ANNUAL ECIT FOUNDATION CONFERENCE
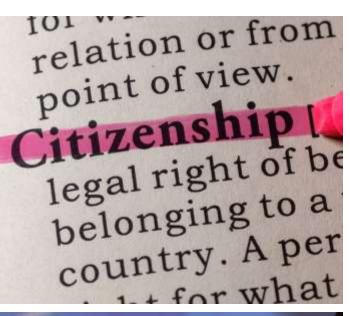
RECLAIMING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

On Tuesday 26, Wednesday 27 and the morning of Thursday 28 October 2021

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RECLAIMING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

Wider context

The 6th Annual ECIT Foundation conference will attempt to go deeper into the question of where this first transnational citizenship of the modern era stands after the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation is paradoxical: on the one hand, restrictions on European freedoms since March last year have encouraged many to be more conscious of what we are missing and increase a sense of identification with EU citizenship. On the other hand, a natural reaction to any crisis is to retreat to national citizenships. Immediate uncoordinated national reactions to restrict movements across borders showed how little weight is given to the interests of some 13.3 million EU mobile citizens.

Against this background, questions for the future of EU citizenship arise. Since the Maastricht Treaty established EU citizenship as an evolutionary first step, it is high time to re-frame EU citizenship to make it relevant in times of crisis. Adding new rights appears necessary to make it fit for purpose in light of the current issues.

Our conference will also look at ideas that are pertinent to the future of EU citizenship in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). Civil society, social and cultural movements are taking the lead in coming together across borders to put EU citizenship on the map.

About

The main threads running through the event will then be mid-term evaluation of CoFoE and our draft statute on European citizenship[1]. This initiative is a response to a resolution of the European Parliament in January 2019 calling for a statute of citizenship alongside the pillar of social rights and the Charter of fundamental rights.

The ECIT Foundation believes that an obstacle to the development of European citizenship is the lack of consensus as to what it is. Beyond the limited set of rights in Articles 18-25 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, other rights, policies, and programmes are scattered across different parts of the treaties, administrative, and committee structures so that it becomes everyone's and no one's responsibility and an abstraction.

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[1] Our Statute on European citizenship is now available on the online platform for CoFoE to encourage a new round of discussions and changes.

Useful information

When and where?

Tuesday 26 October 1.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m. ***Press Club and online***

Wednesday 27 October 10 a.m. – 5.30 p.m. ***53 and 104 rue d'Arlon and online***

Thursday 28 October 10.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m. ***Press Club and online***

How?

The conference is likely to be a hybrid event, which should facilitate the collection of ideas and the building of consensus: remote participation will be made possible using **Zoom** and **Howspace**, whilst some participants are expected to be able to meet on the spot in Brussels[2]. You can already register [here](#).

Who?

Like previous annual events, the aim is to bring together civil society representatives, students and academics with policymakers across different areas of policy and organisational structures.

As in 2020, the conference is organised in close cooperation with NECE which will hold its annual event immediately afterwards. You can find their programme [here](#).

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[2] It should be noted that a fully online event is still a possibility regarding the evolution of the health situation and travel restrictions. Speakers marked with a * are to be confirmed.

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

OPENING SESSION (1.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.): STATE OF EU CITIZENSHIP AND ITS PROSPECTS

Co-Chairs Suzana Carp (ECIT Board) and Tony Venables (ECIT founder)

The opening session will set the stage for further discussion on European citizenship in workshops on Wednesday 27. It will be not for long speeches but for headline suggestions from successive panels of politicians, academics and practitioners as well as first reactions to the ECIT draft statute.

1.30 p.m. – 2.30 p.m. POLITICS OF EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

The opening session will be held in collaboration with the cross-party group of MEPs to provide a political perspective on where we stand on European citizenship today, particularly in the light of CoFoE and practical advice to make it more relevant and popular.

Panelists: Maite Pagazaurtundúa, MEP, Damian Boeselager, MEP, Victor Negrescu, MEP; Helmut Scholz, MEP; Fabio Massimo Castaldo, MEP, Brando Benifei, MEP

- Debate -

2.30 p.m. – 3.30 p.m. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO EU CITIZENSHIP

A panel of well-known authors will be asked to forecast different futures for EU citizenship. They will look into two opposing scenarios. This transnational citizenship has caught the attention of scholars, but is interest now declining? Brexit and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, have shown that this is no post-national citizenship, as some claim. But whilst the EU is doing little to advance the cause of European citizenship, it is at last taking root among citizens. If Eurobarometer opinion polls are right, an increasing proportion of the young generation recognise that they are European citizens. An optimist can also point to the growth of a more transnational civil society activism in Europe, which will influence the future of European citizenship.

Panelists: Jo Shaw, Professor University of Edinburgh; Ulrike Guérot, Democracy lab; Dora Kostakopolou*, Professor of law university of Warwick; Espen Olsen, Professor of Political Science at Oslo Metropolitan University and author of a recent book *Challenging European Citizenship*.

3.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m. PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING EU CITIZENSHIP

Sociological Europe and what people do may be different from the Europe of Institutions. For many, building EU citizenship is a practical question of how it can be explained better and information about European rights, legislation and court judgements improved. Civil society may also carry out cross border actions which are manifestations of European citizenship without necessarily being labelled as such. What action can be developed on the basis of the Commission's 2020 citizenship report?

> Panelists: Marie-Helene Boulanger, Head of unit DG Justice; Alberto Alemanno, the Good Lobby; Claudia Delpero, Editor Europe Street; Virginia Fiume, EU sign day coalition.

- Debate –

6.30 p.m. – 8 p.m. POST-BREXIT EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

This session will serve as an informal brainstorming breakout group on where European citizenship stands in the post-Brexit era. Our proposed statute on European citizenship attempts to define a more inclusive citizenship beyond the EU. Being a citizen of Europe is wider than the EU. In countries applying to join, the one that has left, how to give this concept more substance? Brainstorming on obstacles and opportunities.

> Panelists: Ruivi Ziegler, Associate Professor in International Refugee Law at the University of Reading; Tony Venables, ECIT Foundation.

WEDNESDAY 27 OCTOBER

Following the opening session, the conference will examine in workshops the three components of the draft statute – rights, participation and belonging. In each of the 3 sessions, participants will be asked to choose between two parallel groups. There will be a chairperson and one panel member each from civil society, academia and the EU Institutions for each group.

10 a.m. – 12 p.m. EUROPEAN CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

- **Whether rights to freedom of movement as Europe recovers?**

This group will explore what has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on freedom of movement and whether it is possible to forecast possible future trends. The goal is to assess whether freedom of movement has been restored with the

"Green certificate", uniformly accepted and implemented, or whether the EU still resembles an array of different systems and uncoordinated restrictions.

> Panelists: a representative of Eurostat, MoveS team, MEP rapporteur on EU Digital COVID Certificate; ETTW.

- **How to enforce European rights and the rule of law?**

At the 5th annual conference on 1 December 2020, the Commission presented the first results of monitoring respect for the rule of law across all Member States. This year, the workshop will be an opportunity to analyse how the rule of law and democratic practice has been affected by emergency measures taken to bring infections under control and whether the COVID-19 pandemic has served as a pretext in some countries to entrench authoritarian measures. A particular theme will be developed as a result of the 2020 conference: how to encourage more bottom-up action by citizens raising awareness of violations of the rule of law and taking them to the court.

> Panelists: Jeremy Bierbach, Attorney; Ramona Coman, President of the Institute for European Studies, ULB; Joze Strus*, Rule of law DG Just.

1.30 p.m. – 3.30 p.m. EUROPEAN CITIZENS INVOLVEMENT AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN THE EU

- **The campaign for voting rights across borders**

This workshop will hear about progress with the European citizens' initiative (ECI) "Voters without Borders" and how, after a period of consultation, the Commission intends to reform the directives on European citizens participation in municipal and European elections in their country of residence. In turn, issues about voting across borders should be put in the broader context of how to make elections to the European Parliament in 2024 more European, through the introduction of transnational lists and giving voters a greater say in the appointment of the Commission.

> Panelists: Domenec Ruiz Devesa, MEP Rapporteur for AFCO on European electoral law; Harry Panagopulos, DG Justice; Sofia Profico, VWB; Freiburger Wahlkreis 100%; Thomas Peutz, D66 Delft; Joachim Wilcke, VOLT

- **Will the CoFoE make citizen participation a permanent pillar of EU decision making?**

In a mid-term review of CoFoE, the aim of this workshop will be to assess lessons learned about engaging with citizens with examples of both good and bad practices from across Europe. For many supporters of ECIs, assemblies, town hall meetings, agoras, participatory budgeting and other forums to bring citizens together across

borders, the question is: can the CoFoE lay the basis to go beyond projects and experiments, and bring about more systemic permanent change. Could citizen participation become a pillar of the EU decision-making process?

Panelists: Kalypso Nicolaidis, School of transnational governance EUI; Daniela Vancic, Democracy International; Ophelie Masson, Citizens take over Europe; Benoît Verhulst and Noémie Galland-Beaune, Missions Publiques; DG Research.

3.30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. A EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP OF TRUST AND BELONGING

- **Should there be a right to European citizenship education?**

Following on from the NECE campus and event in Berlin, at the beginning of November 2020, the 5th annual conference highlighted the Declaration emerging from that process and the question was raised of whether an ECI on a child guarantee for European citizenship education could be launched. The aim of the workshop will be to examine the demands formulated for such an initiative and its feasibility. The workshop will also examine other proposals such as a pilot project leading to the creation of a European agency.

Panelists: Christoph-Muller Hofstede, ECIT Board member; Susanne Zels, Values Unite; Selma Kropp, researcher on the rights of the child; Ally Dunhill; Head of Advocacy at Eurochild

- **The wider aspects of EU citizenship of shared cultural values, belonging and identity**

This last workshop, like the opening session, will concentrate on the lessons from European research and programmes such as Erasmus and Horizon, and what can be expected from new programmes under the multiannual framework such as CERV (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) and the EU Recovery Plan generally. Can European citizenship become the status with which people identify to come together across different languages, cultures, histories and beliefs? What reforms such as those recommended in the statute are necessary for this to become citizenship for all?

Panelists: Louisa Slavkova, Sofia plateform, Philippe van Parijs*; Gilles Pelayo*, Head of unit, Europe for Citizens.

THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER

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CLOSING SESSION (10.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m)

Moderated by Tony Venables (ECIT founder) and Niccolo Milanese* (Board member).

- **German Länder resolution on EU citizenship**

At the final session, a regional politician from Germany may be added to the panel to present a resolution by the governments of the German states[3]. This would be an ideal opportunity to provide a keynote presentation to the audience on the resolution and to connect the example of a national address to the larger issues covered the previous days.

> Panelist: Anais Bordes, Ministery of Saxony for Justice, Democracy, Europe and Equality.

- **Final plenary discussion**

Finally, all participants will come together to hear and discuss the results from all six workshops. There will be two parallel break-out groups to make last-minute changes and proposals for the launch of the two main results from the event:

- European citizenship statute: a new version of the statute will be put forward taking into account the discussion over the two days with a view to the approval by the conference for publication on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of the Maastricht Treaty, on 1 November 2021;
- European right to citizenship education: this workshop involving those who will attend the NECE conference[4] will have the chance to study the demands for an ECI and the background explanation before the proposal is submitted to the Commission for registration.

The ECIT Foundation will hold two follow up events in the NECE Conference starting on the same day – Thursday 28 October in the afternoon.

They are supporting the 6th Annual ECIT Foundation Conference

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[3] See the 8/9 September 2021 resolution on the future of European democracy and strengthening European citizenship.
[4] The closing session of the ECIT conference will take place in the morning of 28 October to allow those arriving for the NECE conference starting that afternoon to attend.