars.

Dos and Don'ts in the Czech Republic

When doing business in the Czech Republic, never go straight into business talks. First of all, it is important for people to build up **personal relationships** and sympathies. The interpersonal aspect is therefore very important and should always be taken into account when dealing with business partners.

For an impressive and respectful interaction with your fellow citizens from the Czech Republic, here are a **few tips for getting to know each other** for the first time:

Practical reference

Initial greetings are formal and rather reserved. Handshakes, direct eye contact and appropriate greetings are valued. A change from formal to informal greetings is usually only made after initiation by a woman, an older person or a person of higher status.

Just as in many other European countries, **punctuality** and reliability are lived in the Czech Republic and expected from others. By showing up on time for agreed meetings, you respect this long-standing tradition.

One of the cultural characteristics is that people have a preference for clear hierarchies. **Titles and job titles** as well as a respectful tone towards elders and higher-ups therefore play an important role. Always observe the correct form of address and manners.

Important

No matter which country you are in, it is always important to be open, to learn from other cultures, to respect differences and to be enriched by diversity in life, culture and tradition.

3.5 Culture – and where now?

Cultural education offers contribute significantly to cultural dialogue and exchange. Experiencing and creating together makes the often abstract reality of people from other countries more tangible. Immerse yourself in the possibilities of participation in cultural education for the further development of your own personality as well as your cultural empathy.

Remember

Participating in cultural education offers you the chance to deal with your own culture as well as other countries and cultures and to live an appreciative interaction with each other.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is made up of 193 member countries worldwide and contributes to the preservation of a culture of peace as well as to intercultural dialogue through education, science, culture, communication, and information. Sponsored cultural projects and initiatives are always available online: <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/ifcd/what-is>

Cultural education programmes in Austria

As an organisation that is over 100 years old, the **Kinderfreunde** always offers intercultural projects, such as training courses on "Art, Culture and Identity", a summer academy of international youth encounters or an "Erasmus and Youth in Action Seminar", where young people can exchange, participate and learn culturally. (Read more: <https://kinderfreunde.at/>)

With the initiative "**Culture: Education**", the OeAD (Agency for Education and Internationalisation) offers the most comprehensive arts and culture outreach programme with schools throughout Austria. As part of their lessons, pupils work with arts and culture professionals to strengthen cultural education and participation in schools. (Read more: <https://oead.at/de/der-oead>)

The **Federal Ministry of Arts, Culture, Public Service and Sport** and the **Federal Ministry of Education and Research** also offer numerous funding opportunities and calls for proposals, for example in the fields of film art, literature, composition, music and performing arts, visual arts and media.

Hint

Overview of funding opportunities in the field of arts and culture:

<https://www.bmkoes.gv.at/Service/Ausschreibungen/kunst-und-kultur-ausschreibungen.html>

Culture makes you strong:

<https://kumasta3.buendnisse-fuer-bildung.de/uebersicht-der-foerderer-und-initiativen>

Cultural education programmes in Poland

Have you ever thought about how much you can immerse yourself in Poland's cultural diversity by volunteering? The **International Federation Polska** (<https://ib-polska.pl/english/>) supports social and professional activation of excluded people. Exclusion often caused by nationality, religion, education or social status is counteracted through volunteer project work. Solidarity, social engagement, and exchange are promoted.

To support artists, producers, informal groups, institutions and organisations, the "**polanddances**" platform was founded in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Through this initiative, culturally and artistically talented people can present themselves and exchange ideas. (Read more: <https://polanddances.pl/>).

The **Scholarship Program** of the Minister of Culture Gaude offers a scholarship for people up to 40 years of age who want to engage in cultural creation. This platform supports one 6-month cultural cooperation between Poland and each of the neighbouring countries. The cultural fields include film, photography, literature, music, theatre and many more.

Hint

More details about the programme:

<https://www.nck.pl/dotacje-i-stypendia/stypendia/programy/gaude-polonia/o-programie>

Cultural education programmes in Spain

With more than 300 **Scout groups** and over 32,000 active Scouts, the Scouts are a popular way of cultural education and participation in Spain. The Scouts are an international educational movement for children and young people with the aim of holistic support and development of young people into responsible personalities. The Scouts are dedicated to a critical examination of themselves and the environment, as well as activities for a life close to nature and worldwide solidarity. (More about the Scouts: <https://scout.es/>)

A wonderful way to immerse yourself in Spanish culture is to take Spanish dance classes and workshops. **Flamenco** is probably the most famous Spanish dance and is an art form

based on folkloric musical traditions. There are also fandango, bolero, salsa, tange, flamenco and paso doble.

The **Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport** in Spain offers various cultural funding, such as for the promotion of modern Spanish art. With the aim of supporting the creation, dissemination and research of Spanish visual arts, both galleries and artists are funded. Another initiative is the Culturex Grants, which support practical training in cultural management for young Spaniards living and working abroad.

Hint

More about the funding possibilities:

<https://www.european-funding-guide.eu/scholarship/4160-grants-promotion-spanish-contemporary-art>

<https://www.european-funding-guide.eu/scholarship/4124-culturex-grants>

Cultural education programmes in the Czech Republic

Sokol is an international organisation that originated in the 19th century in the Czech Republic. With the aim of social and cultural exchange between members and their communities, Sokol shares sporting activities such as gymnastics. (Read more: <https://world-sokol.eu/en/basic-information/>)

Cultural **promotion and funding opportunities** are offered, for example, by the Visegrád Fund. This organisation supports cooperation in the fields of culture, education, innovation and development between the countries of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, among others. In particular, innovative projects that address the common challenges of these countries are supported.

The **Ministry of Finance** in the Czech Republic supports cultural participation, for example, by promoting initiatives in the field of restoration and innovative use of cultural heritage, cultural and creative activities and art criticism. Numerous projects include church rehabilitation and artistic community projects.

Hint

Visegrád Fund: <https://www.visegradfund.org/apply/grants/>

Ministry of Finance: <https://www.eeagrants.cz/en/programmes/culture/news>

3.6 Summary

Did this unit give you a good insight into the culture and traditions of other European countries? With the new knowledge you will have opportunities to **learn from different cultures** and to be enriched by the **diversity of other people's lives**.

Cultural symbols are **important elements of a culture**, and all European Member States have their own cultural symbols. Do you remember the examples from Austria, Poland, Spain, and the Czech Republic? Furthermore, the term **tradition was defined as the historical transmission of cultural knowledge of customs and traditions**, followed by a few examples from different European countries such as the Austrian custom of St. Nicholas and Krampus as well as the Easter traditions in Poland - here people enjoy a good meal! The Spanish running of the bulls in Pamplona and the Czech Whip Monday were also discussed.

The **do's and don'ts** mentioned differ greatly in some EU countries, so now you know that when travelling to Poland it is helpful to know a few basic words/phrases to express your appreciation of Polish culture.

Finally, you were given an **insight into the cultural education opportunities** in Austria, Poland, Spain, and the Czech Republic. Thus, you were offered numerous opportunities through projects, initiatives, associations and organisations to **actively participate in culture**.

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