**European Network of
Education Councils**

STATEMENT

EDUCATION FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

EUNEC SEMINAR

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Introduction

The concept of EU citizenship was formally introduced as a legal concept in the Maastricht Treaty (1992), which aimed to strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of EU nationals. In accordance with article 17 (formerly article 8) of the Treaty on European Union any person who holds the nationality of a member state is a citizen of the EU. EU citizenship, which complements and does not replace national citizenship, comprises a set of rights and duties additional to the rights and duties of national citizenship.

EU citizens enjoy the rights conferred by the Treaty and are subject to the duties imposed by it. Every EU citizen:

- has the right to freely move and reside within the territory of member states, subject to the restrictions and conditions laid down in the Treaty and by the measures adopted to enact it;
- (who resides in a member state of which he or she is not a national) has the right to vote and to stand as a candidate at municipal elections under the same conditions as nationals of that state. The same holds true for election to the European Parliament;
- is entitled to protection by the diplomatic or consular authorities in the territory of a third country in which the member state of which he or she is a national is not represented;
- has the right to petition the European Parliament;
- has the right to apply to the European Union ombudsman.

For the European Union to succeed in achieving its goals and ambitions, Europeans need to be aware of their shared values, history and capacities. The European constitution may be a source of inspiration: it includes some provisions regarding fundamental rights and citizenship. In accordance with article 1.2 of the draft European constitution the Union is open to all European States which respect its values and are committed to promoting

them together. Article 2 mentions the values upon which the Union is founded: respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These are common values in a society of pluralism, tolerance, justice, solidarity and non-discrimination.

Inspiration may also be drawn from the proposal for European competencies[1] that was created under the Lisbon process. Under the Lisbon process a number of working groups have been established to elaborate and specify the objectives of the process. A proposal has recently been formulated to develop a set of key competencies, including European competencies. This proposal may serve as a reference point for assessing the efforts of member states in fostering citizenship through education. Establishing a Europe of education and training, the Europe of education and training is build on three elements. One of the elements is the consolidation of the Europe dimension of education: in 2010 all education systems should ensure that their pupils have by the end of the secondary education the knowledge and competences they need to prepare them for their role as a citizen in Europe. This entails amongst other things stepping up language teaching at all levels and strengthening the European dimension in the training of teachers and in the primary and secondary curriculum.

Statement[2]

European societal citizenship encompasses knowledge and acceptance of societal and political practices in Europe and a willingness and ability to contribute to a (shared) European culture.

- At *the meso level* European citizenship education should focus on the different European communities. Learners should be able to successfully participate in outside school activities (including work) in the different EU member states. This form of citizenship education looks at the student as a participant in the European education community and as a future European citizen in his relationship with fellow European citizens.

- At *a macro level* European citizenship education may focus on the acquisition of knowledge of societal and political processes within European society (in particular the history and workings of the democratic process); it should boost learners' willingness and ability to become participants in these processes, particularly European state processes, and to deal with European institutions and national governments.

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[1]   European Commission (2003). Communication of the commission 'Education and Training 2010', The Success of the Lisbon Strategy hinges on urgent reforms. Joint interim report (5499/04).

[2]   The CEF (Conseil de l' Education et de la Formation de la Communauté française) has examined these statements on November the 23rd 2004. The CEF means that the text is very dense and very long and that it is difficult to declare itself globally in agreement with the form and the content. Therefore, the CEF has made a balanced judgement. The CEF agrees with the first part of the text, which is very general and defines the global positions. However, we will have to evaluate the concrete consequences, which may occur when we implement these positions. The agreement must be seen under this reservation. The CEF cannot agree with the second part of the text, particularly concerning the list of competences. The CEF has not the authority to give advice on scholar programmes.

European citizenship has to be related to the perspective of broader social and cultural diversity , both at the level of every day life and at the global level.

Living in a multi-cultural society is not an easy perspective/duty for all Europeans. Because of this multi-culturalisme, a reflection on European citizenship should not only take into account the perspective of European values and rights by itself. European citizenship has to be related to the perspective of immigrants with a Muslim background, immigrants from Africa, form the Caribbean, etc. For European citizens this fact obliges them to reflect on their own tradition, culture and values in a global perspective. On the interpersonal scale of a local community, there is a growing challenge of putting European citizenship (with its ethnic, political and moral aspects) in the perspective of living with people coming from other traditions.

This intercultural dialogue in order to find a new social cohesion, must find a balance between the openness/acceptance of difference and integration in the European citizenship, and respect for diversity and the development of communality.
The same evolution is seen on the worldwide scale. Europe as a political project has to grow in globalizing world. Once again European citizenship has to be put in perspective with the concept of citizenship of other important political powers. European citizenship built on the humanistic tradition of our continent, should also encompass a responsibility towards the construction of a more peaceful and prosperous world order.

European citizenship is one level in a global concept. In the citizenship-concept the following levels are integrated:

- personal responsibility of the individual;

- responsibility in social networks/ communities;

- citizen in the local community;

- citizen in the region and national state;

- citizen in the European context;

- citizen of the world.

An important goal of civil society on the European level is to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of networks and communities through which learners (future alumni) gain access to the social resources necessary for securing and maintaining employment and for acquiring a place in national society and European society. Education may thus play a valuable role in enhancing social cohesion.

European citizenship needs to be developed at the individual level as well as at the group level. To become European citizens people need to connect with society, which can only be achieved if they feel involved in it. If people are or do not feel accepted, that is if they are not full members of a group or community, they do not feel responsible. For this reason, the primary objective is to strengthen public engagement with society and particularly with Europe. The second objective is to determine if schools and other educational institutions are making full use of existing opportunities for citizenship education, and which measures (if any) need to be taken to improve this situation.

What contribution do schools make to establishing and providing access to social networks and resources?

In order to fulfill their public responsibilities European citizens need to be well-informed and equipped with knowledge; they need to have gained practical experience and they need to feel connected to the community.

Learning for active European citizenship is competency-based learning. A European citizenship competency means that the citizen possesses 'the abilities to apply knowledge; and skills and attitudes to adequately perform activities in a European context. The citizen is able to act responsibly and actively participate in Europe's public domain'. Schools and education systems take a responsibility to prepare all categories of youngsters to behave as citizens, active and responsible.

To achieve that goal the following conditions are essential:

- A participate class and school culture in which active citizenship is cultivated.

- Democratic competences must have the support of the whole school structure

- Today schools may have many pupils from a wide variety of different backgrounds. This microcosm offers opportunities for young people to learn how to live with diversity.

- Social and communicative skills have a prominent place.

1 Components of the European citizenship competency [3]

To the European citizenship competency, we formulate the following components

1.1 Knowledge competency

A student possesses knowledge of:

- a common European history in different perspectives, culture and capacities; this includes the European ideal and the integration efforts since 1945;

- the political and legal rights and duties (including power, consultation, expression of opinions, decision-making, institutions and processes, notions of the law, state and freedom);

- the socio-economic domain (including labour, trade and wellbeing);

- the socio-ethnic domain (with aspects such as education, spare time, family and group formation);

- *the working of political institutions;*

- *negotiation strategies.*

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[3] For the Vlor it is not realistic to advice the Flemish minister of education to add all the competences mentioned in the draft statement to the final objectives imposed by the government

A student is able to clarify:

- the role of international institutions and the functions performed by European institutions;

- the enhanced visibility of the global dimension of our society, as well as other economic, political and ethnic issues. Is aware that this may create problems and conflicts as well as new opportunities.

A student is able to explain:

- the complexities of international collaboration.

A student respects:

- democratic outcomes.

1.2   Capacity development competency

A student possesses:

- a welcoming attitude towards immigrants and a willingness to recruit newcomers to enhance Europe's capabilities.

A student is aware of:

- a joint, though diverse, European culture and its development, characteristics and testimonies.

A student is able:

- to participate in Europe's multilingual environment and its ethnic richness.

1.3   Networking competency

A student is able:

- to participate in collective activities in Europe aimed at resolving economic, ecological, social and political problems;

- to participate in extra-curricular activities aimed at strengthening ties between learners and the school and between learners and the educational process; this may involve natural learning, that is to say that the extra-curricular activities are integrated into the learning process;

- to participate in defining clear-cut and jointly agreed school rules, that will produce the best results with respect to learning to build and maintain social networks so as to gain access to social resources.

A student is aware of:

- his own responsibility for his behaviour.

A student is involved in:

- voluntary community service (they engage themselves in democratic procedures and strategies).

Citizenship competences should be regarded as transversal ones, i.e. not as a separate subject but as topics within different subjects (history, geography, language, teaching, etc.), or as a project.

This transversal concept is one of the core ideas of the propositions of the working group B regarding citizenship[4]. A competency-based concept of citizenship includes the concept of a school as a place where citizens learn to act as responsible and democratic citizens. A participative and democratic school concept is part of this.

To achieve these goals, the following measures concerning student mobility be given priority:

- promotion of bilingual education;
- focus on the European dimension and on foreign language mastery in teacher-education programmes;
- promotion of pupil exchange schemes, particularly schemes aimed at vocational pupils.

2   Europe as a project[5]

Europe is a project. Over the past decades this project has continually changed; it will continue to do so over the next few decades. Establishing the boundaries of the Union in terms of geo-politics, tasks, powers and procedures will take a considerable amount of time and effort. The education sector should not work towards a static goal but should become involved in the project entitled Europe. The recommended European citizenship competency, broken down into different competencies, may well be a helpful tool for successful participation in that project.

An important contribution of the education sector to the project Europe is more transparency in qualifications. This concerns both vocational (Copenhagen process) and higher education (Bologna process). This transparency is necessary to obtain more mobility, both professional and academic, which is an important contribution to European citizenship. Above, professional and academic mobility and the development of a European citizenship concept must be linked stronger.

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4   Following the competencies of working group B, The EUNEC competencies can be a fruitful input for the further development of the competencies in the working group

5   The communication of the commission of the directorate Youth is a useful supplement to the promotion of citizenship in education

3   School networks

Schools should be stimulated to participate in school networks across EU member states so as to strengthen the European dimension in education. If these networks are to function effectively, supporting measures will need to be put in place. Such measures might include identifying, classifying, and analysing educational practices; organising expert meetings; and disseminating good practices. Interested schools should be able to sign up for (European) citizenship education activities under existing and new European Union programmes. Projects designed to enhance the European dimension in education should be strengthened. To what extent should schools contribute to the notion 'I am proud to be a European'?