NECE Expert Workshop
"Crossing Borders. Migration and Citizenship Education in Europe"

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City Hotel
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A workshop report by Ted Huddleston

Aims

The aim of the workshop was to identify and clarify key issues for discussion and make recommendations for potential programme formats for the forthcoming NECE conference in November 2016.

Participants

The workshop brought together representatives of civil society organisations from a range of European countries, and also from Tunisia and Egypt.

Focus

The on-going European response to the issue of migration and its implications for citizenship education in European countries.

Workshop sessions

The workshop began with a welcome by Caroline Hornstein-Tomić, Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany) and Zlatko Šabič, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and introduction by Christoph Müller-Hofstede, Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany). This was followed by a mapping exercise, facilitated by Oliver Gnad, Bureau für Zeitgeschenen in which participants expressed their expectations for the workshop and shared their experiences of the response to migration and the "refugee crisis" in different countries.

Panel I

The first panel session, with input from Samuel Abrahám, Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts, BISLA (Slovakia) and Eleonora Poli, The Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI, Italy), considered the impact of migration in different European societies. In a rich discussion, participants focused on the twin themes of **anti-immigration** and **anti-EU** sentiment.

A key feature of recent migration history, it was argued, was a noticeable **lack of solidarity among European citizens either with migrants and refugees or with the EU as an institution** - individual acts of generosity, such as those shown by the inhabitants of the Greek island of Lesbos, notwithstanding. Rather, solidarity has tended to be selective, e.g., with victims of atrocities in Brussels or Paris, but rarely with those dying in the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time, **migration has generally been conceived as a national rather than European or wider international issue.** Typically, it has been presented as **a threat to the national way of life**, e.g., in the form of 'alien' culture, foreign workers taking local jobs, strain on welfare services, terrorism or criminality.

This response to migration, it was suggested, has been compounded by a number of factors, including:

- The **lack of a unified policy response to the "refugee crisis" from the EU** – not simply in terms of the failure to control EU borders, but also in relation to the underlying causes of migration beyond its borders.
- The **validation of anti-migrant rhetoric by mainstream political parties** in a bid to secure the popular vote by appearing tough on immigration.
- The existence of **real suffering and social concerns in citizens' daily lives** – e.g., through inequality, austerity measures, rapid cultural change – which are likely to be exacerbated by inward migration.
- The **loss of a positive narrative commanding popular belief in the EU as an institution** – early notions of the EU as a guarantor of security being replaced by one of economic liberalisation.

The more fundamental problem, it was argued, is the **absence of a sense of European identity**. Identity is necessary for anyone to feel **compassion for 'the other'.** It is the **basis of citizenship** and is rooted in **a sense of belonging.** The task, therefore, is to create **a concept of Europe to which people can feel attached** and **in which they feel they have a part to play**. Such a concept cannot be retrieved from the past, however. It cannot be constructed on the basis of common history or religion. A **new model of European citizenship**, it was proposed, will need to be an 'integrationist' or 'inclusive' one – one which takes account of the rapidly changing make-up of and diversity within European societies, and which gives due recognition to the presence of non-citizens.

The challenge, therefore, is **how to create such an identity**. Clearly, it cannot be imposed from above, but has to be built. In part this means **addressing areas of social policy** which give rise to and reinforce anti-European sentiment, such as inequality, austerity measures, etc. However, given its potential to shape and expand identities, there must also be **an important role for education**, in particular, citizenship education.

Panel II

In the second session, Bryony Hoskins, University of London (UK) and Louise Métrich, Tom Lantos Institute (Hungary) considered the role of citizenship education in societies facing migration and diversity, and, in particular, lessons learned from the recent experience of Brexit in the UK. Issues discussed included the **declining emphasis on active citizenship in schools** in the face of agendas promoting employability and entrepreneurship; the **separation of citizens from and anger with the political establishment**; the significance of **structural inequalities and effects of austerity and globalisation** on the experience of citizenship; and the general **loss of trust in the EU among EU citizens**– as evidenced by Eurobarometer.

First and foremost, it was concluded here is a widespread need in Europe for a type of citizenship education which will enable citizens to **re-engage with the political system, including with the EU**. One which promotes a form of citizenship which is **active** and **critical -** encourages critical analysis of social inequalities and injustice; recognises and appreciates diversity; and generates a sense of belonging not only nationally but also locally and internationally. Crucially, however, it needs needs to promote **a new inclusive form of citizenship –** one with which non-citizens and citizens alike can identify and be identified.

The experience of participants was that **citizenship education is generally weak** in European countries. There tends to be a wide gap between government rhetoric and reality in practice, a lack of teacher training, a general indifference in schools, an emphasis on the promotion of national to the exclusion of wider, including human rights, values, etc. One long-standing problem is that the field of citizenship education is covered not by one but by **a series separate initiatives**, each

supported by a different set of agents and organisations, such as 'education for democracy', 'human rights education', 'intercultural understanding', 'multicultural education', and so on. It was felt that **building bridges between these different emphases and approaches** should have high priority in any future developments.

Parallel Session I

This session was designed to follow up on the debate started the day before on the basic **problems Europe as a transnational project on the one hand and member states on the other hand are facing when they try to deal with migration and integration.**

The workshop set off with a short input by Eleonora Poli, Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI, Italy), a think tank. Eleonora referred to the strong populist "Five Star movement" in Italy which is exploiting the discontent of citizens in Italy by using the "EU" and the "euro" as a scapegoat for all ills affecting the Italian society.

She argued in favor of a multi faceted approach when trying to address populist discourses in Italy and elsewhere. On the one hand there is clearly room for improvement when it comes to functional deficits of the European Union and its institutions and agencies: **criticism of the EU should be therefore seen as necessary and important** in political conversation and citizenship education.
On the other hand, as Eleonora pointed out, there is a growing need of non-partisan information on the most basic facts regarding the workings of the European Union. **Misinformation and distortion of facts and statistics are too often successfully used by populists in order to dismiss everything "European" as elitist** and against the "man on the street".

The following discussion elaborated on these useful points and stressed that apart from the issue of the European Union as such **migration has become the most important topic not only in countries like Germany and the UK** but also in Serbia where many trends are visible towards Serbia transforming itself from an emigration society towards a country receiving and integrating migrants.

Parallel Session II

With input from Milan Hrubeš, Charles University / Masaryk University (Czech Rep.) and led by Adam Newman Turner, School Development Support Agency, SDSA (UK), this session focused on teaching approaches appropriate for citizenship education in European societies characterised by migration and diversity.

It began with a discussion about the need for **a shift from methods in which young people are given "ready-made" answers to ones in which they are encouraged to think for themselves and reach their own opinions.** This was seen to be a particular issue in school systems in which didactic teaching predominates and is regularly promoted in initial teacher training. How to **support teachers** in this situation was thought to be an important issue, as also was the need to **allay parental suspicions** about the use of such an approach.

How to deal effectively with the **emotional dimension of citizenship education** provoked a good deal of debate. Whereas on the one hand it was felt important for the construction of new forms of European citizenship that **young people should be able to speak openly about their ideas and their concerns** in school, on the other hand it was clear that **there is also a need to protect individuals and minorities**. Two complementary approaches to dealing with this problem were recommended:

- Using **simulations, gaming and related methods** to allow young people to deal with potentially controversial issues by 'proxy' rather than as themselves;
- Instituting **rules of debate based on human rights principles**.

Two other important issues raised were the **danger of teaching active citizenship simply as a set of skills** and the need to help learners develop **a sense of where legitimacy lies in argumentation**. Regarding the first, an example was given of how skills learned in citizenship education lessons had been used later in nationalist campaigns. In the light of this there was a call for a distinction to be made between 'activism' and 'active citizenship' – the one being value-free, the other value-laden. The second drew attention to the importance of helping young people develop a sense of practical judgement in relation to argumentation used in key debates such as climate change, so as to be able to judge which arguments should be given the more weight.

Finally, reference was made to the **work that has already been done in this area** in different European countries, and, in particular, by the Council of Europe. This included the standards set out in the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. It also included reference to the development of different **indicators for active citizenship**, such as the Council of Europe competences for democratic culture, UNESCO indicators for global citizenship, PISA global competences and those used in IEA studies. The question was raised as to **how this work could be built on during the forthcoming NECE conference**.

Scenario training

The workshop ended with an exercise to uncover in more depth some of the trends, factors, forces and actors driving the debate on migration and integration in Britain facilitated by Oliver Gnad, Bureau für Zeitgeschehen (Germany). This consisted of Key Assumption Check (KAC) and a Structured Brainstorming Exercise (SBE). It was suggested that **a version of this exercise might be used in the NECE conference**, not focusing on a particular country but t**o inform thinking and planning around citizenship education in general**.

Issues for further discussion

During the course of the workshop a number of issues were identified for further discussion. These included:

- What it means to identify as "European" and how this relates to the EU as an institution;
- Developing positive narratives for the EU;
- How citizens and non-citizens, including migrants and refugees, can be brought together in more inclusive forms of European citizenship;
- How different European actors and organisations in the field of citizenship education can pool their insights and methods to develop a more unified and sustainable approaches to citizenship education;
- The relationship between different approaches to civic and social education – such as "citizenship education", "human rights education" and "intercultural understanding"
- What schools can teach about Europe and the EU and the methods they can use to teach this;
- The roles and responsibilities of teachers in teaching about political issues such as migration and the 'refugee crisis' and how they can be supported in these;
- Practical methods for handling the discussion of political issues, such as those relating to migration, which can be used in schools;
- The part that standards and indicators, such as the Council of Europe competences for democratic culture can play in developing new forms of European identity and citizenship.