

Programme

5th Annual Conference on European Citizenship - Putting European Citizenship on the Agenda -

Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 December 2020

Online

Morning of 1 December

9.00 – 10.30 a.m.

i. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE AND OUTLOOK FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP?

Facilitated by **Tony Venables**, founder of ECIT

The scene for the campus will be set against the background of the results of the Commission public consultation for the 2020 report on EU citizenship, the EU recovery plan, new multiannual financial framework (MFF) and preparations for the Conference on the future of Europe. This will be an opportunity for participants to make suggestions, put questions directly to the policy makers and test the scope and limits for developing this first transnational citizenship of the modern era.

What is the role of EU Institutions and relevant CSOs in popularizing the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) which could make huge leaps towards a more inclusive Erasmus and how can these improvements become better known? How can awareness and popularity of EU Citizenship be increased?

Speakers:

Marie-Hélène Boulanger - Head of the Citizenship Unit, DG Justice, **Maite Pagazaurtundua** – MEP and rapporteur of an own initiative report, **Alberto Alemanno** – founder and director of the Good Lobby, **Laura Sullivan** – Executive Director at WeMove.eu, **Carmen Descamps Gerstenmeyer** - Editor and author of the book “To be or not to be - EU Citizenship”.

Debate between the panel and the audience.

11.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

ii. HOW TO STRENGTHEN THE ENFORCEMENT OF EUROPEAN RIGHTS, VALUES AND THE RULE OF LAW?

Facilitated by **Ramona Coman** – President of the Institute for European Studies, Université Libre de Bruxelles

This panel is organised in the framework of the Jean Monnet module “Rule of law and Mutual Trust in EU and global governance” (ROLETTE - 599377-EPP-1-2018-1-BE-EPPJMO-MODULE, coordinated by Prof. Ramona Coman). The debate will tackle four main questions:

- How to link EU citizenship with fundamental rights? The citizenship of the Union is now included in the preamble to the Charter of Fundamental Rights. What is the possibility to invoke it as a fundamental right instead of as a link to freedom of movement?
- What can be done to better enforce European rights? The focus should be on job seekers without sufficient resources to support themselves in their country of residence, minority groups, as well as others likely to suffer discrimination. The barriers to freedom of movement are not new but could become worse following Brexit and the current pandemic.
- What lessons have we learned from the pandemic? As the emphasis has been on restrictions of freedom of movement and association on health grounds, not enough has been said on advancing human rights, which are currently under strain as new challenges emerge i.e. for data protection and the fight against racism as well as all forms of discrimination.
- How to enforce European rights and values against systemic non-compliance by national governments? The crisis has been a pretext for authoritarian governments to tighten their grip on power, but at least some are meeting more opposition. The European Commission has recently issued its country-by-country Rule of Law Report, and the Parliament is pushing for clear rules linking the receipt of EU funds by Member States to respect for the rule of law.

Speakers:

Brando Benifei - MEP, **Clare Daly** - MEP, *rapporteur on fundamental rights in the EU*, **Michal Simecka*** - MEP, *rapporteur on mechanism on democracy, Rule of Law, fundamental rights*, **Jeremy Bierbach** - *Attorney at Franssen Advocaten, Amsterdam*, **Monika Frackowiak*** - *Member of MEDEL-Europe*, **Jože Štrus** - *Justice Policy and Rule of Law (European Commission - DG JUST)*.

Afternoon of 1 December

3.00 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.

iii. PUTTING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION ON THE AGENDA: HOW TO MAKE IT CENTRAL TO THE EU RECOVERY PLAN?

Facilitated by Christoph Muller-Hofstede, coordinator of NECE and Niccolò Milanese – Director of European Alternatives

The NECE declaration affirms that “Citizenship education is essential in a world of pandemic and ecological risk”. The main focus for the Brussels debate will be on how to persuade the EU and the Member States to take up the declaration and put citizen education at the top of their priorities. In particular, what initiatives could be taken by the European Parliament?

Questions for debate:

- Is a new political impetus necessary? How to respond to what could be a watershed moment? Are Council of Europe charters on education for citizenship, human rights and democracy, the 2015 Paris declaration by ministers of education and EU Erasmus and life-long learning guidelines enough?
- Has enough been done to close the gap between the rhetoric and actual practice? The results across Member States are uneven, leaving gaps where citizenship education is most needed. The EU could do for European citizenship, although its competence for education remains limited. Despite earlier promises Erasmus for all has yet to become a priority of the EU multi-annual budget and recovery plan.

- What specific action should be taken? The declaration demands educational materials on the European dimension of citizenship education, an EU centre of excellence and that active citizenship competence be a key to life-long learning. It also recognises that far more could be done to mainstream citizenship education across all policies, involving civil society and a wide range of stakeholders.

Speakers:

Marta Markowska- DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, **Brikena Xhomaqi** – Life-long learning platform, **Salima Yenbou*** - Representative of the Committee on education and culture (EP), **Michael Remmert*** - Council of Europe, **Victor Negrescu** - MEP, member of the CULT committee, **Sabine Verheyen*** - MEP, chair of CULT committee.

6.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.

iv. PUBLIC DEBATE - HOW TO PUSH BACK THE BOUNDARIES OF EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP WITHIN THE EU AND IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES?

Facilitated by **Alexandra von Westernhagen** – Initiator of an appeal to the General Court of the European Union

Who is a European citizen? Certainly, millions more than officially have this status. In the evening, a public debate will be held on the theme of a European citizenship centred on the EU, whilst reaching out to the broader Europe.

Should EU Citizenship be based solely on nationality of a Member State? Could it also be based on residence within the EU as many civil society organisations and human rights lawyers have advocated since the Maastricht Treaty came into force? Could a form of European citizenship be available for those who identify with this status in former, neighbouring and applicant countries?

Speakers:

Tony Simpson – Representative of the Permanent EU Citizenship ECI, **Ulrike Guérot** – European Democracy Lab, **Suzana Carp** – ECIT Board Member, **Dora Kostakopoulou** – Professor of European Law at the University of Warwick, **Igor Stiks** - Professor of politics at Faculty of Media and Communications, Belgrade, **Dragoş Pişlaru*** - MEP.

General debate with the audience.

Morning of 2 December

It is a myth that EU Citizenship only concerns rights which are triggered by leaving one's country and does not concern those who stay at home. Notwithstanding this misconception, however, will EU Citizenship really become relevant to the majority of the population until new rights are added? After 27 years since this status was introduced by the Maastricht Treaty, is it now high time to consider this possibility? *Can European Citizenship be strengthened by new political rights and other European rights which would make it more relevant to citizens who do not take advantage of the rights to freedom of movement?*

10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

v. HOW CAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ACHIEVE FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR EU CITIZENS ON THE MOVE?

Facilitated by **Anna Comacchio** and **Beniamino Brunati**, Voters Without Borders task force.

EU citizens residing in other Member States **can vote and stand in municipal and European elections, but not in regional and national ones** or in referendums. Some EU citizens have never been able to vote in a national election simply because they have used their right to freedom of movement. This is a stain on European democracy, made ever clearer by the initial nationalistic reactions to the spread of coronavirus. The aim of the ECI 'Voters Without Borders' is to link the ECI to regional and national campaigns for extending the franchise to EU citizens and other migrant communities, and examine ways of meeting the threshold in at least seven Member States and the target of over one million signatures.

Questions for debate:

- What initiatives could be taken by the European Parliament? The citizens' agenda setting right through ECIs could be merged with an initiative in the European Parliament, especially since the Commission has promised to propose strengthening the Parliament's right of initiative. What could the European Parliament do to push for full political rights?
- How to make the ECI part of a wider agenda? One reform alone cannot achieve a more transnational European democracy: measures are also needed to encourage the formation of European political parties and the introduction of transnational lists for European elections. How can the reforms proposed be taken up in the Conference on the future of Europe?

Speakers:

Alberto Alemanno - Founder and Director of The Good Lobby, **Kalypto Nicolaidis** – Professor at the School of Transnational Governance, **Michael McLoughlin** – Member of the European Economic and Social Committee, **Roger Casale** - Director of New Europeans, **Louis Drounau** – President of EuropeanConstitution.eu

Response from a cross-party panel of MEPs

Gabriele Bischoff (S&D), Claudia Gamon (Renew), Domènec Ruiz Devesa (S&D), Jakub Dalunde* (Greens), Danuta Maria Hubner* (EPP), Philippe Lamberts* (Greens).

Afternoon of 2 December

3.00 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.

vi. SHOULD NEW SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH RIGHTS BE ADDED TO EU CITIZENSHIP?

The afternoon session will take the form of 3 parallel world café style round tables with a virtual room for each where remote participants can join the discussion.

1. SOCIAL CITIZENSHIP

Facilitated by *The Wheel representative*

EU Citizenship is not a citizenship for all, as freedom of movement is not an absolute right but conditional on having sufficient resources and medical cover, so as not to be a burden on the host country. There is no European system of social security except a coordination of national systems for people on the move, whilst access to social assistance can be a lottery. Differences in unemployment rates and the cost of living make job seeking from a poorer to a richer EU Member State challenging and a prey to exploitation. The aim will be to look in depth at proposals that have been made in the past by researchers and civil society groups: emergency social assistance and a safety net for homeless EU citizens, a European minimum wage scheme, a free movement solidarity fund, a more legally binding EU pillar of social rights, as well as a recently-launched ECI for unconditional basic income. *The current health and economic crisis brings new urgency to such proposals.*

Speakers:

Stefan Olsson* – Representative of the DG Employment, **Piotr Sadowski*** – President of the Social platform, **Sebastiano Sabato** – Senior Researcher at the European Social Observatory,, **Leire Rincón-Chair**, Unconditional Basic Income Europe, **Freek Spinnewijn** – Director of FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless), **Diletta Alese** - Member of JEF Europe - Social Europe portfolio.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

Facilitated by **Marta Ballesteros*** – Representative of MILIEU

*Should the right to a healthy environment which is now included in many national constitutions be added to EU Citizenship? This is generally interpreted as a right to clean air, soil and drinking water. In [Article 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) a high level of environmental protection is called for, placing an obligation on the EU to act rather than giving citizens rights they can invoke directly in a European court. Rights can and are invoked, stemming from EU legislation on the environment. There is an important body of case law in the European Court of Human Rights that makes environmental protection a fundamental right linked to the right to life and the right to health, especially now as Europe emerges from the pandemic. Lastly, the EU Commission adopted a legislative proposal amending the *Aarhus Regulation*, which would allow NGOs to seek administrative review not only against acts of “individual scope”, but also against those of “general scope”. *This event will bring together proponents of EU environmental actors to start a process leading to this addition to European rights.**

Speakers:

Anais Berthier – Representative of Client Earth, **Priska Lueger*** – Representative of Justice and Environment, **Representative of the European Environmental Bureau**, **Virginia Fiume** – *Stopglobalwarming.eu*, *Eumans* coordinator.

3. HEALTH CITIZENSHIP

Facilitated by **Suzana Carp** – ECIT board member

The EU has rightly been criticized for its **late response to the pandemic** and has often appeared behind the curve **calling too late for coordination** after Member States had taken unilateral action. However, criticism misses the point **that the EU has a very limited power to act in a health crisis**. Could a **European right to health protection**, particularly against cross-border epidemics be added to

the rights of Union citizens under [Article 20 TFEU](#)? Such a right would be as relevant to EU citizens on the move as to the majority in their own country. It would be additional to and in no way replace national rights to healthcare. The issue of insufficient EU powers has been raised in letters, petitions and resolutions of the European Parliament. However, it will take more grassroots activism to change the status quo. On 11 November, the Commission issued a communication that grants the ECDC and EMA a broader remit for tasks and decision-making in relation to cross-border health. This, along with opinion polls, show a big case for citizens wanting the EU to do more. However, this communication had no mention of citizens' action, it is purely a top-down approach. *This is why ECIT is looking at the possibility of launching an ECI which will be described in a discussion document to be sent to participants.*

Speakers:

Mariano Votta – Director of Active Citizenship Network (ACN), **Marco Cappato** – Associazione Luca Coscioni, **Julie Steendam** - Representative of the 'Right to Cure' ECI.

*Participants can already find here our [guidelines](#) on European Citizenship, [demands](#) to the EU Institutions and proposals for new [political](#), [social](#) [environmental](#) rights. A paper on health rights follows.

**The 2020 edition will be organised in cooperation with [NECE](#) (Networking European Citizenship Education) building on the results of their conference in Berlin on 5-8 November, the [IIE-ULB](#) (Institute of European Studies – Université Libre de Bruxelles), in particular with the support of the [Jean Monnet Module “Rule of Law and Mutual Trust in Global and European Governance”](#) (ROLETTE - 599377-EPP-1-2018-1-BE-EPPJMO-MODULE, coordinated by Prof. Ramona Coman), and the [Friedrich Naumann Foundation Europe](#). Taking account of Covid 19, the original programme (which can be found here) has been simplified to keep risks to a minimum and allow for on-line participation. The sessions and speakers foreseen remain largely as originally planned as do the questions for debate.

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<https://zoom.us/j/92562650512?pwd=UUxuUjNKtT28xK0tBMXk2N0Z6MHQxQT09>