

Preface: European citizenship and young people in Europe

Hanjo Schild, Yulia Pererva and Nathalie Stockwell

The topic of European citizenship has gained considerable political importance for both the Council of Europe and the European Commission over the past years. Without giving a comprehensive overview of the policies and programmes of the two institutions, some priority actions should be highlighted, particularly in the field of education, training and youth.

In the period 2006-08, the Council of Europe's youth sector is putting a special emphasis on:

- promoting and sustaining the role of youth organisations in the development of democratic participation;
- promoting citizenship education and participation of young people;
- promoting access of young people to decision making.

By establishing close co-operation between civil society (youth organisations and networks) and governments through a system of co-management, the youth sector has set up an exemplary model, which is used in practice for promoting young people's participation in democratic institutions and processes throughout Europe. The Young Active Citizens Award, the activities of the European Youth Foundation, work on youth policy development and particularly the educational and training programme of the Council of Europe's youth sector are complementary to these principles (for further information, see: www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth).

In the field of formal education, the Council of Europe is currently running a programme on Learning and living democracy for all, 2006-09, which includes a broad range of activities on education for democratic citizenship and human rights (EDC/HRE). Some examples of this work include: development of a set of manuals for various target audiences (known as the "EDC/HRE pack"), development of a framework policy document on EDC/HRE (which could take the form of a framework convention or a charter) and a co-operation research project with the European Union on Active citizenship for democracy, aimed at the development of indicators in this field (further information can be found online at: www.coe.int/edc).

Within the European Union, faced with the French and Dutch negative votes on the European Constitution, in 2005 the European Commission launched its Plan D (democracy, dialogue, debate), laying the foundations for a profound debate on Europe's future, in particular that of the European Union. The clear objective is to build a new political consensus on the policies required to equip Europe with the wherewithal to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to bring more democracy into the Union.

Also, the Europe for citizens' programme provides the Union with instruments to promote active European citizenship. It puts citizens in the centre and offers them the opportunity to fully assume their responsibility as European citizens. It responds to the need to improve citizens' participation in the construction of Europe and encourages co-operation among citizens and their organisations from different countries (for further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.html).

As an integral part of the European Union's youth policy, the White Paper on A New Impetus for European Youth encouraged EU member states to promote young people's active citizenship. "Getting young people more involved in the life of the local, national and European communities, and fostering active citizenship thus represent one of the major challenges, not only for the present but also for the future of our societies," the White Paper notes. Strong co-operation among member states (Open Method of Co-ordination) was put into place as a follow-up to this White Paper, concentrating on the implementation of concrete objectives in the field of youth participation, information and voluntary activities. This co-operation also aims at gaining better knowledge of youth. In July 2006, the European Commission adopted a communication on active European citizenship of young people. To actively involve young people in policy-shaping debates and dialogue, the EU emphasises the importance of a structured dialogue with young people. In 2007, the European Commission adopted a communication advocating a cross-sectoral approach to youth policies in order to enable young people's full participation in education, employment and society as a whole (for further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc26_en.htm).

European citizenship is also one of the priorities of the Youth in Action programme 2007-13. It aims to develop a sense of personal responsibility, initiative, concern for others, citizenship and active involvement at local, national and European levels among young people. One of the proposed objectives of the programme is to promote young people's active citizenship in general and their European citizenship in particular (for further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.htm).

Unsurprisingly, European citizenship and participation have also been one of the cornerstones of the Youth Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission since the year 2000 and still constitute a main focus. Given the growing importance of European citizenship in the youth policies and programmes of both partner institutions, the Partnership has developed and is still developing a number of training and research activities, as well as publications in this field.

The flagship of the Partnership training activities in this field are the training courses on European citizenship. Various training modules, targeting youth workers and youth leaders as multipliers, have been developed since 2001. In 2007, an ambitious programme of training courses on European citizenship, to be implemented by the National Agencies during the Youth in Action programme (2007-13), was launched by the Partnership in co-operation with the SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre. These courses are accompanied by other important initiatives such as a mentoring and support strategy for former participants and a Training-kit on European Citizenship. The main motivation behind the organisation of the training courses on European Citizenship is to encourage participants to explore and "live" the concept of European citizenship by sharing their own experiences and reflecting on their identities. Once they go back home, many former participants start exploring, promoting and building European citizenship through youth work projects. This fully corresponds to the new priority of the Youth in Action programme, mentioned above.

Within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean co-operation, the Partnership organised various training courses focusing on a broad notion of citizenship, beyond its European dimension: "Participation and Intercultural Exchange", "Human Rights Education and Citizenship" and "Citizenship matters – Participation of Women and Minorities".

In youth research and youth policy co-operation, the Partnership convened a series of research seminars, specifically for young researchers, which are in one way or another linked to the topic of European citizenship. Their themes were “Political Participation”, “European Youth Voluntary Activities”, “Diversity, Human Rights and Participation” and “Young People and Active European Citizenship”, the results of which are documented in this edited collection (for further information, see: www.youth-partnership.net).

But why is the topic of European citizenship so relevant for the political institutions in Europe? In recent years there have been many debates in our societies with regard to the future of Europe and its institutional and conceptual development. The Treaty of the European Union, the accession of new countries to this Union and the disapproval in some cases (in other cases, the denial) of potential candidates for membership show that there is no clear common vision of the political future of the continent.

Furthermore, people feel that the European institutions do not operate transparently, that they do so behind closed doors, and are distant from the citizens. There is today a growing feeling among (young) people that the representative political institutions are far removed from their realities, and often they are right. Especially young people coming from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds often lack appropriate communication channels and access to information; they articulate their concerns and interests in many other ways, which are often neither heard nor understood by policy makers, institutional representatives or even teachers.

On the other hand, many people, especially the young, play an active role in constructing and creating this Europe, they are committed to the European ideal and an open, inclusive and socially cohesive society. For them Europe is about respect for the fundamental values of human rights and the rule of law and a place for increased mobility in which they live, work, study and travel.

Despite all the activities and political priorities mentioned, many (not only young) people still do not exactly know what the concept of European citizenship means and, above all, they do not know how they could integrate this concept into their own life, nor into youth work.

It is against this background that increasing knowledge and a shared understanding of the notion of European citizenship, and of the political, legal, social, cultural and economic framework in which it is embedded, was given considerable importance. To this end, the Seminar on European Citizenship wanted to make these captivating and controversial issues a subject of academic discussion. The political, social and emotional dimensions of European citizenship, the sense of community and belonging, diversity and otherness, dignity and integration need further discussion, emphasis and knowledge.



Ditta Dolejšiová

Introduction: Europe, citizenship and young people

Issues related to European citizenship and European identity represent an important area of discussion among policy makers, researchers, as well as educators and youth work practitioners. Yet, “European citizenship” is undoubtedly an expression that is not part of the vocabulary of many young people living in Europe today. “In the process of construction ...” says the title of this publication – referring to the ever rolling debate on living in, belonging to, participating in, being excluded from and still building the community of people in Europe.

Europe is facing a variety of challenges in the process of its political, economic, social and cultural developments. It is almost sixty years since the process of European integration modestly began in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the signature of the Treaty of London in 1949 establishing one of the oldest intergovernmental organisations working towards peace and reconciliation in Europe – the Council of Europe. Led by economic reconstruction, the gradual strengthening of the political aspects of the European Community was occasioned by the end of the Cold War, which opened up new possibilities and perspectives for the integration process. Inspired and supported by the

proclaimed “end of the nation state” by academics (Ohmae, 1996; Beck, 2008), the vision of a new supranational Europe, in which the responsibility for policy making would shift from the national states to the European institutions, has become in many different ways a reality. In spite of the fact that European political integration has not been a smooth process, since the mid-1990s there has been a considerable increase in European Union members from 12 to 27. As the enlargement process continues, the supranational “European dream” is on its way to being achieved.

The term “Europe”, which refers to a geographical continent, is often incorrectly used as a synonym for the European Union. Nevertheless, and in spite of different national interests, Europe is united as never before: at the time of writing, at the beginning of 2008, 47 out of the 48 states on the European continent subscribe formally to the principles of the rule of law, democracy, human rights and freedoms, and social justice as members of the Council of Europe.¹

“Europeanness” has in some way become an integral part of life for many people living on the European continent through the processes of institutionalisation of European bodies and global interconnectedness, integration towards a single European market, and the increasing possibilities of mobility, information, knowledge and cultural exchange, study, work and trade. With the rise of the European Union, a region with no borders and one currency has gradually become a new reality for more and more Europeans.

At the same time, this reality, characterised by a period of transition towards democracy and restructuring of international economic and geopolitical power relations, has also brought a renewal of civic conflicts and new forms of terror, as well as a crisis of the sense of security and the alleged failure of multiculturalism and integration. Despite the increasing possibilities offered by a globalised economy and integrated markets, there appears to be a call to return to national and local levels. The overall increase in human insecurity, fear of unemployment and the necessity to accommodate “others” gave rise to right-wing extremism, and an apparently benign strengthening of national identities as a source of individual pride. Young people were naturally among those who benefited most from all these developments in a number of positive (for example, mobility and new opportunities) as well as negative (for example, youth unemployment and prolonged transitions to adult life) ways.

Europe, during its process of “construction”, should be shaped and defined by its citizens. Nonetheless, Europe does not seem to provide sufficient opportunities for its citizens to contribute to this development. This lack of possibilities for ordinary people in Europe to get involved in decision-making processes at local, national and, especially, European levels contributed to the ever growing legitimacy gap between the European institutions and its population. Young people, in particular, have a special interest in and concern about what kind of Europe they want to live in. However, the existing mechanisms that should contribute to the strengthening of their role in building Europe, more often than not, obstruct informed and participatory involvement. It is therefore important to reflect on how European citizenship and debates on European identity can help to empower young people to actively contribute to building Europe.

¹ At the time of writing all states on the European continent, except Belarus, were members of the Council of Europe.

The recent actions of national governments promoting a reinforcement of immigration policies has encouraged a perception of Europe as a “fortress” or an elite club, closed to all those who are not formally recognised as being part of it. Bearing in mind the changing demographic and sociocultural patterns in Europe, along with an ingrained understanding of who belongs and who does not, how many young people residing in Europe are considered as “outsiders” or “others” and are treated as such on a daily basis?

The legitimacy crisis, reflecting mistrust of European institutions, together with growing intolerance at national levels – through xenophobic and racist discourse – represents an ongoing concern for all those working towards a Europe based on dignity, human rights and social justice. Researchers, practitioners, policy makers, as well as European institutions as a whole, should work together to understand better the existing challenges and explore new ways to address the issues related to Europe and European citizenship in their respective fields of work of knowledge, policy and practice.

Contemporary discourse on citizenship, and European citizenship in particular, mirrors the changing circumstances in an enlarged Europe that is working towards the development of a new, more democratic face, in which all young people will have the right and the opportunity to participate. Yet, in reality, many still witness these new developments only as unheard observers.

Youth participation is often considered as a key mechanism for the construction of citizenship. First, this is due to its educational function, leading to social participation and associative life. Second, it is due to its democracy-building quality, leading to representativeness and democratic culture. Nevertheless, its impact and effectiveness for citizenship formation have been essentially contested in this process as well.

As much as there are increasing efforts to promote and develop new mechanisms for youth participation, real opportunities for doing so at local, national and even European levels are still relatively scarce for the average young person. At the same time, it can be observed that the apparent apathy and lack of political participation among young people, revealed by a growing tendency not to participate in elections or by the fall of membership in political parties, trade unions and NGOs, may be misleading. It may simply reflect a lack of trust in traditional political institutions, as well as a shift towards new emerging forms of expression, which are not so easy to examine, such as the Internet (Forbrig, 2005). The general lack of relevant and adequate education, combined with unequal access to participation, and a great reliance on mainstream national and local media (Eurobarometer, 2007), may be some of the reasons for negative approaches to “Europeanness” among some young people.

Considering these changing patterns, what does European citizenship mean for young people living in Europe? How can European citizenship work in practice, if not all young people share the same rights? How could it be inclusive, if exclusive by definition? How can it work for all those who live in Europe, including immigrants, their children, undocumented workers and asylum seekers? In what ways can civic education contribute to the process of strengthening European citizenship?

Originating in a research seminar promoted by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the youth field, which brought together researchers, practitioners as well as policy makers in November 2006,

this publication reflects a joint interest in the issues of European citizenship and young people. As a result, this collection of articles gathers different perspectives in relation to the conceptual basis for European citizenship, as well as perceptions on how young people reflect, understand and eventually participate in the construction of European citizenship through their actions, or at least in terms of civic education and training.

Ultimately, the purpose of this book is to strengthen the connections between research, on the one hand, and the policies and programming on European citizenship in the youth field, on the other. This should contribute to better-informed and evidence-based policy making and programming among the European institutions, as well as governmental and non-governmental actors in the youth field. At the same time, this debate offered an opportunity for researchers to enlarge their scope of understanding, with a reality check on the fields of policy and practice.

Such joint reflection on the process of construction of European citizenship resulted in a broader understanding of it, which is centred on exploring European identity rather than focusing exclusively on the status and rights involved in membership of the European Union. Yet, not all authors decided to approach the discussion in this way, and at times the notion of European citizenship was used interchangeably with that of citizenship of the European Union.

Taking this into consideration – and as will become clear when reading the different contributions – it was found that European citizenship is still a contested concept, which brings together two notions and therefore two different conceptual debates: one on Europe and European identity, and the other on citizenship and non-citizenship.

→ Reflecting on Europe and European identity

More often than not, Europe is defined by what it is not, rather than what it actually is. According to the research on orientations of young men and women to citizenship and European identity (Jamieson et al., 2005), which examines issues of European identity among 18-24 year olds living in Europe, it became evident that for many young people the geography of Europe was not confined to the European Union. Although clear definitions of Europe were not expressed, “geography and the political alliance of the European Union were found more important than values and tradition or the economic alliance expressed by the euro”. Yet, only about half of those surveyed felt that they had a European identity.

According to studies on identity making, opportunities as well as material and cultural resources for “being European” are distributed unevenly (Jamieson et al., 2005). While there are divergences in understanding Europe – either as a fluid concept, developing together with the changes in global society, or as the traditional concept linked to the institutional and political formation of the European integration project, which delineates the political-legal status of citizens in the European Union – it becomes clear that in both cases, an understanding of “Europeanness” requires experience of identity formation, which is not offered to all young people in an equal manner. Travel, mastering European languages, and knowledge of “European” music, art and literature, combined with the basic welfare package and appropriate civic education, are simply not available to all young people living in Europe, and not even to all those in the European Union (Jamieson et al., 2005).

Furthermore, until relatively recently, political messages in relation to European integration and “Europeanness” did not particularly address young people and their interests, such as their concerns about unemployment or independent living (Chisholm et al., 1995; Nagel and Wallace, 1997). Except for a minority of young people involved in the formation of Europe through participation in youth work and other cultural, sport and civic activities, the majority of young people were excluded from resources for and the debates on the development of European identity, and therefore also from being European in an aware and articulate manner.

However, in what ways is it possible to make “Europeanness” available and meaningful without replicating the patterns of social inequality and, on the contrary, going beyond them? In what ways can “Europeanness” be effectively promoted beyond the privileged social, cultural, financial or political elites? How to establish links between socially distinct communities of young people that would otherwise not have an opportunity to experience “Europe”?

Some scholars (Putnam, 2000) argue that this may also happen in a natural way through a process of bonding, in which people interact based on a common interest or a common goal. Yet, it is not clear to what extent even the existing pan-European networks involved in anti-racism, environmental, peace or other social movements foster interconnectedness and a common cause among young people (Jamieson et al., 2005).

And yet, youth work at the European level, expressed in diverse forms of educational activities and exchange programmes, and developed and supported by the Directorate of Youth and Sport and the European Youth Foundation, together with the recent Youth for Action programme of the European Commission, demonstrate that “Europeanness” is being lived, whether as a political and social status, or as a cultural or social identity.

→ **Citizenship in the European context**

Against this broader supranational framework and the controversies it involves, it becomes clear that citizenship in the European context cannot be defined in the same way as in a national context. If European citizenship is considered to be a work in progress, its developments require the participation of its population in its creation. European citizenship cannot be simply defined by a scholarly debate on citizenship that certifies the relationship between the individual and the state in terms of a status, experienced by young people in its formal and rather asocial nature when using an identity card, or at the passport control. Citizenship in the European context needs to refer also to the living conditions and social and political rights of young immigrants and young people without status, who represent an integral part of the European continent.

Besides, it is the social interaction, at home and among peers, that stimulates young people to negotiate their ways of interacting with the society and the community they live in. Given a different access to “Europeanness”, it is only in rare cases that a young person needs to negotiate their citizenship or an understanding of it with the authorities. In practice, no individual, whether from a member state of the European Union or not, can go and question their status in Europe in a direct manner.

This calls for a broader understanding of citizenship, which is “conceptualised not just as a status that can be given and taken by the state but as a set of social

practices of engagement with civil society over governance issues at personal and local level" (Jamieson et al., 2005).

According to this alternative approach, citizenship goes beyond the political science definitions and strives for a "more total relationship, inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging" (Werbner and Yuval-Davis, 1999). Matters of concern to citizens should be confronted on a daily basis. Although according to the 1997 Eurobarometer study, the main concerns of young people were employment, social inclusion, the fight against social exclusion, peace and security, with not much importance being given to the relationship with the European institutions, a similar study ten years later refers to the necessity to consult young people before any public decision that concerns them is taken.

As much as citizenship has been linked to identity, belonging and common concerns, citizenship in its essence engenders a distinction of "others", of the non-citizens. While at the national level this may lead to a nationalist discourse arguing against difference, the supranational dimension of "Europeanness" calls for an expanding understanding of citizenship, which is based on a conscious and active dialogue with other citizens that celebrates diversity and protects human rights. The reality confirms that developing this sense of European identity, which is personal and based on individual experiences of young people living in Europe, is not an easy task, as it requires "everyday social interactions that emotionally invest in and habitually practise as well as consciously express this type of active citizenship" (Jamieson et al., 2005).

Considering the human rights based approach to European citizenship, which extends further than the continent's borders, it could be easily understood as a step towards a global identity and humanity without frontiers (Levy-Strauss, 1966). In this sense, instead of basing European identity and citizenship on states, territory, national and cultural traditions, it should be founded on a legal identity, which celebrates human rights and democracy, and is impartial vis-à-vis cultural communities, while celebrating their diversity (Delanty, 2000). This legal identity refers to the process of identification with democratic and constitutional norms that provide a basis for a citizenship that goes beyond cultural complexities and calls for a legal system that is fair and neutral in its practice. This kind of active citizenship is based on conscious articulations and negotiations through everyday social interactions. Yet, the legal basis for such European citizenship practice is far from reality when compared to the provisions at national level. The legal dimension of European citizenship is only so developed, there are some extra rights, but recourses to any form of legal protection or legal redress are limited. Whether the framework of European law could be adequately developed to provide rights and protection to all citizens at the European level is still to be examined.

The commitment of the two European institutions, the Council of Europe and the European Union, is to invest and inspire other local and national resources for a European citizenship that is meaningful for young people and their everyday life.

Yet, it remains a reality that this broader understanding of European citizenship and its expression is far from being widely incorporated into formal and non-formal education systems or used in the mainstream media. In addition, investment tends not to reach all the young people in the different social strata. It is to be noted that citizenship education in Europe is not universally taught and, if it is, is usually related to national rather than European citizenship. It is of great importance

to consider including elements of European citizenship education into existing curricula, as well as strengthening non-formal citizenship education efforts in the mainstream.

Taking this into account, this book, by means of its contributions, provides a reflection on European citizenship according to the following four thematic areas: the conceptual basis and understandings of European citizenship, inequalities between citizens and “non-citizens” living in Europe, changing patterns in and forms of youth participation in society, and approaches to citizenship education. The last two contributions of this book specifically address the implications of the research on policy, educational and youth work practice.

→ Overview of contributions

The different schools of thought on European and national identities, cultural versus rights-based approaches, and the debates about sameness versus otherness, as well as the overall conceptual basis of European citizenship, are discussed in the contributions of Supriya Singh, Jan Dobbernack, Oana Balescu and Tamara Ehs.

Starting from the European dream and the European integration process, Supriya Singh explores the theoretical foundations of citizenship by highlighting the pitfalls in contemporary sociological discourse. While equal rights are being promoted, as an ideal to work towards, the very essence of society inspires group-differentiated rights and multiple memberships. On the basis of the concept of “other” present in European societies, Singh elaborates a “post-colonial critique” of the existing approaches towards European citizenship, arguing that these also shaped the process of European identity formation through their historical colonies.

Cultural affinities, as a basis for shared identities, that can lead to patriotic sentiments are critically discussed by Jan Dobbernack. His essay distinguishes between the two poles of European mystification and patriotic morality, on the one hand, and the aspirations promoting universal values, and rights and responsibilities, on the other. By combining these different approaches, Dobbernack contemplates on their repercussions in relation to citizenship education and young people.

European citizenship, seen from the point of view of eastern European countries, has often been used as a policy tool kit to attract new member states. Yet, different countries used it for different motivations: overcoming socio-economic backwardness, guaranteeing protection against a hegemonic neighbour, or promoting civic and modern identities. In her contribution, Oana Balescu offers interesting insights into European identity formation and an understanding of nationality and citizenship in the pre-accession countries, by arguing that through the process of multiple transitions, eastern European countries are more prone to nationalist views. With the priorities on economic and legislative integration, national identities, embedded in their historical-geographical contexts, will have to face various challenges in order to facilitate their renegotiation with others.

A call for demythologising the European project, presented by Tamara Ehs, ponders the paradox of developing European identity to overcome nationalism using the techniques of heroism and imagined community to promote it. This picture is contrasted with the rationally based concept of civil concern, which focuses on the real interests of citizens in the affairs that concern and affect them. While thinking about how to strengthen a sense of civil concern and turn young people into active and concerned citizens, Ehs explores the facts of demography and the

changing generations for whom unification of Europe is a reality. By exploring examples of young people's attitudes to European identity, she demonstrates that multiple identities among the majority of European youth are a reality that cannot be contested. Instead, the focus should be on the history of Europe to be told in a demythologising way, which would encourage a dialogue enabling participation and expression of concerns.

The processes of European integration came hand in hand with the processes of exclusion and "othering". The challenges in the process of identity formation among immigrant communities in the Netherlands and Germany are discussed by Syuzanna Vasilyan and Meral Gezici Yalçın.

In the example of the Netherlands, Vasilyan analyses the immigration crisis of the Dutch pillar system and its approaches to the integration of immigrant communities. By looking at traditional security, demographic, economic, cultural and social measures, and the "new" categories of gender and youth, Vasilyan highlights the trends and policy implications for the lives of migrants. In relation to young migrants, their living situation is twice as poor as their young Dutch counterparts, when compared to indices of school dropouts, youth unemployment and juvenile delinquency. Although the new policies, based on positive discrimination, account for specific strategies for migrant youth, the lack of an integrated approach may lead to ever greater resentment and separation of the "others".

The effects of citizenship status on political participation of immigrant youth are examined by Meral Gezici Yalçın, concentrating on the cases of Turkish, Greek and Italian communities in Germany. On the basis of a quantitative research, Gezici Yalçın argues that attitudes towards the "country of origin" and the "receiving country" influence young people's willingness to obtain German citizenship, as well as their decision to participate in collective action. In her contribution, Gezici Yalçın observes that the process of in-group identification with the country of origin varies across the different minorities, and while among Turkish and Italian youth a stronger identification with their country of origin leads to higher levels of participation, young Greek people show the opposite reaction. Participation of immigrant youth in society depends not only on their feelings of belonging, but also on their education level and their official citizenship status.

New forms of involvement together with the shift of concepts when looking at participation of young people in civic life and their engagement in political action were examined in the contributions of Elvira Cicognani and Bruna Zani, and Bram Vanhoutte.

By looking at the role of social relationships, Cicognani and Zani explore the different dimensions that give young people a sense of community. Based on research among adolescent youth in Italy, the authors confirmed that community attachment plays a role in the development of social participation during adolescence, which provides a basis for developing behaviour that reflects civic responsibility and increases active citizenship. Participatory approaches that involved entire communities, for example, in the school contexts – schoolteachers, school principals, teachers, students, parents, etc. – and not only adolescents, had a much higher impact on young people's participation in the community they live in.

Based on the example of young people's engagement in political action in Flanders, Bram Vanhoutte examines the patterns and the new forms of youth participation in social and civic life. Pondering whether the alternative expressions effectively

complement the traditional forms of participation, Vanhoutte differentiates between four political behaviour patterns: political conformists, political inactives, supporters of direct action and political activists, through which young people in Flanders express their political preferences. Lastly, Vanhoutte emphasises the factors that contribute to a particular political behaviour, describing therefore the participation patterns that contribute in significant ways to influencing society.

Challenges of access to citizenship by “invisible” social minorities and multidimensional social exclusion, which limit the capacity to enjoy and access citizens’ rights, are discussed in the case of young LGBT people. A contribution by Judit Takács explores the notions of intimate citizenship and the barriers to its realisation within a community membership and in the attainment of a social status. Based on European research into the living conditions of young LGBT people in 37 countries, similar situations of vulnerability and exclusion could be observed in the family, school, workplace as well as in the media.

In an attempt to overcome the democracy deficit and strengthen participation mechanisms among organised youth, civil society and the European institutions, the European Commission has implemented the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC). In her research, Kamila Czerwińska analyses the adequacy of this method in relation to the specific characteristics and needs of the youth field by examining its scope for action and its implementation in practice. Through exploring the limits and challenges of OMC, Czerwińska discusses the possible implications of such structured dialogue on youth attitudes to European citizenship.

The possible models for civil engagement are equally central to the contribution of Terry Barber, albeit viewed from a very different angle. In taking the point of departure as the relationship between the individual and the community, his analysis looks at possible reasons why some young people fail to engage with their communities. The essay suggests that a genuine citizenship can be achieved when practitioners work with young people in an open, supportive and democratic manner. Based on empirical research, Barber highlights good practice in developing processes for active youth citizenship, and offers a new model of engagement between young people and their social counterparts.

Promoting active citizenship through school education has been a priority in many European countries. Based on research conducted in Sweden, Tiina Ekman identifies the reasons for negative attitudes towards political participation, as well as attractive forms of political participation among upper secondary school students. Ekman argues that in order to prepare students to participate actively in society, more attention should be paid to the political competences that are determined by gender, socio-economic background and the choice of study programme.

Developing opportunities for vulnerable young people to participate in their local communities certainly represents a challenge. Through the examples of three different projects within youth clubs, secondary schools and the local community developed in co-operation with the City Council of Berlin-Neukölln, Franziska Süllke emphasises the lessons learned in strengthening opportunities for citizenship education in a community where young people from migrant background represent a majority. Among others, Süllke’s contribution highlights the importance of the communication strategy and practical applicability when discussing issues of citizenship, participation, partnership, social cohesion, mutual understanding, equity and solidarity.

Recognising the importance of the conceptual clarifications and the different forms of practising European citizenship by young people, the last two chapters gather observations and recommendations that translate the outcomes of the research presented elsewhere in this publication into the areas of policy and practice.

While Nathalie Stockwell and Hanjo Schild highlight the lessons learnt and policy implications within the context of the programming of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, Miguel Ángel García López focuses on the lessons learnt in the context of educational and trainers' practice.

→ Acknowledgements

This publication, as well as the research seminar that preceded it, would not have been possible without the contributions of many committed people. Particular thanks for their work and ideas go to Alana Lentin, who stood at the very beginning of this process, as well as Marta Mędlińska, Hanjo Schild, Yulia Pererva and Rui Gomes from the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe and Nathalie Stockwell of the European Commission's Youth Unit. Emin Amrullayev, Olga Artsiukh, Barbara Giovanna Bello, Konstantinos Ioannidis, Sandra Jancauskaite, Anouk Kopriva, Erzsebet Kovács, Kateryna Mamonova, Alix Masson and Hazel Patterson contributed to the seminar discussions that are reflected in this book. I would like to thank Yael Ohana and Nicolle Pfaff for valuable advice during the editing process.