

## DRAFT MANIFESTO TO MAKE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP COHERENT, STRONG AND INCLUSIVE

In this manifesto, we appeal to candidates and political parties campaigning for votes in the European elections of 2019 to take inspiration from the younger generation and by strengthening European citizenship, strengthen their prospects for the future and those of the European union itself. There is no other way forward. Across Europe, from Lisbon to Riga, Athens to Edinburgh, more and more young people are becoming true European citizens, their opportunities and personal lives enriched by a Europe of freedom to live, study or work anywhere they choose. This first transnational citizenship of the modern era is both popular and spreading in sharp contrast to the doom-laden scenarios of retreat to identity politics and nationalism. Enacting EU citizenship is a way of breaking down the barriers which divide us into cliques and local identities. EU citizenship is about personal self-fulfilment, but it also keeps Europe together because it has forged connections, networks and collective values. It means inhabiting a space beyond the nation-state, which has its own codes of behaviour to work properly with equal opportunity, rejection of all forms of racism and discrimination, and mutual respect for differences paramount. It can only be built on the curiosity to explore those differences so that they enrich one's own behaviour. A Europe for example in which we no longer welcome people from outside will rapidly become a Europe where we no longer tolerate each other. It is not surprising that so many young people, and not only young people, are up in arms against a Europe where asylum seekers are to be kept out of sight and out of mind. Whilst the official Europe of the EU is a prisoner of competing national interests, more and more young people are escaping those constraints and taking the fate of Europe into their own hands and building their own means of transnational communication and networking through acts of European citizenship. Erasmus and other EU programmes have been a catalyst for this emerging public European sphere, which goes well beyond their direct impact. Social movements, forces for change, or just the coming together of people with the same interest are less and less confined within any particular border or limited to people of the same nationality. Parts of our cities, university campuses, workplaces, social media and civil society are creating the social capital of European citizenship. The growth of transnational societies is not just due to the internet and cheaper travel and other means of communication, but also due to the resulting changes in culture in turn producing a sense of common citizenship across borders.

The European situation is profoundly paradoxical. Transnational citizenship is surpassing expectations whilst at the same time a broader nationalist wave is sweeping Europe. The fragility of European citizenship and the sense that no-one knows where it is going are apparent from the pressures of repeated crises which reveal its shortcomings:

- Formal access to Union citizenship, because it is additional to citizenship of an EU Member State, is uneven because of differences in laws on the acquisition of nationality, even though it has been shown that there are ways round that for the super-rich. Access in practice is even more uneven because of lack of information, civic education and opportunity to enjoy the advantages Europe can

offer. This is not yet a citizenship for all, but for relatively well-off and educated sections of the population.

- Far too many European citizens are in limbo having lost entitlements for example to health care or unemployment benefits in their country of origin without being able to access them in their country of residence. This is particularly true of minorities and vulnerable groups such as the Rom or the homeless.

- There are increasing barriers to freedom of movement in a more hostile climate especially for anyone in a so-called atypical situation: i.e. members of a family of EU citizens coming from outside the EU, unregistered partners or carers.

- For many young people, being a European citizen is a necessity rather than a choice given the lack of job prospects at home leaving them often in a precarious situation, given the lack of economic and social rights attached to this status.

- Formal loss of EU citizenship can occur for 65 million UK citizens without information let alone rights of appeal. A total of 4.5 million people in the UK and EU-27 will lose part of their status and rights: a done deal in the Brexit negotiations.

The European Parliament needs to claim European citizenship as one of the bases for its own legitimacy, defend and advance it. This means enforcing European rights across borders, giving European citizens a greater role in setting the EU agenda and promoting a wider sense of European identity shared by all. It is astonishing that the European Parliament of all the EU institutions has so far not done more to take advantage of this unique and fundamental European status and the advantages it offers:

- ***Historical roots.*** For over a millennium since the first transnational citizenships of Greek and Roman times, being a European citizen has meaning. It is related to landmark struggles for rights and democracy and has, especially after periods when our continent was torn apart by war, been seen as the best hope to achieve the European dream. It is no accident for example that Thomas Moore's tale of Utopia emerged from a discussion among a group of Europeans and was printed with the help of Erasmus. Our artists and scholars have always travelled. For some the birthday of European citizenship was 25 years ago when it was included in the Maastricht Treaty, but this distant echo of our identity as Europeans was born 61 years ago when the Treaty of Rome created a European Economic Community, the rules of which could be invoked by individuals in a court of law against their own government. Union citizenship finds definition in the EU context but there is much more to it than that.

- ***Legal substance.*** When Union citizenship was added to the Treaties to many observers this was public relations or "citizenship light". That was to overlook the impact of the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) which has turned this into a real citizenship with rights to freedom of movement and equal treatment regardless of nationality at its heart. On repeated occasions, the Court has declared Union citizenship "a fundamental status of nationals of member states", which can be invoked as such, and challenged restrictions to the individual's rights free movement in areas of state sovereignty such as access to social assistance, higher education and even how one can name one's children or risk losing nationality itself. Treaty provisions from the Maastricht to the Lisbon Treaties have been backed up by an expanding body of European law in the areas of free movement

and residence for European citizens and their family members, the coordination of social security arrangements for those on the move and the recognition of their professional qualifications.

- ***Extensive practice.*** Before the 2004 enlargement of the EU from 15 to 25 Member states and then 28, freedom of movement was at a low level and outstripped by immigration from outside the EU. Now it is catching up not only as a result of enlargement to the East but also because of youth unemployment in the South hit by a decade of economic crisis. The expansion of European citizenship in practice has been largely ignored. In the political debate dominated by disagreements within and between countries over immigration and asylum, the fact that Europeans are also on the move goes unnoticed. There has been an increase in the official numbers living and working in other member states. In turn, this overlooks the scale of cross border commuting, temporary and unrecorded movements and simply carrying out cross-border transactions virtually without having to travel. Sociological research suggests that some 30 % of Europeans are to an extent enacting European citizenship.

- ***Increasing popularity.*** Traditionally a roughly equal number of Europeans have seen themselves as citizens of their country and also citizens of Europe, but that figure has risen to 70 % according to the latest Eurobarometer surveys. Even in the UK where a majority voted to leave the EU, 58% see themselves as in some way European citizens. Awareness of European rights has increased to over 40% of the EU population. A majority see freedom of movement as the greatest of the EU's achievements and good for their own country. This shift towards European identity is occurring paradoxically at a time of decreasing trust in the EU and its Institutions and increasing insistence by governments of national interests.

As a first step, the European Parliament should take on a clear responsibility for EU citizenship. This raises both practical questions about European rights which can connect directly to one's own life choices, but also about our different linguistic and cultural identities, national concepts of citizenship and what it means to be a European. Different crises facing the EU are also crises of citizenship and identity, so that a transnational citizenship relates closely to choices for the future of Europe:

- To what extent is EU citizenship only an extension of our nationality and transnational through the opening up of states and territories to each other, or emerging to become a genuinely post-national citizenship in its own right? If this is the case how to make this status as relevant to stayers as to those on the move? Like the European Union itself, is not European citizenship itself too much of a top-down project, its advantages enjoyed by the relatively privileged and well-educated?
- How can EU citizenship be made to work better in practice particularly for minorities and low-income groups, who face barriers to the exercise of their European rights? EU citizenship is part of the broader framework of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, but how can that be applied in countries where basic European values are being violated? Could EU citizenship become the counterweight to the rise in nationalistic populism which can spill over into racism and xenophobia?

- Does citizenship fit with an EU decision-making process which is organised by sector of activity and dominated by expertise and lobbying for more specific interests? Can citizens really have a voice without more fundamental reforms to the way the EU works and transnational deliberative and representative democracy? How to explain the paradox that EU citizenship has been side-lined by crises facing the EU whereas it can overcome them?
- Apart from allowing young people from Eurozone countries hit by the crisis to exercise their European rights to find work in the stronger economies, where is the sense of common citizenship not just national interest? Are Europeans really so divided on questions of the right to asylum and immigration that boat loads of people fleeing war and persecution are being sent from one European port to the next?
- How to make European citizenship accessible to all and a condition of equality so that everyone has a stake in its development? How can this transnational citizenship strike the popular imagination and develop its own symbols?
- Should this be a citizenship which is only gained automatically if one's state becomes a member of the EU and lost in the same way if it withdraws? Is there a case for a European citizenship based not so much on a fixed territory but shared values?  
Should it remain confined to nationals of EU member states or be more expansive and continent-wide, including citizens of neighbouring countries and people resident in Europe who have come from the rest of the world?

Hence this **manifesto** which draws on policy research by ECIT, the recommendations from the Summer University and other proposals.

## TEN- POINT MANIFESTO FOR THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

### **1. The European Parliament should make the next legislature the citizenship legislature in all areas of EU policy**

We appeal to the European Parliament to support this unique citizenship which often appears the responsibility of everyone and no-one and is all too easily taken for granted. The opportunity to do so will come shortly after the elections when the Commission should present the report due every three 3 years under Article 25 TFEU on activities related to Union citizenship. In a letter to ECIT on 6 June 2018, Antonio Tajani, the President of the European Parliament states how much his Institution "appreciates what your initiative sets out to achieve: to bring together policy makers, civil society activists, academics and students and give them the opportunity to debate European citizenship in the context of the numerous challenges Europe is facing and with the 2019 European Elections very much on the horizon". The European Parliament can itself support this initiative by organising public hearings on the Commission's report in order to develop its own response. On the previous report the Parliament went further than the Commission stressing in particular the link between Union citizenship and the need to step up the fight against all forms of discrimination.

Implementing the recommendations of the report should be kept under democratic scrutiny by the Parliament..

Above all the public should be more involved in shaping the future of European citizenship. In 2013, the EU made a first attempt with a special year for European citizens but this was badly prepared, under-resourced and the concept too general. Lessons can be drawn from this first mistake. The European Parliament should call for the organisation of a special year on European citizenship as such, which will allow for more widespread debate across EU-27 particularly in schools and universities to raise awareness of European rights and opportunities to have a say in the decision-making of the EU. The year should be a vehicle to kickstart European civic education projects and result in an action programme on the lines of the reforms presented in this manifesto. A successful year requires resources, a cross sectoral alliance of civil society organisations and imaginative narrative, cultural and multi-media activity. It could turn this transnational citizenship round from a relatively elitist to a popular concept.

**2. Produce a blueprint to explain what European citizenship is by bringing its scattered features together.**

The guidelines published by ECIT [here](#) are a first attempt to respond to this need. Even this obvious objective needs political support and is difficult to meet among a set of Institutions where responsibilities for European citizenship are so scattered with one department or committee dealing with free movement and residence, another with social rights, another with professional qualifications and still another with the educational, cultural and youth exchange programmes. The official definition of Union citizenship is in articles 18-25 TFEU, but other aspects are scattered across other parts of the Treaties, legislation and programmes. To give meaning to citizenship at any level, the different components of rights, participation and a wider sense of common identity stand or fall together. The guidelines show that EU citizenship, despite its scattered and discreet profile, does contain the ingredients of a true citizenship even if the rights aspects have progressed further than the other two.

By bringing together what exists, the guidelines show that EU citizenship is more than the sum of its parts but also where a piecemeal approach leaves gaps and suggests a need for further progress. The guidelines can encourage civil society and the academic community to relate to Union citizenship as a whole and not just through the lens of their own particular area of interest or discipline. They are also a basis for EU citizenship to be taken into account in all the policies of the EU. The European Parliament should promote the approach, adopt a set of guidelines as its own and urge the other Institutions and bodies of the EU to do the same. This approach should be backed up by demanding that the next Commission should appoint a senior member to coordinate efforts to promote EU citizenship and take on responsibility for communication with citizens.

**3. Enforce European rights to freedom of movement properly and create a fund to counteract any negative side effects.**

There is a gap between the fine principles of the case-law of the European Court and what happens on the ground where exceptions to freedom of movement can become the rule especially for low-income groups, minorities and people who do not conform to standard classification. There is a long history of failure by national authorities to apply European law properly and increasing tension between national and European citizenship when it comes to issues of social assistance, immigration or family law.

There should be a twin-track approach of enforcement of European rights combined with local non-legislative action. There is a need for more action by the Commission to prevent barriers to freedom of movement occurring in the first place, introduce collective action by associations and a fast-track enforcement procedure. Securing European rights for 3.3 million EU citizens in the UK and 1.2 million UK citizens in the EU post-Brexit will be an uphill struggle for at least a generation. Migration organisations and law clinics should be given more support from EU programmes. The main challenge is that freedom of movement is uneven and can create problems of brain drain in specific country of origin regions and corresponding strains on local services in regions of destination, so that EU regulations and better enforcement are not the only answer. A European free movement solidarity fund should be created to bring the two together and support both movers and local communities not with new resources but as part of EU social, regional and migration funds. The fund should operate on the basis of partnerships at local level linked across the main pathways of intra-EU migration among public authorities, civil society and the private sector. A cross-border EU minimum income scheme should be introduced to ensure that job seekers have less need to claim social assistance in the host country. Such action is essential to counteract calls for general restrictions on European rights to freedom of movement.

#### **4. Support the introduction of cross border universal suffrage in Europe.**

Political rights are the defining feature of any citizenship. The Maastricht Treaty was a step forward by introducing the right to vote and stand in local and European elections for EU citizens living in another EU member state. It would certainly encourage more use of these rights if political parties both decide to pitch their campaigns towards communities of European citizens and include more of their number as candidates. For the next European elections, the EU Institutions should issue guidance to national electoral authorities as to how to make registration and voting as easy as possible as well as to political parties to highlight their European affiliations and European lead candidates.

The ECIT guidelines illustrate, however, the paradox of European political rights which exist for lesser order elections but not for the ones that really count – the national ones – or for local but not regional elections even though the two are closely related. In the British referendum of 23 June 2016, which was a close call, EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens resident in the EU for over 15 years were disenfranchised. ECIT is building a partnership for a European citizens' initiative- "My Europe, my Vote"- in favour of full voting rights in order to remove this stain on democracy and make it more transnational. This is essential at a time when elections at all levels are becoming more and more of a platform for asserting anti-EU,

populist and nationalistic agendas. The one measure which can give European citizenship more substance is to make it more political. This campaign will need the support of the European Parliament.

**5. Call on the new Commission to produce a white paper on European governance and the citizen.**

The white paper of 2001 remains still the basis on which the EU has developed reforms to become more transparent and reduce the gap with the citizen. The white paper is however now out-of-date and overtaken by the new opportunities offered by the internet and social media to reach out to more significant numbers of the unreached across Europe. At the same time the challenges of disenchantment with Europe and sharp divisions across public opinion have also grown as a result of a series of crises facing the EU. The need for an overall assessment and updating of the white paper are all too apparent. Reforms have tended to become increasingly piecemeal with expectations raised only to be disappointed when the latest gadget – be it citizens’ initiatives or the transparency register – fails to make a noticeable difference to perceptions of the EU or its ability to reach out beyond a relatively closed bubble of insiders.

From the citizen perspective the different channels of access and communication are not ends in themselves but simply different ways of raising their concerns with EU policy makers and part of the same picture of a system of governance which is either perceived as serving them or itself. Such a new white paper should examine European governance not just in the terms of the European Commission’s role but also that of the European Parliament, the Council and national governments. Different geographical levels should be taken in account. The white paper should propose a comprehensive reform agenda across the range of all the possibilities open to citizens: formal complaints against violations of European law, access to documents, public – not just expert – consultations, the transparency register and rules for lobbying, petitions to the European parliament and the role of the European ombudsman. The emphasis should be on how to make these access points better known, multilingual, easier to use and capable of producing quick results. Each MEP should be responsible for holding an open surgery for citizens in his or her region at least once a month. A new white paper bringing reforms together would make a difference, but not enough.

**6. Make deliberative and participatory democracy a permanent pillar of EU decision-making through a European Citizens’ Agora.**

The new European Parliament should build on different national and EU initiatives in the run-up to the 2019 elections to engage citizens in local debates about the future of Europe and a vast online consultation designed by a randomly selected panel from across EU. Such initiatives are welcome provided they are not just a one off, but become permanent. Space and resources should be created to bring in the citizens by reforming existing bodies. The European Economic and Social Committee sees itself as a bridge towards civil society. The staff, premises and technical equipment would be better employed servicing a European

Citizens' Agora. In the past the European Parliament ran its own annual agora. Such a body should be composed of citizens drawn by lot or selected to be representative of the population from across all EU member states. Such an agora should receive a mandate to make recommendations on major challenges facing the EU such as migration, sustainable development, the Euro-zone or cross-border security where European countries may be divided in the short-term, even if in the long-term their interests could converge. The agora should work for the long-term consensus beyond the current programme and next electoral cycle and in that way should complement rather than duplicate the formal decision-making process. Like the proposed citizens' house the Agora should not only exist in Brussels but be accessible from anywhere virtually and be multi-functional for both serious formal deliberation, and more festive or cultural activities both in Brussels and where needed.

A European law is needed to go beyond ad hoc experimentation with participatory democracy and ensure the fair and proper use of tools such as citizens' juries, scenario-building exercises or participatory budgeting. Such a law should lay down standards so that citizens know their role and what to expect. It is necessary to establish rules for the selection of participants, access to expertise, ownership of the results, engagement with decision-makers and follow-up.

## **7. Create European citizens' houses**

Among all the prestigious buildings of institutions, some 30,000 lobbyists and think tanks in Brussels, citizens need their own place. The European Parliament should look again at an idea it supported in the past with an experimental budget line, but which ran up against resistance from those arguing for the status quo. The house would be much more than an advice service for individuals and provide an interactive space where proposals can be worked on – for example to gather over one million signatures for a citizens' initiative, forge cross-border alliances and networks and create synergy among what are often original but isolated ideas for Europe.

Proposals are being worked on for such a facility, which has to meet a wide range of different requirements: a European citizens' house should be a bottom-up creation emerging from the local community and fitting with the local architecture and urban surroundings, therefore reflecting diversity. At the same time, such a house should not only exist in Brussels, and have at least some common features – or a "brand" – which are immediately recognisable anywhere. Civil society activists are aware that starting successful European ventures requires considerable investment of time and energy, mostly on a voluntary basis. One option for a European citizens' house would be to provide for accommodation. The European citizens' house is an incubator and should be adaptable to different needs. For example, to be able to respond rapidly to a local problem with a European dimension there should be a mobile version. At the Summer University different designs and existing examples will be displayed. The new European Parliament should provide political support for a win-win project to reduce the gap between the EU and the citizen.

## **8. Introduce a European citizen card.**



Such a card which could be the reverse side of national identity cards (or a special card in countries which do not have national IDs), showing that national and EU citizenship are complementary. In terms of the citizenship directive (2004/38) residence cards are not necessary for short stays in another EU member state but only for permanent residence. This has a disadvantage: it has encouraged the introduction of different kinds of voluntary European passes for different categories of the population and different national schemes to register as a worker or to obtain an identification number, which can be required in order to be able to make a start. Such a multiplicity of different European and national schemes is confusing and a barrier to freedom of movement. A European card should bring them together and become instead a shared practical badge and symbol of the same transnational citizenship across Europe. It could serve a number of objectives to establish European rights both across Europe and towards the EU Institutions:

-More and more people are moving around Europe and coming in and out of different national systems more quickly. In a digital Europe, considerable time and money can be saved for citizens and the administration alike by an electronic card replacing the need to supply paper originals and authenticated translation of documents to establish one's status. There is already a European health card which could be extended to other social security entitlements, such as rights to a pension, for example. Differences in private civil law are problematic but at least with a card red tape can be cut and mutual recognition becomes easier by establishing connections to family members and their rights. A card could carry proof also of one's professional and academic qualifications.

-Such a card could also make access to the EU and citizens participation much easier and more extensive. For example over 9 million people have signed over 70 European citizens' initiatives, but with a proliferation of different national requirements only 5 have reached beyond the 1 million threshold to be valid. A card would make signing much quicker and easier and guarantee more successful ECIs. It could also be used to send requests to the EU authorities, petition the European Parliament, participate in public consultations or vote in European elections which could be expected to have a positive impact on turn-out.

-Whilst the card should provide information for both the holder the administration of all the European rights under the Treaties and how they are applied, it should also be proof of one's entitlement to participate in a European educational, training or youth exchange programme.

#### **9. Create rights to be informed, educated and enjoy the benefits of European citizenship.**

Whilst reforms are needed to make the EU more democratic, this is not enough unless they register with the majority and are actively taken up by more people. European citizenship must become a condition of civil equality and rest on a wider sense of shared identity in a European public sphere. As a first step there should be an obligation on EU and national authorities to ensure that all Union citizens and residents should be informed about their European rights and activities of the EU, but that in turn that will not be sufficient unless people have had from an early age the necessary education in and out of school about the EU and what it means to be a European citizen.

As a counterpart to the new programme on fundamental rights and European values, there should be a special programme on citizenship education. The EU has a role in educational exchanges and in promoting the knowledge of languages. Citizenship education has spread across Europe, albeit unevenly, following a Council of Europe charter. The EU, which does have competence for Union citizenship, should propose a model for the European addition to these efforts following the 2015 Paris declaration by EU ministers for education.

In the context of the negotiations for the next multi-annual financial framework, the European Commission has recommended doubling the budget for the Erasmus programme. This is a welcome investment in the younger generation, but the programme will still be only accessible to a minority. Erasmus should also include civic education as an EU policy objective supported by a specific share of the budget. Should not the possibility of participating at some time in one's life in a European exchange programme be open to everyone? It should become a European right – a universal entitlement of a European citizenship of greater equality. Such an objective could only be achieved gradually and through the introduction of an increase in European revenue or a European tax to produce the necessary resources. The new European Parliament should support such an objective and introduce a feasibility project.

#### **10. Reconsider European citizenship itself in a revision of the EU Treaties.**

When Union citizenship was introduced in a top-down fashion in the Maastricht Treaty 25 years ago, it was welcomed by civil society organisations but with strong criticism of the status being based on nationality of member states, rather than residence. Human rights and migrant organisations, as well as a broader alliance during the European year of citizens in 2013, have highlighted the dangers of discrimination between two groups of migrants – EU citizens and those from third countries outside the EU. This argument is especially relevant today when there are major challenges of integration of migrants facing European societies stemming from asylum and immigration. In the European Parliament there was support until recently of the idea that legally resident third country nationals could become European citizens after 5 years.

Issues of access and loss of the Union citizenship status are once more on the agenda and should be considered for future Treaty revision. With Brexit, the automatic and involuntary loss of European citizenship status is legally possible in terms of the current Treaties, but unprecedented and arbitrary by the standards set by democratic countries and the international community. Does the EU want an expanding or shrinking European citizenry? Efforts have been made in the context of regulations on social security, freedom of movement, professional qualifications and EU programmes for the integration of migrants to close the gap between legally resident immigrants and EU citizens, but the gap remains and has widened in a climate hostile to migration. A revision of the Treaties and in particular Article 20 TFEU which reserves EU citizenship to nationals of member states could resolve this problem. Union citizenship could be extended for example to all residents in the EU and to citizens of neighbouring countries, or an associate citizenship introduced – an idea floated in the European Parliament.

In this manifesto most of the reform proposals can be introduced without major new European laws because they build on what exists, but the legislative development of Union citizenship itself and the introduction of new European economic and social rights should be made easier. For any Treaty revision, the European Parliament should also earmark Article 25 TFEU to provide for majority voting and proper control by the European Parliament itself, instead of unanimity and an intergovernmental approach, when it comes to measures to develop Union citizenship.

In conclusion we call on all political parties, candidates and those elected in May 2019 to do three things:

- Nail their colours to the mast of a European citizenship for all and explain how they will defend European rights and promote this unique transnational status in all areas of EU policy;
- Commit to an agenda for radical change of the EU Institutions to bring them closer to the citizen with measures such as a European citizens' agora and a wider package of reforms in a new white paper;
- Single out European citizenship as a priority for future reform of the EU Treaties