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# SUMMER UNIVERSITY ON EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

## Final Report



Thursday 6 September-Friday 7 September 2018

Committee of the Regions  
Rue Belliard 99-101  
B - 1040 Brussels

### DAY 1, Thursday 6 September 2018 - RIGHTS

#### Report of workshops held before the opening of the summer university

The European citizens' initiative (ECI) as a tool to empower European citizens (ECIT, the ECI campaign and Democracy International)

##### *Part one - ECI's in general and revision of the regulation*

Daniela Vancic, European Programme Manager at International Democracy, explained what the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) is, a right of every EU citizen to directly invite the Commission to propose legislation on a topic that falls within the framework of the Commission's powers. Taking into account the results of the live survey conducted at the beginning of the workshop, it was revealed that several participants had no prior knowledge of the ECI – proving to be true also at the overall EU level. Low public knowledge of the ECI is not the only drawback of the ECI – the ECI is overly complicated and has not created much of a political impact in its six years of existence. Since the law entered into effect in 2012, five initiatives have successfully reached the one million signature threshold required to submit the proposal to the Commission, but the Commission has followed-up with some form of legislative action to only two initiatives, which is argued by the organizers of both initiatives to be weak in response. A more accurate way to describe the Commission's responses was that it took inspiration from the two ECIs, but the initiatives' demands were not directly addressed.

In order to address the growing concerns with the ECI, the Commission began a revision process for the regulation of the ECI in spring 2017. An analysis of the Commission's proposal by civil society revealed that the Commission took steps towards making the tool more user-friendly, less complicated and easier to sign and launch an initiative as well as more flexibility for organizers. However, where the ECI particularly needed an improvement was the political impact of successful ECIs, and nothing in the Commission's proposal takes steps in this direction. However, due to diligent



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campaign and lobbying efforts of civil society organizations led by The ECI Campaign and Democracy International, the European Parliament took systematic steps in taking a greater role in successful ECIs, ultimately giving the ECI more political impact. Whether the technical improvements will overall improve the tool's impact or increase in use is yet to be foreseen as the new regulation of the ECI will go into effect on 1 January, 2020.

### ***Part two - proposal for an ECI to give full political rights to EU citizens on the move***

Petar Markovic, Campaign Coordinator at ECIT Foundation, referred to the background paper which outlined preliminary plans for an ECI demanding that full political rights should be granted to EU citizens on the move. Those that organise their lives on nomadic principles are given rights to vote in local and European elections in their country of residence but not in regional, national elections or referenda. This incomplete catalogue reflects a European citizenship which is primarily economic whilst the real thrust of citizenship is not just rights but also participation for which the basic right to vote is essential. For example, if the 3.3 million EU citizens living in the UK and the 1.2 million UK citizens living in EU-27 had had the right to vote in the 2016 referendum, the result could well have been to remain.

Why an ECI? Because one cannot expect governments to introduce rights which disturb electoral calculations without pressure from citizens. The proposed ECI has three aims: strengthen European citizenship to become more political; remove a stain on European democracy and respect universal suffrage and the principle of no taxation without representation; do something for Europe – for example, by preventing the far right from hijacking the debate about freedom of movement and reducing it to welfare tourism.

How should this be taken forward? ECIT, in alliance with the ECI campaign and Democracy International, has decided to wait until 2020 when the new regulation come into force. The next summer university in 2019 should make political rights the main theme. Preparations however have to start now by creating a task force to answer the questions: What is the political landscape across the EU? ; What is the experience with this issue (for example an ECI "let me vote" was already attempted)? ; Who would be able to collect signatures? Which countries are likely to be most supportive?

In the debate, the proposal was regarded as ambitious – even utopian by one participant who argued there should be a European public sphere first- but the principle of full political rights appeared to be supported. The questions and debate focussed more on the conditions for acquiring political rights in another country such as the period of residence, how to avoid double voting and whether rights should be limited to EU citizens or be extended to all migrants. At the end of the discussion, 10 participants offered to become involved in the follow-up and preparations for the ECI.



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## Workshops on rights of residence and creating a European network to defend freedom of movement

### ***Part one: residence rights derived from ties to EU citizens (Immigration Law Associates and Mazzeschi S.R.L.)***

Tanel Feldman, co-founder and senior partner at Immigration Law Associated, pointed out that the entry into and residence in the territory of the Member States to third-country nationals who are family members of EU citizens, grants the protection of the family life and eliminate obstacles to the exercise of the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Treaty to nationals of Member States.

The concept of family member raises a significant academic and legal debate.

The U.N. Human Rights Council recently outlined that there is no definition of the family under international human rights law. According to the Human Rights Committee, the concept of family may differ in some respects from State to State, and even from region to region within a State, and that is therefore "*not possible to give the concept a standard definition*". The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has stated that the concept must be understood "*in a wide sense*" and "*in accordance with appropriate local usage*".

The Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families defines the family as encompassing all relationships that, under applicable law, "*produces effects equivalent to marriage*".

Pursuant to Article 9 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the right to marry and to found a family "*shall be granted in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of these rights*".

Before the adoption of Directive 2004/38, the EU law recognised the importance of ensuring the protection of the EU nationals' family life. The right of entry into and residence in the territory of the Member States, to third-country nationals' spouses of EU nationals, was provided for by Regulation (EEC) No 1612/68 and several directives.

A simple reading of Articles 2 and 3 Directive 2004/38, evidences that *prima facie*, the spouse and the direct descendants who are under the age of 21's derived right of residence, is not subordinated to conditions laid down in the national legislation of the host Member State. Where the concept of spouse is still under legal debate, the right of residence derived from ties to mobile EU citizens is still a controversial topic.

The European Court of Justice plays a leading role in enhancing and safeguarding the right of residence derived from ties to mobile EU citizens.

The question is whether Member States are playing a constructive role in that regard.

The following questions must be addressed in context:

- Although not defined by legal instruments, is the concept of "family" considered "*in the light of the present-day circumstances*"?



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- Whether national legislations are complying with the principle of effectiveness.
- Must National Courts refer to the European Court of Justice any *prima facie* new derived right of residence scenario?

### ***Part two: creating a European network (European Alternatives)***

Martin Pairet, the Network Manager of European Alternatives, presented the ACT4FreeMovement [project](#) and explored with the participants ways to mobilise for free movement ahead of the European Parliamentary Elections 2019. ACT4FreeMovement stands for Advocacy, Complaints and Trainings for Freedom of Movement. The program main goal is to increase the capacity of EU citizens to effectively secure access to and knowledge of their rights, as well as build public awareness and political support for mobile citizen rights. To do so, the program employs a multilevel strategy involving: research to identify specific problems and to define good practices; EU-level advocacy through complaints to the European Commission and petitions to the European Parliament; training of free movement activists; and providing support for citizen-led grassroots campaigns on mobile citizen rights.

As part of the presentation, two campaigns to build public awareness for mobile citizen rights were presented to the participants:

- **BLOODY FOREIGNERS:** The campaign Bloody Foreigners aims at raising awareness on discrimination and increasing racism towards Polish citizens in Ireland. The campaigner mobilised the Polish community to donate blood, share their story of discrimination and highlight their contribution to society during a blood donation day. The campaign was well promoted in all mainstream Irish media and through Twitter and serves as a basis to extend such action to all migrants.
- **KNOWRIGHTS:** The campaign KNOWRIGHTS aims at empowering citizens to lobby for the removal of obstacles to free movement for EU citizens' third country family members and raise awareness of public authorities/member states about the negative effects of such obstacles. The campaigners organised a symposium in Bari, Italy targeted at EU citizens' third country family members which are facing serious issues in accessing their free movement rights, and coordinate the writing of a guide to lobby for this issue.

The workshop also presented the particular challenges of running campaigns on free movement of EU-mobile citizens, in particular in terms of communications. How to frame free movement in a time of rising nationalism across Europe? How to get non-mobile EU citizens interested in defending free movement? What kind of actions would mobilise broader constituencies for free movement rights ahead of the European Parliamentary Elections 2019? Inspired by these questions, participants suggested both action and process-oriented proposals to take into account for future campaigns:

1. Explore the possibility of an ERASMUS on a bike program, where EU non-mobile citizens could experience EU mobility without having to travel far;
2. Popularize e-learning tool on the right of free movement of union citizens ([http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item\\_id=51219](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=51219));
3. Use powerful statements to appeal to the emotions of EU non-mobile citizens such as: "Meat has more value than people, because meat can move freely, not people"; "The rich will always be



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able to buy free movement rights" (example of Lufthansa miles program giving special benefits, "buying" Maltese citizenship)

4. Develop active research programs and communications strategies targeted at non-profits and journalists to shift thinking on free movement and migration (inspired from <http://publicinterest.org.uk/framing-economy-report>)
5. Target future campaigns to EU citizens living in border regions in the EU, as well as to cross-border commuters; 40% of citizens live close to the border; AND/OR to EU non-mobile citizens' rights that have a durable relationship with a non-EU citizen/ whose spouse is a non-EU citizen; AND/OR EU-based workers which rely on free movement for their work, who are not visible enough in the media and in peoples' minds (truck drivers, pilots, etc.)

After the workshops a small met with Tony Simpson, author of the European Citizenship Initiative, to consider the strategy for the ECI on Permanent European Citizenship.

Over the lunch break there were presentations by An Fonteyne, Associate Professor at ETH Zurich, and 3 students of architecture from ETH Zurich of proposals to create a European citizens' house in Brussels. Their proposals can be found [here](#). The students were given the task of taking an office tower block and car park and turning it into its opposite- a place for citizens to gather, learn from each other and come together to plan European projects. The students showed that it is possible to design flexible spaces adaptable to a variety of different, often conflicting, requirements, whilst opening up different activities to each other. Further work will be needed on how to establish a brand for this project so the European citizens' house, which should not only exist in Brussels but across Europe, is immediately recognised whilst at the same time fitting in with the local environment. A background paper can be found on the ECIT website. This project is also included in the manifesto for the European elections. It is by no means the only project to raise the profile of a citizens' Europe- at the beginning of the afternoon there was a presentation of the [European Balcony Project](#), which will be launched on the same day, 11 November, across Europe.

## **1. Opening session of the summer university. European citizenship and the challenge of linguistic diversity.**

Philippe Van Parijs, Hoover Chair of Economic and Social Ethics at the University of Louvain, pointed out that the [manifesto](#) should say more about language. It is a subject which euro-enthusiasts prefer to avoid as explosive. Equality of all languages is the policy whilst in practice everyone communicates in English which means de-facto extreme inequality but official equality. There is no doubt that multilingualism makes democracy more laborious and for some -for example John Stewart Mill and Margaret Thatcher whom he quoted- impossible. Europe lacks the united public opinion for the workings of representative democracy -a challenge which also faces countries such as Belgium. Could there be a technological solution? Certainly the EU could make a bigger investment in machine translation to make it easier to dispense with the knowledge of languages, but there are limits and machines remain machines. Is Esperanto the answer? The problem is it's too late and any European lingua franca has to be world-wide which the case with English is already.

The upward trend in competence in English among young people is explosive as the graph. The development of English as a lingua franca is occurring without official top-down interference and as a



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result of a deep natural mechanism. How well you learn a language depends on how often you use it. When people come together the criteria for the choice of language revolve around which language is best known by the most people and by those who have least knowledge of a foreign language-a max-min mechanism which is self-reinforcing and favours the spread of English. There is nothing wrong with this development but some policies to counterbalance English are necessary: it should be appropriated as "our" language and not one borrowed from the British; some ways to tackle the influence of the Anglo-Saxon press have to be found; it is important to protect diversity through linguistic territoriality rules which European citizens should respect; a lingua franca is no substitute for learning the language of others for better communication.

Finally, he referred to his most recent book "Belgium-a utopia for our times" as a country which is a useful testing bed for Europe. Belgium has to build democratic institutions despite the fact that its population has different mother tongues. Even here English has to be used as a language for communication for example in training the national football team, the red devils and for promoting their brand during the world cup. Why by the way should there not be a European football team.

A number of participants, whilst accepting the advantages of having a lingua franca, argued for multilingualism and strengthening the EU policy of learning at least two foreign languages from an early age. There were also grey areas such as the protection of languages spoken only by a minority and the recognition of non-European languages. Further research was certainly necessary, for example by studying groups moving round Europe regularly, to find out more about language use and what was meant by European citizenship as a multilingual citizenship with a lingua franca.

## **2. European rights - different approaches and visions of European citizenship**

Marie-Hélène Boulanger, Head of the Unit "Citizenship rights and Free Movement" in DG Justice, began by reminding participants that if you are a citizen of a member state of the Union you are also a citizen of the Union. Her full presentation can be found [here](#), beginning with an explanation of what Union citizenship is, according to the Treaties in terms of rights to freedom of movement, political rights, consular protection and ways to defend your rights (Articles 20-25 TFEU). The presentation includes references to specific activities and reports by the citizenship unit.

The number of EU citizens living permanently in another Member State has increased from 8 to 12 million in the last ten years. 87% are aware of their status as European citizens but know less about their rights and how to defend them. The four themes of the citizenship report place emphasis on making people more aware of their rights. For example, over the summer a campaign had been launched on consular protection explaining what to do if you lose your passport.

She mentioned that by the end of 2018 the Commission would publish a report on national schemes granting EU citizenship to investors-so-called "golden passports".

The main priority was electoral rights where the Commission worked closely with the European Parliament. Rights to vote in local elections in a country other than one's own were hampered by lack of accessibility especially for minority communities and vulnerable people and could be difficult in small regions. Only 54% of the population were aware of this right and the rates of registration were very low. The situation was better with European citizens standing as candidates with good success



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rates in elections. It was necessary to spread best practices supporting turnout of specific groups: individual letters, websites, campaigns, helplines, local press.

For the European elections, the Commission had held a meeting with electoral experts of Member States on ways to increase turnout. The colloquium on fundamental rights in November 2018 would be devoted to European democracy.

Yuri Borgman-Prebil, DG Research and Innovation, complemented the overview of Commission policy on European citizenship by providing an [overview](#) of a critical mass of results from Commission funded research projects. This status has developed but also faces challenges, such as insufficient resonance with those who do not make use of their European rights. Researchers were asked to look at not only rights but also practices from a sociological perspective, finding significant actions at grass roots level with a European component. European solidarity was more than generally portrayed. For example, one project found a massive response by NGOs to the migration crisis. There is much higher involvement in cross border activity and europeanisation of everyday life than assumed. The researchers recommended that solidarity practices on the ground should be better connected to the EU Institutions and social justice articulated at European level.

What could be the impact of a differentiated Europe on citizenship? Inevitably the research found that there would be different cohorts of citizens and called for strengthening the European social dimension. There is little political appetite for this, but there could be support. The research found that European redistributive justice does have some appeal, although less than at the national level. The findings do not confirm the popular thesis of re-orientation towards the nation state.

Hildegard Schneider, Professor of EU Law at the University of Maastricht, pointed out that her university had adopted a multi-disciplinary approach bringing together citizenship, migration and development studies whilst also running an inter-regional institute which dealt with practical cross border problems. Even between old member states, freedom of movement had become more difficult with for example a recent case of refusal to recognise a professional qualification because of a very minor difference between countries. It is essential to solve basic problems which are not new and to do a European test of the Maastricht Treaty, which introduced Union citizenship 25 years ago.

Her university was doing a report for the European Commission on local and European elections from which it emerged that practices of representative democracy were very different across countries and that there is real scope for increasing the political participation of European citizens.

Finally, she mentioned that there was not just an issue of EU citizenship with BREXIT since recently a number of cases were pending in the European Court of Justice concerning access to and loss of EU citizenship – for example if a person adopts the nationality of a country outside the EU.

Niccolo Milanese, Co-Chair of European Alternatives, said that there is a war on citizenship and attempts both in the US and Europe to hollow out its sense of equality, democratic capacity and protection against the state and majorities. On the one hand citizenship was being commodified, on the other taken away. There was a tendency to stratify citizenship into more or less deserving categories, which creates a sense of helplessness particularly among young people.

Is European citizenship resisting this war? On the positive side the European Commission is looking into the commodification of citizenship and attempting to resuscitate the social dimension. On the



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negative side, the rule of law is being flouted in Hungary, Poland and Croatia even though the Commission has recently adopted a more muscular stance. There are signs too that a European commitment to citizenship education is being abandoned. European citizenship has been captured in a strategy of division between EU citizens and non-citizens of either having freedom of movement or letting in migrants from the rest of the world, but not both. This alienates proponents of citizenship. Lastly experience with European Alternatives networking across Europe does confirm the results of the research-citizens are in the fast lane and politicians in the slow lane.

Wieger Bakker, Associate Professor at Utrecht University and promoter of the bEUcitizen Project, said that to create EU citizenship activists and civil society were needed. That seemed to come out of the research. He wanted to comment on one particular project Beucitizen which had been completed recently and had been a challenge covering 8 disciplines and 24 countries. The results would be published in the form of several books. The big picture emerging was of an EU citizenship everywhere something different and multi-layered. There were 3 main issues: fundamental rights were differently guaranteed; there was a lack of balance between economic and social rights; labour market considerations were too dominant. The strategy must be one of ensuring that whatever their status and from wherever they come, European citizens are treated in the same way.

His own role in the project had been to develop a number of teaching packages which he had presented at the 2017 summer university. The lessons from these were that if you wanted to empower young people you did not look at Europe as something apart or just an institutional set-up. There had to be communication by experience developing a repertoire according to the way young people dialogue with each other rather than attempting to transfer knowledge. One should look at issues which were evidently cross-border. Active citizenship should be part of citizenship education. His presentation can be found [here](#).

Julie Ward, Member of the European Parliament, informed participants about her work following the declaration of Ministers of Education in 2015 in response to the Charlie Hebdo and Danish terrorist attacks. The governments called for the use of education and active participation to promote fundamental values and counter radicalisation. The European Parliament decided to produce apolitical response. Her report on intercultural dialogue working closely with civil society was an alternative to the knee jerk response of more security, checks and fear in response to terrorist attacks. The report was adopted by a large and despite its obvious and reasonable approach was still opposed by the right wing in the Parliament. The report can be found [here](#). There are opportunities to follow up this report now that the future of the EU budget is under consideration and the Parliament will shortly consider proposals for a common education area. Her own background before being elected was in the cultural sector.

Every year she spent a fortnight with all age groups in a European summer school. For early school leavers and unemployed young people these were quite life-changing experiences. Europe should be a Europe for such young people.

Philippe Van Parijs said that all these research findings and examples suggested that there was a constituency for transnational lists for elections to the European Parliament. In response to the debate, Yuri Borgmann-Prebil said that the Commission was considering prioritising research on the role of education in reducing inequalities.



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The meeting closed at 5.30 p.m. In the evening there was a debate at the press club about the impact of Brexit on European citizenship.

## A SHRINKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP WITH BREXIT?

A special evening event was held on this theme at the Press Club, 95 Rue Froissart. It was attended by 50 participants: people from the UK living and working in Brussels, members of the press club and a few participants from the summer university.

Tony Simpson presented the European citizens' initiative on permanent European citizenship. It was doing much better than a previous ECI he had tried with signatures coming in from the UK but also all EU- 27 Member States. The only explanation was that in the UK and elsewhere there was more of a sense that European citizenship was more than just rights to free movement. What needed to be done was clear from examining the table country by country on the Commission website for ECIs: contact friends and colleagues so that the required minimum threshold could be reached in at least 7 countries. He suggested that national support networks could be set up.

Stephen Huyten, one of the plaintiffs in a case challenging the loss of EU citizenship with Brexit, explained that the lower court in Amsterdam had supported some of their arguments but that the Dutch government had appealed against the reference of the case to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. The lawyers taking the case were now looking for evidence of how the loss of EU citizenship had a practical effect on peoples' lives.

Andrew Duff pointed out that now negotiations on the withdrawal Treaty were near completion attention should shift towards the political declaration which would be more than rhetoric and determine the future relationship between the EU and the UK. Attempts could be made to include a reference to some form of associate citizenship which could apply to countries bordering on the EU.

Julie Ward MEP spoke extremely movingly of the impact of leaving the EU on NGOs and the cultural sector in particular with which she was closely associated. She was an unapologetic remaine.

The presentations by the panel were followed by a lively debate chaired by Dora Kostakopoulou, Professor of EU Law at the University of Warwick.

## DAY 2, Friday 7 September 2018 – INVOLVEMENT and TRUST

### 3. Empowering citizens and making their access to the European institutions more effective and participatory

Andrea Bocconi, Representative of [The Good Lobby](#), opened this session by explaining how his organisation, The Good Lobby, supports this objective by finding access to pro-bono advice on legal issues and communication strategy for NGOs. In that way citizens' movements can become more equal to powerful commercial lobbies. In his view, by comparison with national administrations, the EU is much more open and transparent despite the image painted of distant Brussels bureaucrats. A



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number of participants agreed with this assessment whilst pointing out that there was still an issue of convincing a wider public that this was the case.

Rosita Hickey, Head of Strategic Inquiries Unit at the European Ombudsman, explained the role of the European Ombudsman and the progress they had made in bringing about the kind of reforms demanded by the manifesto. Emily O'Reilly the European ombudsman was a vocal and independent advocate for citizens. Her office had a role first in examining complaints against the EU institutions for maladministration. Clear guidance on how to submit a complaint and the follow-up was included on the website in all official languages. The other role of the ombudsman was to undertake strategic inquiries and make recommendations after wide-spread consultations. She mentioned two examples:

- an inquiry which recommended that if citizens are not to be left out, consultations had to be in all official languages and not just in English and the languages of some larger member states as was often the case;
- a year-long inquiry into the positions adopted by member states in the Council of ministers so that citizens can know how their own government is negotiating on European issues.

Gilles Pelayo, Head of Unit “Europe for Citizens Programme” (EACEA), explained the Europe for citizens’ programme which spent 25 million euros per year supporting grassroots projects. A good example was the WISE project which was a partner in the summer university with its emphasis on debates across the EU to “learn, reflect, act”. The programme was bottom -up and different from institutional communication.

The EU was not alone in suffering from a crisis of representation and therefore the next European elections were very important. In turn they are not enough to ensure legitimacy. The EU was quite advanced when it came to transparency and consultations were abundant but performed less well when it came to citizen involvement or participatory budgeting. ECI's and petitions were useful but possibly the next frontier would be co-production of legislation and crowdsourcing.

He referred to the manifesto which set out the goal of creating a permanent citizens' agora, which in a way was what the programme already did by simulating action and debate across the continent. What was lacking was a connection between all the different agoras, perhaps in the form of a European festival on democracy.

Daniela Vancic introduced the panel with a question about how we can make it easier for citizens to get *easy to understand* information about the activities of the EU and the rights that EU citizens hold. Because a vast number of EU citizens do not know that they have a right to influence the agenda of the EU, there is a need to raise awareness of the ECI as a right. A pilot project for a new online collaborative platform launched by the European Commission in May 2018 aims at promoting and educating about the ECI and serves as a helpdesk for ECI related questions. Called the ECI Forum, it raises awareness about the ECI as a tool, the process of launching an initiative, and news surrounding the ECI such as newly registered initiatives. One of the valuable features of the ECI Forum is that (potential) organizers can get tailored expert advice on fundraising, campaigning and legal queries.

While the ECI Forum is one platform that the European institutions use to make a specific EU right more well-known and more practiced, other platforms exist as well. The Commission runs regular online public consultations that allows it to survey citizens' opinions on a wide variety of topics that could influence laws.



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Questions arose regarding whether the institutions are carrying out the full potential of social dialogue, especially with civil society organizers. The European Parliament should also have a role in the ECI Forum, currently run only by the Commission, particularly because in the Parliament took recent steps towards taking more ownership of the ECI. The Committee of the Regions or Economic and Social Committee as strong backers of the ECI could also have a support or advisory role in the Forum.

A participant shared his experience with easy access to the Commission when he was seeking advice about ECI signature collection. The panel acknowledged that the Commission has taken steps towards assistance to citizens and fostering citizenship participation, proved also by the Commission's recent actions surrounding the ECI: the launch of the ECI Forum, the proposal for a new regulation of the ECI that tackles the tool's user-unfriendliness, and its first ever response to two successful initiatives (Right2Water, Stop Glyphosate).

Julie Ward said that as an unrepentant "remainder" in the UK she had received a message saying that "since she was not elected she had nothing to say". Before the June 2016 referendum the issues had not been well explained and it was only afterwards that a real debate had developed. 16-17 year olds who had no right to vote in the referendum felt especially let down. She asked whether there should be a European children's ombudsman.

In the debate there was as a series of questions and answers about whether or not the ECI was sufficiently easy to use and whether the process of reforming the regulation would make enough difference. One participant asked about whether anything could be done apart from ECIs on the other objective which was covered by Article 11-civil dialogue. The panel pointed out that there were initiatives such as the citizens' consultations initiated by Emmanuel Macron and supported by the EU.

#### **4. Preparing for the European elections**

For Marianne Ranke-Cornier, President of Citizens Route, the European elections will be about challenges but also marked by issues such as Brexit, populism and turnout of young people. She had been involved in the creation of the first ever European political party in 1989, which campaigned on issues such as technology, culture, education and localism which are just as valid today as they were then. These early initiatives resulted in establishing the Erasmus programme and have been revived recently. A big event with European associations and political movements such as DiEM25 held last summer at Louvain-la-Neuve offered training and transnational debate particularly for young people. Her movement was campaigning for transnational lists for the European elections. The earlier period of attempting to involve young people in building Europe was marked by marathon debates across Europe which are being repeated by the "En Marche" initiative supported by the EU and national governments to organise meetings with citizens.

What she felt was missing in the run-up to the European elections was debate among actors of different political persuasions and a bringing together of different proposals on a multi-lingual website, a project which required substantial resources. The Commission could not reach citizens directly and to do this needed civil society relays.



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Virgilio Dastoli, President of the Italian Council of European Movement, referred to the 10-point manifesto produced by European Movement, Italy, which can be found [here](#). This was an attempt to work towards a common programme. He pointed out that the system of Spitzenkandidaten had originally been conceived as the choice of a candidate to be the next Commission president by an alliance of different political parties. This was very different from each of the European political party groupings, which were really artificial facades, putting forward their own candidate as the European People's Party had done recently. The next European elections were being canvassed as a fight between anti-European and pro-European forces. The pro-European forces might all keep their own particular objectives, but they should at least join forces and have a common programme and candidate to beat the Eurosceptics. Some of the leading national parties needed to be persuaded that this is the right approach. Finally, he agreed with the ECIT idea of making the next European Parliament, the citizen legislature.

Andrew Duff, President of the Spinelli Group, presented the [manifesto of the Spinelli Group](#) for 2019 and beyond. He was president of the group and the manifesto was supported by 100 federalist MEPs. The next elections to the European Parliament will be a messy and confused affair on the faultlines between Macron and Orban. For 20 years he had been involved in the struggle to introduce transnational lists for elections to the European Parliament. Without them, the system of Spitzenkandidaten lacked democratic legitimacy. The so-called European political party groupings were good at propaganda but their manifestos were exercises in minimising disagreements among national parties. It is right to put a face on the campaign but wrong to claim the person is a candidate for Commission presidency, when that appointment is also up to the European Council.

The European Council, according to the Spinelli group manifesto, should be grounded in the legislature and accountable to the European Parliament. It should run the Council and the rotating Council presidency would be scrapped. The European court of Justice should become a federal court able to enforce the rule of law. The Commission should have a treasury with tax raising powers. The aim is to end the dichotomy between a confederal and federal Europe and create a government for Europe. Civic participation is fine in theory but in the end people are more concerned about the exercise of political power.

One participant defended the role of European political parties which can carry out consultations with citizens on different themes and organise training session across borders. How though, when campaigning is national, is it possible to have transnational lists? Another participant thought though that it should be possible to at least have a partial European list among a group of countries where electoral law would make this feasible. The argument was repeated that instead of the old European political families there should be a cross-party alliance which could put forward a candidate for Commission president. It was also argued that without the UK and the relaunching of the debate about Europe in France, the European elections looked promising. The European elections might well change the status quo and the majorities in the European parliament, but for many people this remained a very remote institution and not enough resources were being put into pro-European campaigns to persuade them otherwise.



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## 5. A European citizenship for all?

In opening this session, Tony Venables, founder of ECIT Foundation, said that civil society and researchers were placing new emphasis on the importance of citizenship education about Europe with this event where the issue had been raised several times, the final conference of the [CATCHEyoU project](#) which had just finished in Brussels and a large scale event organised by [NECE](#) (Networking European citizenship education), which was under way in Marseilles.

Emmanuel Sigalas, Education policy and systems analyst at EACEA, presented the Eurydice report "Citizenship Education at School in Europe 2017". His full presentation can be found [here](#). The report covers 42 education systems, based on laws and regulations and finds some renewed interest in citizenship education. Its findings are based on examining the curriculum and support for teachers.

Citizenship education is about harmonious co-existence, being a responsible citizen and interacting with others. It's about respect for cultures and religions and acting in a democratic way. Pupils should think critically and know how to spot fake news for example. Different aspects of citizenship tend to be taught at different levels, the European but also the international dimension for example being introduced at the upper level. His presentation mentions which countries cover international treaties, but it is not easy to assess how much emphasis there is on education for European citizenship.

This is because systems are so different, with citizenship taught as a separate subject, across the curriculum or linked to specific subjects such as history and geography. The Eurydice report concentrates on citizenship education as a separate subject, the only approach where it is possible to make comparisons such as length of time devoted to it, how it is assessed and what support is given to teachers (in general, not enough specific support). The report contains case studies from Austria, Belgium, Estonia and France.

E. Cicognani and C. Albanesi, from [CATCHEyoU](#), presented the results of the 2-year CATCHEyoU research project which was grounds for optimism. The project involved 8 countries and a consortium which investigated youth organisations and youth policies. They reported on the results of the project and its recommendations, concentrating on two particular aspects:

- in attempting to understand the role of schools text books were examined and it was found that Europe was described primarily as a set of distant institutions without much sense that they were relevant to the students, so recommendations were made about how to improve this situation;
- the research project ran its own programme of getting a group from 5 schools involved with their own projects to learn about Europe starting with their concerns at a local level. For example, refugee and migration issues were favourite topics. The group was brought together at a first meeting in Athens and had just presented their recommendations to representatives of the EU institutions at a second meeting in Brussels. The project showed that given enough time and opportunity 16-17 year-olds were perfectly able to carry out their own research, had a lot to say about European issues and could learn how to communicate. Different school systems could sometimes make cooperation more difficult so support from head teachers was necessary.

In the debate various ideas were put forward for scaling up this kind of approach and different approaches such as school competitions or youth European parliaments as well as using digital technology to make it less necessary to travel.



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At the end of the summer university Tony Venables read out a statement from ECIT which had been drawn up with the help of the office of Julie Ward. The statement arguing for the EU to put more emphasis on citizenship education in its future budget can be found [here](#). It was agreed that this statement should be sent to the NECE conference in Marseilles.