

NECE



newsletter

News Information Conferences
Reflections Introducing Projects

03/12



**Focus
Reports
Introducing
Call for...
Political News
Information**

The EU and the Nobel Peace Prize /// The European Year of Citizens 2013: Expectations and objectives of the European Youth Forum
/// NECE Conference 2012 /// Human Rights and Democracy in Action – Looking Ahead: The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education /// EYCA – European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance ///

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

also in 2012 the European Union's financial crisis was the No. 1 issue. More than ever, it is now the question if the "European project" has become a failure and how things are supposed to go. Then in October, surprisingly the EU was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize**. Was that justified? We asked the director of the **Regional Representation of the European Commission in Bonn, Dr. Stephan Koppelberg**, what might justify awarding the Prize to the EU and in how far – particularly in times of crisis – this may contribute to motivating us all to further work on the "Project of Europe". **The European Year for Citizens 2013** might provide a great opportunity in this respect, as it makes Union citizenship, the rights of European citizens as well as citizens' democratic participation in Europe the focus of interest. What are the expectations and hopes particularly of those NGOs representing the interests of young people for this year? **The European Youth Forum**, an international organisation established by national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations in Europe, gave us some insight into their plans and expectations for 2013. In the course of the European Year, the **EYCA – European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance** has been established. Its tasks and goals will be presented under "Introducing".

In November 2012, this year's **NECE Conference happened in Córdoba, Spain**. Given the EU crisis as well as the transformation processes in the Arab world, questions of democracy and participation of all citizens were discussed. We have summarized the results of this very stimulating venture by a short overview. From Cairo, **Nelly Corbel** gives us her impressions, addressing the possibilities of further European-Arab cooperation; our observer at the conference, **Dr. Benjamin R. Barber**, sent us a summary of his impressions from New York. Further contributions, results and discussions at the conference are already found on our conference blog: blog.nece.eu. From mid-January 2013 on the complete documentation will be available on the NECE website.

Next year's NECE conference will be in **The Hague, The Netherlands**, from November 7-9, 2013. Please SAVE THE DATE: We will keep you posted about the development of the programme.

As in every edition of our newsletter, you will also find news from the European Commission, calls and a number of upcoming events and publications. We hope that you will enjoy reading and look forward to your suggestions.

We wish you, your friends and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Best regards,


 Petra Grüne & Christoph Müller-Hofstede
 Federal Agency for Civic Education

Content:

Focus

The EU and the Nobel Peace Prize

Interview with Dr. Stephan Koppelberg, Director of the Regional Representation of the European Commission in Bonn (Germany) _____ p.2

The European Year of Citizens 2013: Expectations and objectives of the European Youth Forum

by David Garrahy, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, European Youth Forum _____ p.3

Reports

NECE Conference 2012, 21-24 November 2012, Córdoba (Spain)

Statements by Nelly Corbel, The American University of Cairo - AUC (Egypt), Dr. Benjamin R. Barber, Political Theorist (USA), Christoph Müller-Hofstede & Petra Grüne, Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany) _____ p.5

Human Rights and Democracy in Action – Looking Ahead:

The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE), 29-30 November 2012, Strasbourg (France)

by Georg Pirker, DARE board secretary, Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten – AdB e.V. (Germany) _____ p.7

Introducing

EYCA – European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance

by Anne-Charlotte Oriol, European Civic Forum (France) _____ p.8

Political News _____ p.9

Call for... _____ p.10

Information _____ p.11



FOCUS

This section highlights current issues on the political agenda of the European Union or in the field of citizenship education in Europe.

The EU and the Nobel Peace Prize

Interview with Dr. Stephan Koppelberg, Director of the Regional Representation of the European Commission in Bonn (Germany)

On 10 December the Nobel Peace Prize 2012 was awarded to the European Union "(...) for over six decades contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe". Dr. Stephan Koppelberg, the Director of the Regional Representation of the European Commission in Bonn, talked to NECE about the Prize, the thus connected achievements as well as about the future of the EU given the crisis, and also about what this means for citizenship education in Europe.

NECE:

Reactions to the Nobel Peace Prize were as different as they could be. From your point of view, which were the achievements of the EU to justify that the European Union was awarded this year's Nobel Peace Prize?

Dr. Koppelberg:

The European Union's most important achievement is 60 years of peace on this continent. Europe struggled with wars over centuries. It's now living the longest period of lasting peace in its long history. After World War II the idea of economic integration, starting with the strategically important coal and steel industries of six European countries, made reconciliation between Germany and France possible. European integration helped to establish a peaceful community, nowadays reaching from Malta to Finland and from Ireland to Bulgaria. Over the years the European community has contributed to overcome the fascist dictatorships in Southern Europe and the East/West schism of Europe. Thus, it has propagated freedom, democracy and human rights in Southern and Eastern Europe. Currently, the EU contributes to reconciliation in the Balkans. The historical achievement is that the European Union has accomplished these fundamental changes in many states, systems and societies only by the sheer attractiveness of its model – and not by force, power, or arms. This is something all Europeans may be very proud of. Today a war between European Union member states is no longer conceivable. Whenever conflicts arise within the European Union, the member states are committed to negotiate to reach an agreement instead of raising arms.

NECE:

Negative reactions such as "... the European project has become a failure", "the EU as a bureaucratic, undemocratic monster" give the impression that these days Europe does not seem to have all too many fans. What is your impression in this respect?



Dr. Koppelberg:

Failure? The European project is the single most successful peace project in the history of mankind! With its unique supranational community method based on consensus it has attracted 27, soon 28, states into a union of values, of democracy and of rule of law. And more states are on the waiting list. Current plans for a banking union, an economic union and a fiscal union show the way to a fully-fledged political union. In fact, the EU is the most relevant role model for a possible future world government.

Democratic deficit? Virtually no piece of EU legislation can be adopted without the consent of the European Parliament, directly elected by EU citizens. And yet it is true that democracy at EU level needs to be developed further. Proposals from the European Commission's President Barroso and Vice-President Reding in this respect are on the table. The European Union is – and will for a long time be – work in progress.

Lack of support? Definitely, the community of fans could be much larger if only politicians of the EU member states would make more efforts to explain to their voters how they benefit from the EU and why they themselves as political leaders have always wanted their country in and not out of the European Union. Who has ever heard of any government elected into office for its proclaimed intention to lead its people out of the European Union?

NECE:

The Prize also motivates to look to the future and to courageously organize the future of Europe and the EU. Given the current crisis, what is your view of Europe's future? In this context, what is the role of Europe's citizens?

Dr. Koppelberg:

The prize is not only a recognition but at the same time – and even more so in times of crisis – a mission and an incentive. It is a reminder not to give up or to retrocede but, on the contrary, to jointly continue work on a unified and solidary Europe. Peace can never be taken for granted, not even in Europe. We have to safeguard it, and to develop it further, and therefore we need the

FOCUS

passion and the commitment of all EU citizens and particularly of the young people. The EU is facing big challenges. The financial and economic crisis is only one of them. Ageing population, climate change, and increasing energy dependence are other challenges – and there are more. We are optimistic that we can overcome these difficulties, but only if we work together. Not one of the EU member states will be able to cope with these challenges on its own. And we should take the responsibility to lead the world into a future successfully balancing prosperity, social and human rights, and environmental protection.

Again: it is crucial that member states step up efforts to explain all this to their citizens. Europe has its price, true – but it is also worth it. We also must continue raising awareness of the different possibilities citizens have to take part in the shaping of EU politics – and explore ways of rendering the Union even more democratic.

NECE:

How could – from your point of view – the European project be communicated more sustainably, and how could, precisely during the crisis, the citizens be motivated to support the idea and the project of Europe?

Dr. Koppelberg:

We need to better communicate the work of the European Union. It's important that the citizens know what the EU does and why. We have to underline the benefits of the EU. And we insist that the role of the member states is key in this respect: national authorities at all levels have to develop ownership of the European project and find ways of successfully conveying it to their citizens – in partnership with the EU's institutions. The citizens also have to be better informed about the achievements and the facilitation of their everyday lives by the EU. And of course, the citizens should be involved in the processes.

NECE:

What does that mean for citizenship education? What are the challenges, but also what are the opportunities for a European kind of citizenship education given these changes?

Dr. Koppelberg:

Citizenship education is very important for the functioning of any democratic community. It enables individuals to participate in civil society, community and/or political life, in a way characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy. Studies suggest that there is a significant return in terms of increased democratic participation and other measures of active citizenship behaviour associated with formal education. Tertiary education has by far the biggest impact. If you do not know the background of political decision-making you will not understand it. Studies suggest that school education plays an important role and adds significantly to what students learn by living in their respective societies. It may not even be the learning

experience of tertiary education as such but the access to it that creates the positive identity of active citizens. Lack of access to higher education might be one of the sources for negative attitudes, identity and behaviour. Good, accessible and widely spread education, especially tertiary education, is one of Europe's main trump cards in the global competition and thus an important part of any solution of the current crisis. It is also crucial for political stability and prosperity within the European Union. This is why the European Commission asks for increased investment in education at all levels even in current times of budget consolidation.

Press comments on awarding the EU the Nobel Peace Prize

The European Union has been awarded the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize. Some commentators endorse the decision and see the prize as a sign of hope in the crisis. Others comment that solidarity is dwindling in Europe, and that the EU would never have come this far without its partners. Here you may find some press comments of different European newspapers:

http://www.eurotopics.net/en/home/presseschau/archiv/archiv_dossier/DOSSIER112688-Nobel-Prize-for-European-unification

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FOCUS

The European Year of Citizens 2013: Expectations and objectives of the European Youth Forum

by David Garrahy, Policy & Advocacy Coordinator, European Youth Forum

The European Youth Forum looks forward to the European Year of Citizens 2013, with a mixture of hope, expectation and energy. Hope and expectation because we want to see concrete measures that will encourage and enable young people to be active citizens who make use of their citizenship rights. Energy, because the Youth Forum intends to use the year to highlight the cases of young people who are denied their rights as citizens across Europe.

The Youth Forum believes that young people need to be given access as well as encouragement to exercise the civil and political rights and duties recognised by democratic society. And for young citizens to be part of democratic life, a “culture of democratic participation” needs to be established that encourages young people to be part of democratic processes from an early age(1) on.

To progress toward this goal, in the Youth Forum’s 2010 Policy Paper on Democracy and Youth Organisations we called for the voting age to be reduced to 16 which would encourage young people to participate earlier and thus stay active and committed to the future. We also called for policies affecting young people to be developed through democratic co-decision procedures, where young people have the same rights and representation. To help in this process, we also called for more citizenship education through formal & non-formal education channels, noting also that the structures of democratic youth organisations provide young people with the possibility to experience and learn about the principles of participatory democracy and active citizenship first hand. In this paper we also welcomed the European Citizen’s Initiative as a good tool for the participation of young people.

In preparation for 2013, the Youth Forum sets forth its demands to the European Commission in its response to the Consultation on the EU Citizenship Report, which will be launched in 2013. The Youth Forum demands the rights to free movement and residence, non-discrimination and the right to vote to be made real. Among our requests were four measures to increase mobility through more funding for mobility programmes, a mainstreaming of youth mobility through funding, increased social security coordination among member states and support for entrepreneurs. We also encouraged the development of a horizontal anti-discrimination directive to protect against all forms of discrimination in goods and

services reaching out to all people potentially affected by discrimination and also an ambitious agenda to fight age discrimination. The Youth Forum also asked the European Social Committee for a documentation of discrimination against young people and the Fundamental Rights Agency to investigate the status of youth rights in Europe. We also repeated our call for young people to be able to vote at the age of 16 and for increased citizenship education.

As well as working on the above policies throughout the European Year of Citizens, the European Youth Forum is also participating in the Alliance for the European Year of Citizens, which consists of nearly fifty civil society based organisations from across Europe. The Alliance will promote activities aimed at building a citizen-friendly European Union and facilitate and support various expressions and mobilisation of active citizenship. As the Manifesto of the Alliance states(2), active citizenship is necessary to give active European citizenship its full meaning and help bridge the gap between the EU and its citizens. The Alliance defines active citizenship as including all aspects of life in a democratic society, relating topics such as education, culture, sustainable development, non discrimination, inclusion of ethnic minorities, participation in society of people with disabilities, gender equality including the equal representation of women and men in decision making. In this manifesto we call for the involvement of organised civil society in policy-making to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of public institutions, of their work and activities.

(1) Youth Forum Policy Paper on “Democracy and Youth Organisations” approved by Youth Forum Council of Members, 2010. 0057-10. Available at: http://www.youthforum.org/images/stories/Documents/Participation/0057-10_PP_Democracy_Youth_Organisations_FINAL.pdf

(2) European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance Manifesto http://www.civic-forum.fr/site/images/stories/pdf/eyca2013_manifesto_en.pdf

More information available at: www.youthforum.org
For contact David Garrahy, please use: david.garrahy@youthforum.org

More information about the Alliance for the European Year of Citizens please have a look at the section “Introducing”, p.8

Official Website of the European Year of Citizens 2013:
<http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/en/home>

REPORTS

Participation Now! Citizenship Education and Democracy in Times of Change

NECE Conference 2012
21-24 November 2012, Córdoba (Spain)

by Nelly Corbel, The American University of Cairo – AUC (Egypt)

This year's topic of the NECE conference: "Participation Now! Democracy and Citizenship Education in times of change" was a perfect platform for exchange between old democracies, recent ones and transitioning countries. The diversity of participants both in terms of sector and cultural background allowed for the development of a network of professionals dedicated to citizenship education across the Mediterranean. Like any successful conference, NECE was too short. Nonetheless, the format mixing plenary and smaller breakaways gave a chance to all participants to present their projects, one being more inspiring than the other. The challenge was rather to choose among the wide menu of options! Two weeks after the conference, we can reflect on what the NECE initiative brought to us in North Africa and how we can move forward. The current challenges for transitioning countries are the dear need for citizenship and democracy education both in terms of tools and in terms of methods for wide dissemination. The presented projects by the European counterparts can partly fulfill that need and especially provide us with some foundational practices and methodologies to scale up existing North African initiatives. As Egypt and Tunisia go through their transition, the two countries are currently under a state of urgency to insure a due process of transitional justice and governance before a new dictatorship takes over. One of the current threats to this transition is the low baseline of knowledge and understanding of democratic concepts creating a true challenge when voters are asked to make a decision for their future, even more so when this choice is determining the countries social contract. Current confusion include the mixing of majority rule vs. democracy, or of the desire for a perceived stability through a 'quick fix' vs. long term stability led by consensus building. This issue can lead to catastrophic consequences whether through the ballot box or in the streets, like the violence currently witnessed in both countries. Europe's old and recent democracies have developed throughout the decades a wealth of curricula and tools to embed citizenship education in their societies, which would allow a quick gain for organizations working in North Africa. However, it is crucial to tackle this dialogue as a partnership in which a proactive effort is made to contextualize these tools. NECE made the creation of this network and the beginning of a dialogue possible; nonetheless for deeper exchange to take place and achieve the above, working groups and a mid-year workshop were suggested in one of the concluding sessions as a necessary step, which will be a key in moving forward.

by Dr. Benjamin R. Barber, Political Theorist (USA)

The NECE conference 2012 in Córdoba was stimulating, challenging and innovative. It brought together NECE's traditional concerns with citizenship education and citizenship in the well established "old" European democracies with the fresh perspective of citizens in Egypt, Tunisia and the Middle East struggling to establish new democracies. This collision of old and new – the challenge of sustaining democracy in countries hurt by cynicism and disillusion and the challenge of founding democracy in societies long under tyrannical rule – proved to be a powerful stimulus for dialogue and debate. Although there are universal norms that characterize democracy everywhere, there are also temporal and cultural particularities that shape it in different ways in different times and places. This relationship between the universal and the particular was a subject of ongoing discussion. The debate suggests there may be a number of different roads to democracy, and a number of different kinds of "citizen education". Certainly the goal of overthrowing despotism is not the same as the goal of creating citizenship and democracy. A successful revolution (overthrow of tyranny) often leads to chaos, instability and even renewed tyranny (France in 1789, Russia in 1917, Iran in 1970). All of these ideas were vigorously debated in Córdoba, and the presence of many young people from North Africa was an inspiration to all – especially on the morning after President Mursi of Egypt announced himself the supreme power, seemingly above the law in Egypt, when a special two hours discussion interrupted the regular programme. As always at NECE, there was a great deal of productive debating during the regular programme, when organizers worked hard to 'warm up' the participants, also leaving plenty of room for contributions from the floor. But there was also extended and lively exchange during coffee breaks and meals, when delegates were able to converse informally and network. There was ample controversy (the views I express above, for example, were thoughtfully challenged by many delegates in their contributions) and there was a spirit of honest discussion and intellectual tolerance that made this conference a real success, especially as a model of what real democracy looks like. The workshops and practice panels allowed the Conference to include many more contributors to the programme and also balanced the theoretical debates in the plenary sessions with concrete and practical proposals for action. The conference was a real success, and delegates departed looking forward to next year's gathering in the Hague, the Netherlands.

REPORTS

by Christoph Müller-Hofstede and Petra Grüne, Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany)

By inviting more than 60 citizenship education experts and activists from the emerging democracies in North Africa (mainly Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco) the NECE initiative took a first step to establish a platform for dialogue and exchange between European and North African citizenship educators and democracy activists.

The concurrence of a severe crisis of the democratic legitimacy of the European project and the ongoing struggle for a democratic transformation in Egypt and Tunisia helped push the idea to discuss common concerns regarding democracy and participation on both sides of the Mediterranean. This was a first encounter and an experiment. It aimed at a dialogue and an expansion of the professional and intellectual horizons of the European as well as the North African participants. Four days of sometimes animated but always fair and insightful debates and controversies showed the great energy and capacity of the more than 250 participants from about 30 countries and made this meeting a success. The (NECE) mix of plenary sessions, workshops and networking markets and open formats available in Córdoba provided an atmosphere of a truly democratic forum with opportunities for everyone.

Important intellectual stimuli were given – among others by Claus Leggewie from the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities in Essen (Germany), who postulated that a common past should also bring about a common future in the Mediterranean region – given the economic and ecological concerns and opportunities. Benjamin Barber, political theorist from New York, reminded us of the structural difference between the challenge of reinventing or restarting democracy in European countries and the challenge to transform long time autocratic power structures and political cultures in North Africa. Noha El-Mikawy from the Ford Foundation in Cairo

(Egypt) asked who should be the actors to be involved in this process of transformation and what should be the values of the new Arab citizen?

These and other - open - questions provided excellent starting points

for insightful debates and controversies during the plenary sessions, coffee and lunch breaks and the several tapas bars of Córdoba. A spontaneous debate outside the conference programme about Mursi's decree from November 22 underlined the enormous challenges lying ahead before a country such as Egypt can transform into a free and democratic society.

In the end, this 'collision' between old and recently established European democracies and systems of citizenship education and the emerging ones in North Africa proved to be very productive. At the concluding session of the conference nobody had any doubt that a dialogue between equal partners in the field of citizenship education is possible and that – as one participant stated – both sides can be teachers and students at the same time.

In an interdependent world, NECE and other European citizenship education networks and initiatives

can only gain by opening up to new and young initiatives from the Southern Mediterranean.

First impressions and statements from this year's NECE conference you may find at the NECE blog: blog.nece.eu

In January 2013, all contributions of the conference will be also documented at the NECE website.



REPORTS

Human Rights and Democracy in Action – Looking Ahead

The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE)

29-30 November 2012, Strasbourg (France)

by Georg Pirker, DARE board secretary, Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten – AdB e.V. (Germany)

Roughly two years after the adoption of the COE Charter on EDC/HRE the Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre organized the first review conference on the implementation of the Charter, which was at the same time an entry point for the coming European Year of Citizens 2013. The conference brought together roughly 200 experts from ministerial level, formal education, intergovernmental organizations, research as well as youth organizations and activists / experts from the field of non-formal EDC/HRE. Thus comprising the wide field of stakeholders involved in the implementation of the charter on all different stages and levels. (...)

Two important reports related to the Charter were presented at the conference: David Kerr's (DARE member Citizenship Foundation) analysis of the governmental survey on the Charter gave first impressions on the implementation as reported by governments and the NGO's survey conducted by the COE Youth department, that explicitly dealt with the NGO's and youth organizations perspective on the charter. Wrapping up the governmental report there are two things I want to highlight: There seems to be a considerable number of states party to the European Cultural Convention that are active at implementing the charter at different levels. AND the promotion of the Charter in certain EDC/HRE areas has been strongest in formal education (primary, lower, and upper secondary) and in vocational education and training - according to the reports from the governmental level. The biggest concern is that the states suggest for a future review in 2017 to concentrate on the implementation of the charter in the areas where promotion is already strong. This results in the danger of undermining the scope and ambition of the Charter, which treats all fields of education at the same level. (...) To me very interesting and necessary was the several times mentioned need to further much broader involve adult education in EDC/HRE policies and also to concentrate on adult education as highly relevant target in the implementation of the Charter.

Out of the NGO's perspective the strong focus on formal education in these discussions is still worth a bigger dispute as in the meanwhile there is a lot of research evidence that the results of non

formal EDC/HRE are more lasting and better than formal education produces. In this regard the presentation of the EURIDYCE survey from the EC was very interesting. In line with the conclusions from the governmental questionnaire it reported that EDC/HRE is all over Europe embedded in the curricula. Critically one could indicate at this point that an average of 2-15 minutes EDC/HRE in a week school is clearly nothing to be proud of... and might not be the lasting experience that gives people the idea that EDC/HRE can really make a difference. Mr Pierre Mairesse from the European Commission as well underlined the importance of teachers and schools as key agents for EDC/HRE in one of his concluding remarks which was in so far interesting as he did not mention the EP's different concept of a future lifelong learning programme but was arguing in view of the Commissions ERASMUS FOR ALL proposal for an integrated programme, where he saw a lot of space and opportunities for the purposes of citizenship education... These two conclusions to me are indicator for danger we currently face in the field of EDC/HRE. There is a tendency to give easy accessible results and answers. But Citizenship Education and Human Rights Education is not a field where you can give easy answers, if your agenda is not just focusing on formal democracy (i.e. emphasising rules, values and responsibilities - which are one side of the coin).

One of the main and important recommendations to non-formal NGO providers is to remain independent providers of EDC/HRE even if the current situation is difficult in a lot of countries. Non-formal education is able to make the difference in EDC/HRE, it is able to change the paradigms of learning and is the only field of education that has proven its capacity to successfully train and promote critical informed and active democratic citizenship. One should not easily give up the standing independent and non-formal Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights has gained so far. Taking into regard the rather strict focus on formal education the intergovernmental and state level currently has, there is a huge need to even stronger argue for non-formal EDC/HRE (...)

The full article you may check out at the DARE blog:

<http://dare-network.blogspot.de>

All presentations, reports, speeches are available at: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/conference2012/speeches_FR.asp

The conference report by Audrey Osler, will be available by the end of January 2013.

INTRODUCING

In every edition we introduce organisations that are actively involved in the field of citizenship education.

EYCA – European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance

On 11 August 2011, the European Commission proposed to designate 2013 as the “European Year of Citizens” to mark the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the European Union Citizenship under the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. European civil society organisations and network members of the EESC Liaison Group have created a civil society Alliance aiming to advocate on MEPs for a broader understanding of European citizenship within the proposal to designate 2013 the European year of Citizens. Anne-Charlotte Oriol from the European Civic Forum in France - European Projects Officer – answered our questions concerning the Alliance.

NECE:

How is the European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance structured, organised and financed?

EYCA:

The European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA) was created by European civil society organisations and networks members of the EESC Liaison group with civil society. The Alliance currently unites 48 European networks, regrouping about 3.000 organisations, located in 50 European countries (EU and beyond). The Alliance is also composed of National Alliances in the EU-28 Member States. The European networks united in the Alliance and National Alliances are going to organise activities all over the year, in line with their adopted Manifesto. A Steering Committee consisting of eight member networks is going to organise the topical working groups. The Secretariat work made by the European Civic Forum deals with the Alliance’s daily tasks, such as the observation of European events and communication within the broad network. Given the dramatically low budget allocated to the European Year of Citizens by EU Institutions, the EU funds are supposed to solely cover participation to European events, the national initiatives being left with no European means.

NECE:

What is the Alliance’s main goal and how does the Alliance try to reach it? Could you give a concrete example of methods and formats you apply for achieving your aims? What is the task of the members of the EYCA Alliance?

EYCA:

The Alliance’s priorities for the European Year of Citizens (EYC) can be summarized by the topics of the three working groups which stem from the political Manifesto all Alliance members have agreed upon, namely: Relevance of participatory citizenship and civil dialogue in the context of the crisis (1), economic, social and political citizenship as a coherent whole (2), and an inclusive

citizenship for all EU residents (3). These working groups will meet several times during the year in order to draft policy recommendations on citizenship policy in the EU. The outcome of their work will be used to advocate for a broader and more transversal taking into account of citizenship at the EU level in 2013 and beyond. The working groups will bring together members from the European civil society networks and representatives from National Alliances; it will be a unique possibility to share views on citizenship among Europeans.

NECE:

What are the concrete issues and tasks of the civil society Alliance regarding the European Year of Citizens in 2013? Which are the target groups you would like to address?

EYCA:

The Alliance intends to use the opportunity of the European Year of Citizens 2013 to reinforce civil dialogue at all levels (local-national-EU), but we also want civil society organisations to be fully included as stakeholders in the decision-making process in all 28-EU member states. There are no particular target groups, since the Alliance is involved in the widest range of fields of intervention. We are looking at citizens as a whole, without any distinction, and our primary task will be to bring together as many people as possible to contribute to our reflection on active citizenship, may it be at the local, national or European level. On the other hand, it will be crucial for us to make European decision-makers pay greater attention to citizens’ concerns, needs and opinions. Given the growing gap between decision-makers and citizens, we intend to seize the opportunity given by the European Year for Citizens 2013 to re-establish a direct contact between them.

NECE:

Regarding the European crisis, what do you think are currently the challenges and needs to strengthen European citizens’ rights and their participation in the democratic life of the EU?

EYCA:

Given the crisis citizens expect institutions to implement policies answering the problems they face. They look to what is done at local, national and European levels. And the more you see that your voice counts, the more you will feel a citizen and act accordingly, and vice-versa! The Alliance intends, via its National Alliances, to foster citizens’ interest and participation in the democratic life of the EU. The answer of EU institutions is crucial for building a EU citizenship. We consider both a challenge and a need the necessity for civil society organisations to be even more active

INTRODUCING

in bringing the voice of people to institutions and to get proper answers from decision-makers. We are convinced that reinforcing participative democracy in the EU could be a mean to foster representative democracy at the European level. Thus, there is a need to have responsive institutions on the other side. As said, it is both a challenge and a need!

NECE:

In this context, what is the role of citizenship education or a European citizenship education?

EYCA:

We believe that in the current European context citizenship education is crucial for the younger generations which enter the social sphere in this time of crisis, as well as for the more experienced generations which too often have experienced disappointment about the way institutions decide. This is why it will be a topic discussed in one of the three EYCA Working groups (namely: "economic, social and political citizenship as a coherent whole"). In this field, civil society organizations have a lot to contribute to formal education and we expect very interesting discussions. Needless to say that this is even truer when it comes to European citizenship education. Too many people do not know and feel that they are EU citizens. Obviously, the way in which EU institutions work is part of the problem. That said, it is more natural to behave as a citizen at EU level when you are spurring active citizenship at the local or national level. This is why we have chosen a broad approach when addressing citizenship and why we rely on National Alliances to stir the debate on citizenship rather at the local and national level than at EU level.

More information available at: <http://ey2013-alliance.eu/>



POLITICAL NEWS

This section provides information about news and political decisions that are relevant for the agenda setting of citizenship education.

Visit at the European House

Brand new from 2013, the European Parliament now offers 90-minute educational sessions designed to enhance your students' learning about Europe, the European Parliament and the relationship between the UK and the EU. The politically-neutral educational sessions are delivered by citizenship education specialists and are suitable for Key Stages 3-5. The sessions are free of charge. http://www.europarl.org.uk/view/en/Education?dm_i=67A,110MD,W1B-5W,35HZ3,1

The European Year of Citizens gets off to a flying start!

The official launch of the European Year of Citizens 2013 will take place in Dublin on 10 January 2013 at a ceremony in Dublin Castle, Ireland. The event is timed to coincide with the first Citizens' Dialogue of the Year, an event where people from all walks of life have an opportunity to personally discuss their needs, concerns and hopes for the European Union with the Vice-President of the European Commission, Viviane Reding, responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship.

<http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/en/events/european-year-citizens-gets-flying-start>

Hearing on EU Citizenship

This hearing on 19 February 2013 in Brussels (Belgium), jointly organised by the Commission and the European Parliament (LIBE and PETI Committees), is a response to the European Parliament's own initiative report (March 2012) on the 2010 EU Citizenship Report in which it called for closer cooperation with the Commission on EU citizenship issues, notably in view of the 2013 EU Citizenship Report. All interested stakeholders are invited to attend.

<http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/en/events/hearing-eu-citizenship-0>

2013 in Europe

While the European Council meets in Brussels to decide on future treaties for still greater financial control, 200 meters away from the Council European Alternatives launches a year-long and bottom-up process demanding a radically democratic Europe and responding to the Fiscal Pact with the development of a citizen-led Citizens' Pact. In Brussels they will set out a strategy to involve European citizens and organisations throughout 2013 and beyond.

<http://www.euroalter.com/ppp/events/3956/>

CALL FOR...

Call for papers for the international workshop "Youth and Civic Participation: Is a Younger Generation Reshaping European Politics?"

15-17 May 2013, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

This workshop wants to investigate how a young generation of citizens tries to make sense of current social trends and problems. Whereas some researchers are convinced of the apparent civic disengagement of youth, others suggest that civic participation of young people is stable and that they may still be open to non-institutionalized forms of practicing politics.

Deadline for application: 6 January 2013

More information at: http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/news/news_373.html

MitOst invites you to take part in "I AM EUROPE!"

"I AM EUROPE" (IEU) is an exploratory expedition into the heart of the European Citizenship concept. By involving 200 citizens from eight EU countries we want to find out what is needed to make citizens get more involved in EU policymaking, enrich the general public debate on European Citizenship and put forward innovative models of citizen participation. The project activities consist of local preparatory citizens' meetings, three joint international sessions (Antwerp, Paris, Warsaw) and a final conference in Brussels, attended by all participating citizens, policymakers and thinkers. MitOst is a project partner of Evens Foundation, the co-funder and organizer of "I AM EUROPE". The project is supported by the European Union and the Hippocrene Foundation.

On 16 February 2013 the preparatory citizens' meeting is taking place in Berlin for interested participants living in Germany.

Deadline for application: 10 January 2013

Contact: *Margita Hulmanová, MitOst e.V.,
e-mail: hulmanova@mitost.org*

Link to German online-application form: <http://mitost.org/i-am-europe>

Link to English information website: <http://www.evensfoundation.be/en/programs/european-citizenship/i-am-europe>

Call for papers for the CiCe Annual Conference 2013 13-15 June 2013, University of Lisbon (Portugal)

This year's conference will focus on the ways in which the current economic crisis affects research and teaching in the field of identities and citizenship education in formal, informal and non-formal settings. We thus welcome proposals on the topics of economy, environment, sustainability, diversity, rights, values, movement and migration, social cohesion etc.

Deadline for application: 14 January 2013

More information at:

http://cice.londonmet.ac.uk/conferences/main/main_home.cfm

4th Summer Academy: Democracy at School – Call for participants!

6-14 July 2013, Sulejówek/Warsaw (Poland)

The Summer Academy offers a regional training for education professionals and local community actors from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus region. The Academy will strengthen the capacities of participants to implement and promote the principles and practices of human rights and citizenship education at schools and in local communities.

Deadline: 18 January 2013

More information at: <http://www.theewc.org/content/activities/4th.summer.academy.democracy.at.school..call.for.participants/>

Call for papers for the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER)

9-13 September 2013, Bahçeşehir University (Turkey)

National governments and the European Union see innovation as being increasingly important for the development of the 21st century knowledge society. It may contribute to economic prosperity as well as to social and individual wellbeing and may, therefore, be an essential factor for creating a more competitive and dynamic European society.

Deadline: 1 February 2013

More information at: <http://www.eera-ecer.de/ecer2013/submission-registration/submission/>

Call for participants for the European Essay Contest for students 2013

This year is the 3rd edition of the European Essay Contest. This opportunity to share your opinion is offered by Martin Kastler, German member of the European Parliament, and Jan Březina, Czech member of the European Parliament. The subject of the 3rd edition is "What does hold us together in Europe?". Interested? Just write from 1 to 3 pages (DIN A4) in German, Czech or Slovak. The winner will earn 500€. The second and third prize-winners will earn 300€ and 200€.

Deadline: 8 February 2013

Contact: *martin.kastler@europarl.europa.eu*

More information at: <http://www.ackermann-gemeinde.de>

Call for papers for the Inaugural European Conference on Education

"Learning and Teaching Through Transformative Spaces"

11-14 July 2013, in Brighton (UK)

As previous Conferences on Education have shown, education and lifelong learning can be seen as a solution to a host of local and global problems whilst globalized education systems are becoming increasingly socially, ethnically and culturally diverse. Nevertheless, knowledge is often defined through discourses embedded in Western paradigms as globalised education systems become increasingly determined by dominant knowledge economies. The Inaugural European Conference on Education will extend these discussions to consider the pedagogic challenges of developing transformative spaces for learning and teaching.

Deadline: 1 March 2013

More information at: <http://ece.iafor.org/Submissions.html>

INFORMATION

Events

12-13 March 2013, Buskerud University College (Norway)
“Democracy and Diversity in Education”

The overarching interest of this conference is: How are democracy and diversity (and specifically the relationship between these concepts) understood in society and at school? The conference aims to bring together existing research in these fields and consider ways in which education for democracy and democratic citizenship might be strengthened in the context of diversity.

More information at: <http://www.hibu.no/citizenship/conference>

13-15 March 2013, Bern/Zollikofen (Switzerland)
3rd Congress on Research in Vocational Education and Training

Dedicated to the topic “VET Research: Supporting Teachers, Practitioners and Policy Makers”, the congress will seek to make a contribution to these topics and provide an overview of VET research activities in Switzerland and other countries. It is also meant to facilitate academic exchange between leading institutions and to present the latest international research findings.

More information at: <http://www.ehb-schweiz.ch/en/researchanddevelopment/vetcongress2013/Pages/default.aspx>

22 March 2013, Thessaloniki (Greece)
Towards a citizens’ Europe

These events will be moderated panel discussions with European politicians, opinion leaders, local politicians and some 500 citizens from all walks of life. The dialogues will be prepared by help of both rather traditional means (direct contacts with the media, citizens’ association, civil society, schools etc.) and social media (Facebook and Twitter). The follow up will consist of documenting the debates and reporting from the events.

More information at: <http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/en/events/event-thessaloniki>

4-7 April 2013, Marseille (France)
Anna Lindh Forum - 2nd edition

The 2nd edition of the Anna Lindh Forum will represent the largest civil society gathering since the Arab uprisings, with over 1.000 people expected to come to Marseille to share a road map for the promotion of intercultural dialogue and citizenship in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

More information at: <http://www.euromedalex.org/news/anna-lindh-forum-2013-take-place-marseille-european-capital-culture>

24 April – 9 May 2013 (Austria)
Days for Democratic Citizenship Education

The Austrian Days for Democratic Citizenship Education focus on active citizenship and community involvement. Important stakeholders and institutions of citizenship education present themselves

and their work in order to make visible the broad range of their activities. The guiding idea of the Austrian Citizenship Days 2013 is “Learning and Living Democracy”, which is the slogan of the Council of Europe’s “Education for Democratic Citizenship / Human Rights Education” programme.

More information at: <http://europa.eu/citizens-2013/events/citizenship-days-participating-and-contributing>

15-17 May 2013, University of Antwerp (Belgium)
International workshop on “Youth and Civic Participation: Is a Younger Generation Reshaping European Politics?”

This workshop wants to investigate how a young generation of citizens tries to make sense of current social trends and problems. Whereas some researchers are convinced of the apparent civic disengagement of youth, others suggest that civic participation of young people is stable and that they may still be open towards non-institutionalized forms of practicing politics.

*More information at: http://www.ucsia.org/main.aspx?c=*UCSIAENG2&n=110394*

Publication

Activating Human Rights and Peace: Theories, Practices and Contexts.

by Kristen Perry, published June 2012

Activating Human Rights and Peace is an enlightening collection of well thought through cases aimed at academics and students of human rights, political science, law and justice, peace and conflict studies and sociology. It argues that we need to appreciate that cultivating a human rights and peace consciousness is without alternative... Kristen Perrin notes that each chapter gives a glimpse into the diverse range of ideas encompassing contemporary human rights issues.

<http://dare-network.blogspot.de/2012/11/new-book-activating-human-rights-and.html>

Social inclusion of youth on the margins of society - Policy review of research results

by Mojca Kodela Lesemann, published October 2012

If Europe wants to realise its full potential and provide jobs for 75 % of its working population, it needs to use the talents and skills of all its citizens, in particular young people. This review summarises the evidence of a cluster of five youth-oriented research projects launched in 2008 and broadens the evidence basis for stimulating inclusive growth in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives ‘Youth on the move’ and the ‘European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion’.

*http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/policy-review_en.html
 Pdf Version available here http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/social-inclusion-of-youth_en.pdf*

INFORMATION

Study on the impact of Non-Formal Education in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability

by the European Youth Forum in cooperation with the University of Bath and GHK Consulting, published October 2012

Long-lasting and frequent engagement and participation in youth organisations brings high soft-skills development. Experience in youth organisation and the thus developed skills are valued by employers. Participation in youth organisation is particularly valuable in developing social capital and in creating new vocation paths, especially for NEETs, early school leavers and young migrants.

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Employment/Research/0760-12_PR_NF-EReport_EN.pdf

History and Citizenship Education in North Africa and the Middle East, Challenges and Opportunities for History and Citizenship Education from the Viewpoint of Educators from the Region: EUROCLIO (European Association of History Educators) Report

published November 2012

As a part of this programme, EUROCLIO brought together 20 history and citizenship educators from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Turkey, and Tunisia in a seminar on "Responsible and Innovative History and Citizenship Education in North Africa and the Middle East - Stock Taking and Ways Ahead" in Antalya, Turkey on 4 April 2012, during the 19th EUROCLIO Annual Professional Training and Development Conference. This report focuses on the seminar proceedings and the recommendations made during this event.

Download as Pdf: <http://lists.hrea.org/phplist/lt.php?id=Kh5ZA-wJXCANQBxgFBgAAUk4DBIAGBw%3D%3D>

The history of youth work in Europe (volume 3)

by Filip Coussée, Howard Williamson, and Griet Verschelden, published December 2012

This publication is meant to build bridges between past and future, east and west, north and south – and to inform about the contemporary debate on youth work and youth policy in Europe.

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/news/news_382.html

Young people not in employment, education or training: Eurofound report

by Massimiliano Mascherini, Lidia Salvatore, Anja Meierkord, Jean-Marie Jungblut, published 2012

With unemployment rates of young people being at unprecedented levels across the EU, a new report published today by Eurofound reveals how the greatest urgency lies with the 14 million young people currently not in employment, education or training (NEETs). Eurofound's latest comparative research findings on NEETs show that the economic loss to society due to not integrating NEETs is estimated at €153 billion, in addition to the inestimable costs for their disengagement from society in general.

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/news/news_376.html

Publication series on Europe – Volume 7: The Future of European Democracy

by Claudio Franzius and Ulrich K. Preuß, commissioned and edited by the Heinrich Böll Foundation 2012

The Heinrich Böll Foundation commissioned a study on the future of European democracy. In it, constitutional experts Ulrich K. Preuß and Claudio Franzius highlight how Europe may achieve a vibrant democracy. It will require political spaces and institutions that enable for a controversial debate about European issues, thus giving citizens an opportunity to participate in political decision-making.

This publication can be ordered from: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, E-mail: buchversand@boell.de

"Promoting 'active citizens'? The critical vision of NGOs over citizenship education as an educational priority across Europe"

published October 2012

This called article published in the International Journal of Progressive Education, Volume 8 Number 3, Oct 2012 emerged from a research project entitled "Participatory Citizenship Education in Transitional Societies" that aims at a wider understanding about Citizenship Education across Europe, and particularly whether educational policies, curricula and practices emphasise a political culture that values citizens' active and critical participation. Humanity in Action participated in. The paper confronts educational policies with the views of NGOs in 20 European countries.

PDF Download available here: <http://inased.org/v8n3/ijpev8n3.pdf>

The article starts at p.32

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