



Greetings, fellow citizen, and welcome to the T-Kit on European Citizenship. The theme of this publication is one which seems to be on many people's minds today – including yours, clearly.

The Council of Europe and the European Commission have made European Citizenship the Number One Priority in their Partnership Agreement on European Youth Worker Training. As institutions, they are aware of interest from their member states to do something about this topic. First on the topic of citizenship – how can we stimulate young people to engage more in society? Why does there seem to be so much disillusion and disinterest in traditional politics? – which is where our politicians feel it, of course. Secondly, the additional element of Europe – what meaning does this community have for people? Do they even perceive Europe as a community to which they belong?

Why do so few young people vote in the European elections? Is there a future to Europe? If the answer is “yes”, then today's young people are going to be the ones to shape it.

Disillusion and frustration with politics today is particularly noticeable amongst young people in Europe. Political leaders often appear to be missing vision and passion for the important things in life. Once elected to govern, political parties seem powerless to change anything fundamental in the face of the apparently inevitable process of globalisation.

Yet many young people have ideals, visions and passion. They express those in multiple ways as active citizens outside the formal democratic structures. Seeing the problems, they want things to change. However, our political leaders do not seem able to respond. And if people want to act, at what level should they engage? What impact can the local youth organisation have, when faced with the massive global issues that are beamed into our lives via TV and computer screens? As we become more aware of the global, we are challenged to make sense of it in the local.

Europe can provide a bridge here. As nation states are perceived as being less influential and less relevant in our globalised lives, Europe can provide a trans-national space for communication and action. Young people know there is a bigger world out there, and Europe can provide opportunities for exploring, learning and engaging.

There is also a more historical drive to the European project. Within living memory, neighbours all across Europe have been enemies at war, with young Europeans called up to kill other young Europeans. In more recent history, we have seen similar tales of sorrow and destruction unfolding in the East of our continent. Developing a European Citizenship is also about investing in the future, so that we and our children are not forced to look at our fellow young Europeans down the barrel of a gun.

This is a key time for Europe. The European Union is committed to a programme of enlargement, welcoming new member states in the coming years. Times of change like these always bring both opportunities and threats. Opportunities for easier travel and human contact between young people from all over Europe, for experiencing life in different cultures and societies, for widening our horizons and developing our ability to deal with the difference and complexity that we will encounter. Threats will come from the increased diversity that we meet, both on a surface level in terms of our ways of doing things, and on a deeper cultural level. Alongside that, is the challenge that integration into a bigger political block brings to nation states.

Education for European Citizenship will have to engage with these issues. An important element of this will be to ensure that attitudes based on respect underpin the development of a European identity, to safeguard against it becoming a mere extension of exclusive nationalism. Europe should be the forum where shared values can be acted upon, within Europe and with regard to those outside – wherever we should see the boundaries.



This T-Kit aims to help people who are working with young people in Europe to develop activities on the theme of European Citizenship. These could be people who use European Citizenship as an approach in youth work, and / or carry out activities about European Citizenship. So it should be useable for international groups, as well as single nationality groups.

As a team writing this publication, we have a number of expectations. We hope that you find the T-Kit open and provocative. We have deliberately not provided a recipe book – this is improvisation cuisine – in order to stimulate more thinking and questions, to create curiosity and a desire to learn more and try things out. We hope it provides a framework for you to orientate yourself in this work, and that you are able to use the insight in your own reality.

This T-Kit does not come to life until you make it happen. So enjoy the read, then go out and use what you have learned. And don't stop thinking, using and learning. As with everything in this world, it is under construction...

Your T-Kit team

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