



One Town, Many Stories: Exploring european citizenship through local and shared belonging



Main topic & European value

- ◆ **Core topics:** The evolution of European citizenship, focusing on the relationship between local or national identity and a shared sense of European belonging. The game asks whether these identities must compete, or whether they can be held together, using a small town's annual heritage festival as the testing ground.
- ◆ **European values:** Democracy and equality, with supporting threads of rule of law (legitimate, transparent decision-making) and human rights (the right of all residents, including newer arrivals, to belong and be heard).



Educational objectives

- ✓ Explain how European citizenship developed alongside, rather than as a replacement for, national and local identity.
- ✓ Identify concrete situations in which local and European belonging can reinforce one another.
- ✓ Evaluate competing community concerns about EU-linked initiatives, including legitimate fears about funding conditions or loss of local control.
- ✓ Apply democratic participation skills (listening, evidence-gathering, negotiation) to a local civic decision.
- ✓ Reflect on their own sense of belonging to multiple, overlapping communities at once.



Scenario overview

The player returns to their hometown after a year away (studying, working, or volunteering elsewhere in Europe) and takes up a short internship at the town council just as preparations begin for the annual Heritage Day festival.

This year, the council must decide whether to keep the festival exactly as it has always been, a celebration of the town's founding legend, or to also recognise the town's newer ties to Europe, built through an EU-funded youth exchange programme that has brought new residents, ideas, and friendships over the past three years.

The town is gentle but genuinely divided. Some residents feel the festival is the one day a year that is unmistakably theirs and worry that adding a European theme will dilute it or invite outside influence. Others, including newer residents and many younger people, feel left out of a story that does not yet include them. Councillor Ferreira chairs the committee that will decide the festival's format, and he is open to persuasion but will not be rushed by enthusiasm alone.

Over four exploration quests - the archive, the market square, the council hearing, and festival day itself - the player gathers evidence, listens to differing views, and drafts a proposal. The game does not present a single correct answer about what belonging should look like; it asks the player to build one community can recognise as fair.



Core mechanics & tasks

- ◆ **Exploration map:** the player moves freely around a top-down town map (archive, market square, council chamber, festival grounds) typical of RPG Maker-style design, unlocking new areas as quests are completed.

- ◆ **NPC quests:** each main location offers a short quest involving dialogue, light research tasks, and item or information gathering (for example, collecting resident opinions or archive documents).
- ◆ **Belonging meter:** a simple two-axis indicator (Local Trust and European Openness) shifts based on player choices, without ever rewarding one extreme over a balanced approach.
- ◆ **Council credibility:** a resource built through honest, evidence-based choices, required to unlock the strongest ending at the final hearing.
- ◆ Tasks include:
 - ✓ Quest 1: Research the town archive;
 - ✓ Quest 2: Gather resident perspectives at the market;
 - ✓ Quest 3: Defend a draft proposal at a council hearing;
 - ✓ Quest 4: Design and frame the festival's opening day.



Player role

The player is **Robin**, an 18-year-old former resident who has just returned home after a period away through a European youth mobility programme. Robin has no fixed opinion to start with: equally able to feel pride in local tradition and curiosity about wider European ties.

As a council intern, the player has genuine agency, choosing which evidence to prioritise, which residents to consult, and how to frame the final festival proposal. The player's choices shape both the Belonging meter and which NPCs become allies by the end of the game.



NPC profiles

Name	Role in the story & function in the gameplay	Personality traits
Mara	Mentor and town archivist. Runs the local heritage museum and has spent thirty years documenting the town's history, including the waves of migration and exchange that	Patient, curious, fond of long stories. Believes identity is layered, not a competition. Encourages

	shaped it long before the EU existed. Guides the player through the archive quests, offering historical context that complicates simple “us versus them” narratives.	the player to ask questions rather than accept easy answers.
Iris	Ally and childhood friend. Runs the town's youth centre and co-organises the annual Heritage Day festival. Helps the player gather signatures, test ideas with other young residents, and navigate the town's social map. Privately worried that talk of “Europe” will sideline local traditions they care about.	Warm, loyal, occasionally defensive about home traditions. Open to persuasion when shown respect rather than told they are wrong. Quick to laugh, quick to worry.
Councillor Ferreira	Opponent (nuanced). A long-serving town councillor who chairs the committee deciding the festival's future. Genuinely cares about the town's economic survival and fears that a town fund tied to an EU exchange programme could come with strings attached or dilute local control. Not hostile to Europe, but unconvinced it serves this particular town.	Pragmatic, sceptical, protective of his community. Responds to evidence and concrete local benefits, not slogans. Capable of changing his mind when shown respect and proof.



Dialogue options, choices & consequences

Dialogue or dilemma	Available options (2-3)	Short-term & long-term consequences
Quest 1 (The Archive): Mara shows the player two competing drafts for this year's Heritage Day theme - one centred only on the town's founding legend, one that also features the EU-funded exchange programme that brought	- Research the founding legend in depth, to honour the version most residents already know. - Research the exchange programme's local impact, to build the	- Iris is relieved and supportive; Councillor Ferreira is pleased, but the player has less evidence later for a broader proposal. - The player gains strong evidence for change but Iben feels the town's older



new residents and ideas in recent years. The player must choose which version to research first.	case for a shared-belonging theme. ○ Split time evenly between both, risking less depth on each but more balance.	story is being sidelined; trust dips slightly. ○ Balanced standing with both NPCs, but Mara notes the research feels thin in places, costing some credibility with the Councillor later.
Quest 2 (The Square): At the weekly market, residents share mixed views on whether the festival should add a "Europe Day" component. The player must decide how to gather and present these views to the council.	○ Collect only the views that support the player's own proposal, to make a stronger pitch. ○ Collect a representative range of views, including disagreement, and present them honestly. ○ Avoid the square entirely and rely on official statistics instead.	○ The proposal looks strong at first, but Councillor Ferreira later discovers the gaps and trust drops sharply. ○ Slower to prepare, but the council respects the transparency; long-term credibility rises with all three NPCs. ○ The proposal feels detached from real residents; Iris warns that people will notice they were not asked.
Quest 3 (The Council Hearing): The player presents a draft proposal. Councillor Ferreira raises concerns about funding strings attached to EU programmes and asks the player to respond under time pressure.	○ Argue that EU funding rules are not a real constraint and dismiss the concern. ○ Acknowledge the concern directly and propose a clause keeping final decisions with the town council.	○ The Councillor feels unheard; opposition hardens and the proposal nearly stalls. ○ The Councillor's trust grows noticeably; this option opens the strongest path toward a council majority. ○ Buys time but Iris worries momentum and youth



	○ Suggest postponing the vote until more research is done.	interest will fade before the next session.
Quest 4 (Festival Day): The final festival design is unveiled. The player chooses how to frame the day's opening speech to residents and visiting partners from the EU-funded exchange programme.	○ Frame the day as a celebration of the town's founding legend alone. ○ Frame the day as one story with many chapters - local, regional, and European - told side by side. ○ Frame the day primarily around the EU partnership, minimising local tradition.	○ Warmly received locally, but exchange partners and newer residents feel excluded from the town's story. ○ Strongest overall outcome: residents, Councillor Ferreira, and exchange partners all feel represented; sets up a recurring annual format. ○ Exchange partners are pleased, but many long-time residents feel their town's identity has been overwritten; local backlash follows.



Summary, debriefing & reflection questions

After completing the game, consider the following questions:

- ◆ What does it mean to belong to a town, a country, and Europe at the same time? Must one come first?
- ◆ Councillor Ferreira's concerns were not based on hostility to Europe. What made his objections legitimate, even where you disagreed with them?
- ◆ In what ways did the game show local and European identity reinforcing each other, rather than competing?
- ◆ How might a real town in your own country navigate a similar decision? What would success look like?



References & additional resources

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