

NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

NECE Workshop: The Impacts of National Identities for European Integration as a Focus of Citizenship Education

INPUT PAPER

Contribution from Estonia

“Citizens, Nation or Minority – Pattern of Russian Identity in Estonia”

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Russians in Estonia – minority or majority? As a part of the population in this country they are minority, of course. But what can we do with the huge Russian parent state just near by? TV channels, printed media from neighboring country often offer completely different interpretation of news and events. Is this interpretation always in the same line with European values?

I had a chance to take part in comparative sociological research of cultural preferences among Russian in Estonian populations in middle of 1980-s. Still it was Soviet era but already on that time the homogeneity of so called Russian population came under the big question. Is it really nation we are talking about? Who are “Russian speakers” then and now?

It is not just an idle question. With new member-states and booming Russian economy EU got an exciting present of vast Russian speaking population on it's territory. Are they really European citizens (with 150 million Russians in their home country)? Any contradictions between Moscow and Brussels (not to mention Tallinn, Warsaw, Riga etc.) immediately can turn them into aliens if... If what?