European Conference
**The European Union and the Promise of Democracy:
What can Citizenship Education and Civil Society contribute?**

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Report

Workshop 3
Diversity of concepts of citizenship education in Europe:
Is there a need for a common understanding?

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Inputs:
Dr. Avril Keating, Institute of Education, University of London (UK)
Andreas Karsten, Demokratie & Dialog e.V. (Germany)
Moderator: Marinko Banjac & Tomaz Pusnik, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)
Number of participants in the workshop: 45 participants (incl. contributors, moderation and rapporteur)

Content

As the moderators indicate at the beginning of the workshops the overall target was the transfer of knowledge and the share of experience among the participants, as well as a fruitful intersection between theoretical insights and practical issues.
The questions of the conference served as guiding lines and the main objective was the one proposed originally by the NECE Conference:

Is there a need for a common understanding, common reference framework and common concepts on the field of citizenship education?
Is the potential divergence of the concepts, policies and frameworks influencing on European Citizenship and on the day-to-day practice of citizenship education?

However, these were complemented with the following, previously placed at the beginning of the session by the moderators:
How is situation at the moment? What is or what are the contemporary goals of citizenship education? Where are the main obstacles on the theoretical and practical level? Who should we address?
What are the future perspectives? Which are the main challenges that citizenship education (CE) will face, which topics will be on the forefront of CE and what is your vision, how you would like that CE would function as a field and which topics/methods would you like to expose?

What has to be done by whom? What should be the role of policy makers, scholars/researchers and practitioners? What is the role of formal, non-formal and informal education and which are common tasks and what should be the focus of each approach? These were handled very flexible taking the participants' interest into account in the debate that follows the imputers' presentations.

Regarding the input, the workshop started with Avril Keating, who pointed out that over the past two decades there has been an upsurge in the number of European activities that seek to promote cooperation and best practice in citizenship education policies. A key rationale for these activities is that countries are facing common and complex challenges that transcend their borders; trans-national policy cooperation, it is believed, can help states to pool their problems, share experiences and identify solutions efficiently. Across Europe, similar themes emerge time and time again: active citizenship; active learning, community participation, critical thinking, conflict-free problem solving, intercultural communication, global and European citizenship. These are terms that you will commonly find in CE policy statements, and this pattern lends the appearance of convergence, and least in terms of the policy aims. Yet, through her presentation, Dr. Keating showed that there is still remarkable divergence between European countries' policies. One reason for this is that the structure of national systems continues to differ considerably. But a second and arguably more important reason she suggested is that the underlying imperatives of citizenship education have not changed, as citizenship education policies still seek to create and consolidate *national* citizenship. This means, she argued that it would be extremely difficult to create a common understanding of citizenship education, even if one were desirable. Dr. Keating then highlighted some of the pros and cons of this continued divergence. Further details about this presentation and its arguments are available in Dr. Keating's final paper.

Andreas Karsten, the second speaker gave a theoretical input on the workshop's topic, enriched the debate focusing on his contribution in the formulation of the issue and framework: *Chasing an illusion? The diversity of citizenship education practice in out-of-school education across Europe.* He stated that after decades of sharing best practices, harmonising policies and mainstreaming funding approaches, we are still confronted with an impressive number of definitions and understandings of citizenship, complemented by an equally impressive wealth of learning-for-citizenship frameworks and education-for-citizenship approaches in non-formal education. The question is if we are offering such a dazzling array of options because we are despair or if the overwhelming diversity is a wanted feature? This input highlighted that most of the times definitions don't match with practice and Andreas Karsten drew on several practical examples from current events as Lampedusa or questions about the future of the EU to illustrate his arguments. Finally, beheld at existing several understandings of citizenship and how it relates to current frameworks of out-of-school citizenship education across Europe, seeking to identify common elements and common challenges in an attempted response to the question: whether a common understanding, a common reference framework and a common overall concept are absolutely necessary – or absolutely counterproductive in the world beyond schools. Further details about this presentation and its arguments are available in Andreas Karsten's final paper.

After these inputs, questions and opinions arose and the time devoted to debate among participants was initiated. The moderator Marinko Banjac starts entering a question focused on European citizenship/s versus inherent rights. Avril Keating took the floor: "I think nobody knows what citizenship is; citizenship is everything and nothing. It has to do with culture, history and most of all, identity". About European citizenship, her concerns are that following precise and recent data, most European citizens don't know their rights or their impact in their every day lifes, despite 2013 subsist the European Year of Citizens. But main points of

the debate had to do with different understandings and some controversial questions asked by participants, such like:

- Why is the EU so passive? In schools where I work, we love to go to Brussels to the Parliament, why can we go there more often?
- I like the idea of Unity in Diversity or the Canadian idea of a mosaic, a beautiful frame made up a collection of different parts and each separate part (tile/patch) shines by itself. Do you think this can be an image for the EU?
- Do we need to choose between diversity of approaches and common frameworks?
- Different approaches are rooted in historical experiences at the same time. They force us to reflect and "negotiate" about principles, standards and visions of citizenship "shay" self-reflexive – do not finalize and "freeze" development.
- What future for a training of politics do teachers have at school?
- Formal civic explicit classes; formal curriculum; formal policy, or no?
- You talk about European Citizenships: How do you see this retreatment?
- What does "European Identity" mean?
- I know that you like to talk about rights when it comes to citizenship, but culture comes back to "hunt" us when it comes to how millions of people think about their identity. What do you think?
- As we are in a conjuncture of time that so many people are confronted with challenges in their daily life, does the question of a European identity really matter?
- Does the EU create an European identity to serve their EU dreams and keep preserved in the long term, growing the challenges & economics comments?
- There is much talk about citizenship education in schools. Teaching about democracy and human rights is great, but I believe that we cannot teach young people that they have the human right to talk and be heard; and that democracy is important, while in the same sentence; tell them that they cannot vote. Voting at 16 years old is a big topic. In your opinions, what are the pros and cons of votes at 16?

Findings

The environment during the workshop was very pleasant and relaxed. The high number of participants with so many nationalities and experiences on the topic - it was an encouragement to all.

As mentioned by Tomaz Pusnik at the beginning of the session, considering the increasing interest on the theme, the method applied was in order to secure findings and to collect as many ideas and contributes as possible. So, after the introduction of the speakers and the session in which the main questions given by the moderators were discussed, Avril Keating and Andreas Karsten presented their theoretical inputs that have led into a debate of all participants.

After the coffee break, the group was divided into two groups where they got the chance to debate about ideas for each of the three questions raised by the moderators. For each question they had fifteen minutes to summarize their notes. The moderators asked the speakers to join each of these two groups.

Marinko Banjac made a brief introduction of the theme stating that different environments imply different concepts about what *citizenship* and *education for citizenship* are and about different policy implementations and in the end it emerged out the three statements for the three questions regarding the topics of this workshop:

How is the situation at the moment?

Due to multiplicity of identities and perspectives (ideas) about citizenship there is no common definition/concept of citizenship and citizenship education. We are faced with variety of policy frameworks of citizenship education on different levels (national and European) reflecting

different goals, aims and interests, which can result in potential conflicts and dynamic responses. Globalisation (international flows, digitalization, etc.) and national histories contribute to this diversity.

What are the future perspectives?
Due to simultaneous processes of globalization and localization (including diversification of identities) not only different citizenships (e.g. digital citizenship) will persist but also new forms of citizenships will emerge. This will bring up continuous rearticulations and transformations of citizenship education. Possible responses are: fostering democratic culture, expanding the reach of citizenship education through more diversified tools and mechanisms, bridging the gap between theory and practice, strong responses to exclusionary (political, nationalistic) ideas and discourses and reflexive comparative research and learning.

What has to be done by whom?
Politicians and decision-making institutions need to provide stronger support for citizenship education in dialogue with civil society, individuals, practitioners and teachers. Formal, non-formal and informal learning and teaching environments must become fruitful framework for fostering participatory, creative and democratic approaches and practices (projects, teacher trainings, peer to peer education).

Final notes
In general, the audience agrees that different environments imply different concepts that citizenship is not limited to the citizen's legal status and to the voting right this status implies. It includes all aspects of life in a democratic society. Education for citizenship is therefore related to a vast range of topics such as sustainable development, participation of people with disabilities in society, gender mainstreaming, prevention of terrorism and many other areas. But mainly divergence of the concepts, policies and frameworks are more in focus and scope rather than in goals and practices.
The presence of delegates from non-European countries with little history of democracy means that the discussion focused on some of the additional challenges that they face in trying education for democratic citizenship.