

Citizenship Education Facing Nationalism and Populism in Europe

Strategies - Competencies – Practices

Report

Workshop 5: Concepts and Practices in South Eastern Europe: How can citizenship education be made more popular Iliyana Nikolova (Bulgaria)¹

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The objectives of the workshop were defined at the very beginning by the moderator, **Mrs. Rayna Gavrilova** in order to create at the end a list of what is believed to be the problems related to civic education, what is European and what is universal and regional, as well as defining what is wrong or missing as well as how the gap should be addressed. The two speakers **Prof. Ivaylo Ditchev**, Sofia, and **Caroline Hornstein-Tomic**, Zagreb, tried to define the specific problems of Civic Education in the region and provided useful points to start the debate. Their presentations can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

We summarise here some of the general recommendations the workshop participants found useful for an improvement of civic education in South eastern European countries.

Civic education is about basic literacy in social skills: schools, but also kindergartens should teach an understanding of what a 'society' is.

Recognition of basic values: the aim of civic Education is to make the position of the other understandable, to foster empathy. This can only be achieved if we create safe and neutral spaces where it is possible to discuss, for example, the crimes and failures of the past without being threatened by anybody.

We should approach the civic education process on the basis of pluralism. Pluralism is a basic ingredient needed for everything– approaches, formats, methods.

It was agreed that democratic skills are a prerequisite of the representative democracy. Minimum skills such as respect, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, acknowledgement of human rights, listening, were mentioned.

Topics for Civic Education

- Literacy
- Living in diversity
- History
- Rights and duties

¹ Revised and edited from the report of Iliyana Nikolova

Practical suggestions

- Deal with the past in different ways, not only in publications, but in posters, films, exhibitions and all other available new media forms; start to interview witnesses of the socialist past using oral history methods
- Try to involve external experts from politics, religious institutions, civil society and the business sector in order to expose the audience to new opinions and experiences.
- Develop initiatives that allow people to travel, thus create opportunities for personal exploration beyond national borders. International exchange is always helpful.
- Media are playing a specific role in the process of dealing with the past should be aware of their social responsibility.
- Use popular culture to make civic education interesting and more accessible for young people. .
- 'Informal talks' and debates, using 'open space' methods should be encouraged as they may create a space for people to communicate more easily with each other.
- Civic education should be included in children's and adult education at the same time, using different but basic standards and normative approaches.