

## AFTER THE SUMMER UNIVERSITY ON EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

**What were the main results of the Summer University held on 6-7 September, and what are the next steps for ECIT?** We are currently working on a report of the event, which encouraged the bringing together of a significant amount of material, from civil society organisations, academics and policy makers. Dialogue between these three groups has been shown to be highly productive, so the report could provide a useful resource for all those studying or looking into the potential for action offered by this first legally established transnational citizenship of the modern era. Most of the speakers have sent in their contributions, which we will publish with the report, especially since there was not enough time at a two-day event for them to present all their ideas and findings.

The event this year was the third of its kind and we certainly see value in developing the Summer University as an annual rendezvous. Updating on developments and sharing information among researchers, civil society representatives and representatives of the EU Institutions are valid objectives in their own right, since those working on European citizenship are scattered and do not form a constituency. The formula also attracts young people and students, and a sharing of ideas and support for embarking on new European ventures. In 2019, we would like to strengthen that dimension. This year, we were only able — because of a limited budget — to offer a “scholarship” to 6 young people, towards the cost of travelling and staying in Brussels. The lesson must be to find more resources and partners. Next year, we should also try to attract the new Members of the European Parliament.

### ECIT Manifesto

With only nine months to go before the European Elections, which are seen as a make or break test for the EU, [the Manifesto prepared by ECIT](#) was well received with references to its 10-point plan and call for a citizens' legislature. Once we have completed the report, there will be some changes for the ECIT Board of Directors to consider: more emphasis on languages and citizenship education, as well as involving not only first-time voters, but also those below 18. The idea of a **European Citizens' Agora** was well received. It appears that the Manifesto survived as a good reflection of the views of many who campaign for more democracy and reform of the EU to become a citizens' Europe.

**What should happen to the manifesto?** It should be discussed and offered up to other pro-European forces which should come together in a campaign which will be marked by strong nationalistic opposition to the EU.

## Themes explored during the Summer University 2018

Throughout the two days of debate, and an evening event on European citizenship post-Brexit held on 6 September at the Press Club, three themes kept coming back:

- **European citizenship would have much more credibility not only if the rights to freedom of movement attached to it were properly enforced, but also, more generally, if the rule of law was fully respected in all Member States.** Workshops considered how to enforce the case law of the European Court and how to create a network to defend European rights more effectively. There was support for [the European Citizens' Initiative \(ECI\) demanding permanent European citizenship post-Brexit](#), which has already reached the threshold in the UK and has begun to attract signatures in all other Member states. Participants also volunteered support for [ECIT's proposal for a follow-up ECI](#) demanding that European citizens resident in other Member States should have rights to vote not only in local and European elections, but also in the regional and national ones, as well as referenda.
- **European citizenship is being practised on a much wider and more effective scale, but remotely from the EU Institutions, especially by young people able to act locally and across borders.** This development has been encouraged by programmes such as Erasmus, new civil society movements emerging from the crises facing the EU, and better, cheaper communication, including the use of English as a *lingua franca*. New forms of European activism are however scattered and do not generally translate in more influence over the direction of European politics. There are though good grounds for optimism about the future of European citizenship. Young people acting as European citizens is also a factor recognised in the results of the EU's own [Horizon 2020](#) research projects, but not reflected as yet in European policy making.
- **The need for European policies and programmes to shift emphasis from education for jobs to a broader vision, including citizenship, was stressed.** The Summer University was held at the same time as the final conference of the [CatchEyoU](#) — a two-year research project which examined Europe in text books and brought groups of students from five schools to Brussels to present what they had found out and proposed to representatives of the EU Commission and Parliament. The project showed that education for European citizenship works and should be scaled up. With the help of Julie Ward M.E.P, who attended most of the Summer University, a message was sent to another event, organised this time by [NECE \(Networking European Citizenship Education\)](#) in Marseilles. The challenge now is to translate calls for more effective citizenship education into advocacy and to influence the negotiations on the future of the EU financial framework after 2020 and programmes.

**Reactions, suggestions? Any will be gratefully received as we work on the report of the Summer University and start planning the 2019 version.**