

International Training on Gamification, game-based learning and the EU

EU Player Training | Report

Training in Lucca (IT), 25-27 March 2026

Summary

From March 25 until March 27, the **International Training on Gamification, game-based learning and the EU took place in Lucca, Italy**. The event was hosted by **Zefiro** and organised in collaboration with **YES Forum** as part of the **EU Player project** (European Participation through Youth Engagement in Role playing and game-based learning). The project aims to foster a sense of belonging and increase understanding of EU structures, values and decision-making processes among young people and youth professionals through a **fun, interactive and game-based experience**.

The primary training goal was to equip youth workers, teachers and other educators with both theoretical and practical knowledge of EU-focused gamification and game-based learning in a “train the trainer” setting. Participants will go on to train other educators locally on how to bring the EU to young people through board game play and also engage in play sessions themselves. Crucially, the training served as a kick-off for the **board game “Europe United”** developed within the project in cooperation with professional game developer **Red Glove Edizioni**.

Workshop: What is gamification and game-based learning?

After a round of introduction and welcoming, the first afternoon in Lucca provided an overview of the EU Player project, outlining the upcoming steps and the objectives of the training. Later, Zefiro’s gamification expert Alexa Dominici led a **theory-informed session on gamification and game-based learning**, and their application for formal and informal education. The speaker reminded participants on the significant **effects of playing games for the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development** of individuals. Participants also learnt to distinguish between game-based learning and gamification: the first one being an educational approach to enhance student engagement and facilitate the learning process where games become tools, while the second one refers to how game mechanisms - for instance competition and rewards - can be applied to learning contexts.



After this theoretical explanation, a **gamification lab** was set up where participants split into three different groups and played various educational games. The afternoon closed with a reflection on how the different games connected to game-based learning and gamification.

Europe United Game Play Session & video-editing workshop

On the second day, participants were introduced to the **Europe United board game**. A special guest – Federico Dumas from game developer RedGlove Edizioni - joined the training to explain the rationale, the challenges and the process behind its development. Europe United is an **exciting cooperative board game**, designed for young people to impersonate EU member states. Their challenge is to find a **compromise** between their individual country's self-interest and the common goal to be achieved in collaboration with the other playing nations. The game **translates complex EU structures - such as the European Single Market - into an accessible and engaging experience**. To make sure the game can be repeatedly played, different scenarios were developed where players have to solve big societal challenges such as climate change, a global pandemic or migration management. Alongside EU knowledge, **key skills such as cooperation, critical thinking, and democratic participation are fostered**. The participants then proceeded to play the game guided by the facilitators to understand its rules and mechanics. While very engaging, the game was still unclear in some respects and the valuable feedback from the educators will now be used to further improve the game.

In the afternoon, a **video editing workshop** led by Zefiro ensured participants gained communicative skills to promote the board game in their organisations and beyond.



Logistics of Gameplay Sessions & How to Build a Local Network

On Friday, participants received an overview of the logistical requirements for the project – ensuring that game play sessions are reported and implementation progress is monitored. **Local training** will start soon to ensure additional youth workers and educators from all partners can facilitate board game sessions for young people starting from the next school year (September 2026).

The next session led by Mirco Trielli (Zefiro) shared the experiences of Zefiro with successful **engagement strategies** to build a local network and ensure the board game reaches different schools, youth clubs and organisations in the local community. Through different activities - such as developing an engagement manifesto or mapping the local stakeholders - participants learned how to reach their target groups.

Another important skill session was led by Elie Demerseman (External Expert) on **how to train trainers** and facilitators, through **tricks and tips** coming from his extended experience as trainer of trainers. Lastly, the afternoon sessions were devoted to presenting the **EU in pills**, sharing online resources for participants on EU education and testing the participants' knowledge of the EU through a game quiz.

Annex 1 – Programme

Arrival & Day 1 – Wednesday 25th March

Welcome & Introductions

Afternoon I **What is gamification and game-based learning and how to use them?**

A theory-informed session on gamification and game-based learning, and their application for formal and informal education.

Gamification Lab

Afternoon II A chance to play various educational games and reflection on how the different games connected to game-based learning and gamification.

Day 2 – Thursday 26th March

Europe United Game Play Session

Morning Participants get to play the brand new game – and get help in their first game play by the director in charge of game development himself!

How to communicate the game: Video Editing workshop

Afternoon Lead by an expert from Zefiro's training centre, participants learn how to communicate about the game through short video snippets.

Day 3 – Friday 27th March

Logistics of game play sessions & Engagement strategies

Morning Participants receive an overview of the logistical requirements for the project and tips and tricks for local trainings. They learn how to build a local network and work in groups to determine their local strategies.

European Union in Pills

Afternoon Where to find information on how to convey general EU knowledge to young people? Overview of resources available, key knowledge for each game play scenario as well as an EU Quiz!

Day 4 – Extra Day – Saturday 28th March

EU Player – From Playing to Awareness: Gamifying European Values

Morning Workshop session at Lucca Collezionando Fair presenting the EU Player project and board game to the wider public!

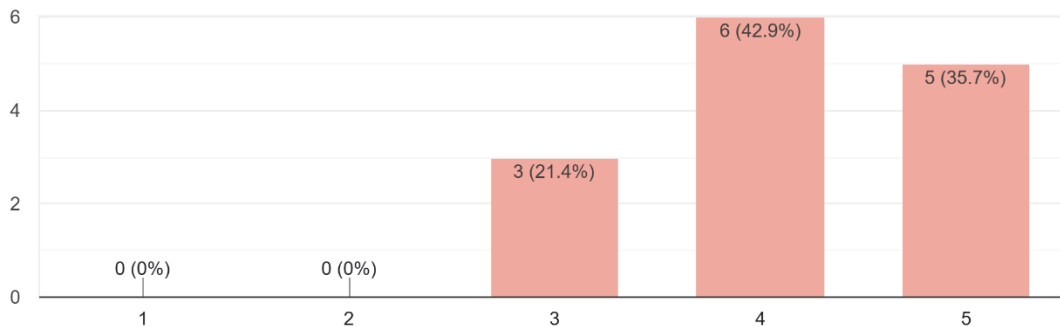
Afternoon Departures

Annex 2 – Evaluation by participants

As shown by the summary of participants’ feedback below, the EU Player International Training in Lucca **was clearly a success!** The results do also show that there is still some further support of trainers needed before they go into playing the game – we will continue to support them and keep them up-to-date with game updates developed using their feedback!

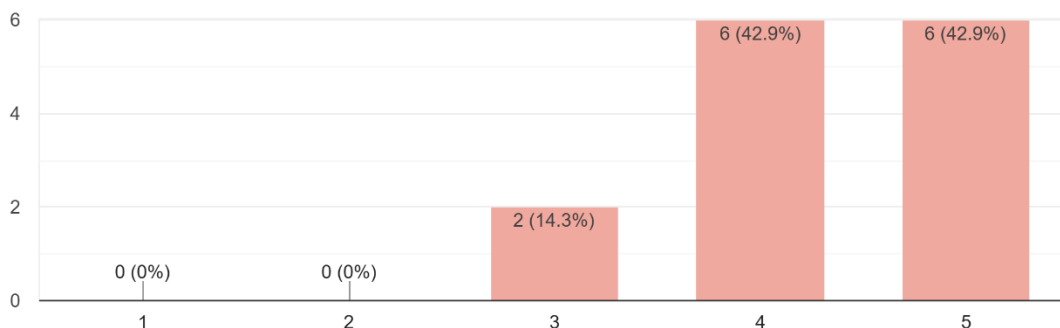
Q14. How satisfied are you with the training overall?

14 responses



Q9. How confident are you in engaging young people through interactive and participatory methods?

14 responses



Q6. How confident are you in facilitating a learning session using a game (explaining rules, guiding, debriefing)?

14 responses

