

Draft programme for the 5th Annual Conference on European citizenship

(Originally planned for 21 and 22 September and now postponed until Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 December 2020)

Venues: Institute of European Studies (IEE) 39 Avenue FD Roosevelt and SECO 53 and 104 rue d'Arlon, Brussels

On average **73%** of people living in the EU see themselves as in some way “European citizens” ([Standard Eurobarometer 92 Autumn 2019](#)). Higher figures are apparent among young voters, who contributed to the much better turnout in the European elections of May 2019. Freedom of movement of people within the EU appears consistently as the most popular of the EU’s achievements. The number of people living and working permanently in another EU Member State has doubled in the last decade to reach **17 million-but that is the figure before BREXIT**. Millions more, not included in the statistics, are experiencing Europe and networking across borders. Why is it then that more efforts are not being made to develop European citizenship? **Now is the right time for initiatives**. The current pandemic has revealed both the weaknesses of European citizenship with the sweeping aside of rights to freedom of movement, but also its strengths and potential for supporting the necessary solidarity for Europe to emerge from the crisis.

This fifth ECIT annual event, like the previous ones, will bring together civil society activists, researchers and EU policy makers. The aim is to build consensus about how to support and develop this first transnational citizenship of the modern era. The 2020 edition will be organised in cooperation with [NECE](#) (Networking European Citizenship Education) building on the results of their conference in Berlin on 5-8 November and the [IIE-ULB](#) (Institute of European Studies – Université Libre de Bruxelles).

Questions for debate include:

- How to **educate for European citizenship**, so that it captures the popular imagination?
- How to make **EU citizenship as relevant** to those citizens who stay at home as to those on the move?
- How to **strengthen European rights**, values and the rule of law?
- What are the **boundaries of European citizenship**?
- Should new **political, social, environmental and health** rights be added to EU citizenship?

The programme attached is in two parts:

- The theme of the first day will be **how to give a new impetus to European education for citizenship and democracy**, the field of study and activity in and out of school most effected but also most neglected during the pandemic.

ECIT believes that every citizen should be informed *from an early age* about the EU and their European rights and have a once in a lifetime opportunity to participate in an Erasmus for all. EU citizenship education can no longer be taken for granted and should be additional to national civic education. The current crisis calls for this to be a new priority since the pandemic has changed social relations, the future employment prospects of young people and increased inequalities. The first day will cover **the changed landscape of a European citizenship of rights, participation and belonging** to provide policy makers and educators with ideas for the contents of European citizenship education. *The result will be a declaration building on the results of the NECE conference in Berlin with recommendations to EU policy makers.*

-The second day will be focussed on **the need, 27 years after the Maastricht Treaty, to grasp the nettle of adding new rights to a status too narrowly focussed on freedom of movement**. EU citizenship is relevant to those who stay in their country of origin, but has to be either activated or disentangled from national provisions to be visible. ECIT proposes that EU citizenship needs to become more like a **normal citizenship** connected to the public sphere. This should be done by granting full political rights to EU citizens on the move which is the aim of the citizens' initiative "Voters Without Borders". The pandemic has shown that European rights can be suspended in an emergency by uncoordinated national measures. The 17 million should have a stronger voice at all levels of decision-making. **Increased political rights are the key to claiming other rights**. The participants will consider the case for adding new social, environmental and health rights to an EU citizenship which would then be as relevant to those on the move as to those who stay at home. *A final session will consider future research and action agendas.*

A background discussion document will be prepared by ECIT. Participants can already find here our [guidelines](#) on European citizenship, [demands](#) to the EU Institutions and proposals for new [political, social environmental](#) rights. A paper on health rights follows. Over 100 participants, either physically present or on-line, are expected to attend. The programme below is still work in progress under current circumstances. Most speakers still have to confirm and a choice has to be made between different possible venues.

Programme for the Conference on European Citizenship (Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 December in Brussels)

Opening session, 1 December-morning

A NEW IMPETUS TO EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND DEMOCRACY POST CRISIS

*Co-chairs ECIT and NECE representatives: **Tony Venables** and **Christoph Müller-Hofstede**. Welcome and introduction to the themes of the day based on the results of the NECE conference in Berlin.*

There has been a consensus to increase the **budget for education**, which is a step towards an Erasmus for all. A new programme on citizenship, justice, rights and values is being put in place. Once the new programmes are adopted what new opportunities for European citizenship education will they offer? How can awareness and popularity of EU citizenship be increased? What is the role of EU Institutions and relevant CSOs in popularizing the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) which could make huge leaps towards a more inclusive Erasmus and how can these improvements become better known? What could be the added value of the Council of Europe's reference framework of competences for democratic culture?

Speakers:

Mariya Gabriel*, *Keynote Speech* - Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. **Milan Zver*** - MEP and Erasmus programme rapporteur, **Sarah Lynch*** - Representative of Erasmus Unit DG Education, **Alexandrina Najmowicz*** - Director of the European Civic Forum, **Brikena Xhomaqi*** - Director of the Life Long Learning platform, **Villano Qiriazzi*** - Head of the Education Policy Division of the Council of Europe.

Debate between the panel and the audience.

Workshops, 1 December – afternoon

HOW TO STRENGTHEN AND COMMUNICATE A EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP OF RIGHTS, PARTICIPATION AND BELONGING?

How can civil society activists, researchers and policy makers see the future of European citizenship which sometimes appeared an irrelevance in the current crisis? Freedom of movement was swept aside by uncoordinated national restrictions at borders. EU citizenship can no longer be taken for granted.

Participants will have a choice among three informal brainstorming workshops:

i) **RIGHTS, VALUES AND RULE OF LAW**

*Facilitated by **Ramona Coman***, Director of the Institute for European Studies*

The emphasis should be on **enforcement of rights** especially for minority groups such as the Roma, third-country national family members and EU citizens who have insufficient resources to support themselves in the host country, fall through the safety nets and risk expulsion. The economic crisis following the current health crisis combined with the fall out from BREXIT are bound to challenge the efforts to enforce European rights. Restoration of freedom of movement and the operation of Schengen are currently open questions. The coronavirus will impact disproportionately on the European rights of the most vulnerable. *A test of any citizenship should be how far it protects the most vulnerable particularly in times of economic crisis.*

A health and economic crisis will be followed by a third *-a crisis in human rights-* unless decisive preventative action is also taken on two fronts:

-the pandemic requires a **reassessment of priorities to protect European rights**. For example, rights to health and safety at work are changing and efforts to trace and control the pandemic are placing new strains on data protection, where EU legislation is advanced. Although the crisis has shown we are all in the same boat, the EU should devote new attention to the **fight against all forms of discrimination**.

-measures to reduce infection should be **time-limited, accountable and under democratic control**. The crisis has though been a pretext for authoritarian governments, particularly in Hungary and Poland, to tighten their grip on power and pose a challenge to a rights and values-based EU. The challenge is all the more serious since the constitutional court in Karlsruhe has challenged the supremacy of EU law in a recent much-criticized ruling.

Speakers:

Clare Daly* – MEP and Rapporteur on the situation of Fundamental Rights in the European Union, **Maite Pagazaurtundua***, MEP and Rapporteur for an own initiative report on European citizenship ; **Jeremy Bierbach*** - Attorney at Franssen Advocaten, **Marie Helene Boulanger**-Head of the citizenship unit, DG Justice

ii) PARTICIPATION

Facilitated by Niccolò Milanese, Director of European Alternatives

In the run up to the 2019 European elections there was an array of imaginative projects with young activists crossing borders in Europe. They were highlighting local struggles with a European dimension, reaching out in particular to minority groups and those likely to suffer discrimination and explaining to them that they had European rights and should vote in the European elections. A new generation is showing a willingness to take over the task of explaining and involving people in Europe and finding innovative ways of doing so and was largely responsible for the increase in turnout to reach over 50%. How to maintain the momentum and achieve better turnout in 2024? What role can non-governmental organisations have in educating for European citizenship?

Another focus will be on the **Conference on the future of Europe** and in particular the experience of the citizens who are to be given a role alongside that of the EU institutions, whilst the inclusion and role of civil society remains unclear. It should not be too early to discuss reforms such as the **introduction of transnational lists and improvement of the Spitzenkandidaten system for elections to the European Parliament in 2024**. The EU response to the current crisis has also thrown up demands for more fundamental reforms.

Speakers:

RadUni* - *Winners of the EU Youth Charlemagne prize*, **Laura Sullivan*** – Executive director of *WeMove*, **Esther Durin*** - *Member of Citizens for Europe representing IHECS Academy*, **A representative of the European Parliament's "together.eu" campaign***, **Virginia Fiume** - *Coordinator of ECI for Eumans*, **Stephen Boucher** - *Founder of Dreamocracy*

iii) BELONGING

Facilitated by Pierre-Yves Le Borgne, President of Europeans Throughout the World

A basis for the broader approach of this workshop will be the latest Commission report on activities related to EU citizenship under Article 25 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the Union, which should provide an overview.

There is though a difficulty in **interpreting the policy on EU citizenship**. Responsibilities are scattered across different Commission departments and in the other Institutions. There appears to be a shift from a rights-based citizenship for people moving around Europe towards one which focuses more on citizens' participation in the elections and the EU decision-making processes judging from the initiatives for an action plan for democracy and the conference on the future of Europe.

This session will aim to bring together with the audience people working in different parts of the Institutions to consider best practice and recommendations for education for European citizenship

Speakers:

Julie Ward* – former MEP, **Michael Vorlander*** - Germany Education Ministry permanent representation, **A representative of the European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education;**
A representative of NECE

After the workshops participants will come together briefly in a [plenary session](#) to hear the results of each and approve a statement of demands to the EU to give a new impetus to education for citizenship and democracy.

This will be followed by a reception and an evening debate:

*Chaired by **Tony Venables**, Founder of ECIT*

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

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

Keynote speech:

Terry Reintke* - M.E.P and convener of the EU-UK Friendship Group in the European Parliament

Reaction from a panel:

Tony Simpson* - Representative of the Permanent EU Citizenship ECI, **Alexandra von Westernhagen**- initiator of an appeal to the European Court of Justice, **Suzana Carp** – Board member of ECIT- **Roger Casale***- Secretary General and CEO ,New Europeans

General debate with the audience.

New rights, 2 December

WHAT NEW RIGHTS SHOULD BE ADDED TO EU CITIZENSHIP?

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

Morning session

The session will consist of 2 parallel group discussions:

i) **FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR EU CITIZENS ON THE MOVE.**

Chaired by Alberto Alemanno, Founder and Director of The Good Lobby

EU citizens resident in other EU countries **can vote and stand in municipal and European elections, but not in regional and national ones.** Nor are they able generally to vote in **referenda** in their country of residence. Some EU citizens who have never been able to vote in any national election just because they have used their right to freedom of movement. This is a stain on European democracy. ECIT has launched an ECI "**Voters Without Borders**" with a task force of young people. The aim is to link the ECI to regional and national campaigns for extending the franchise to EU citizens and other migrant communities and examine ways of meeting the threshold in at least 7 countries and the target of over 1 million signatures. The need for EU citizens on the move to be better represented at all levels of political decision-making has been made abundantly clear by the initial nationalistic reactions to the spread of the coronavirus.

Speakers:

Damian Boelsager - MEP, Volt **Anna Comacchio** - Representative of Voters Without Borders, **Christian Miess*** - Coordinator at Citizens for Europe, **Michael McLoughlin*** - Member of the European Economic and Social Committee

i) SOCIAL EU CITIZENSHIP

*Chaired by **Freek Spinnewijn**, Director of FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless)*

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

Speakers:

Stefan Olsson* - Representative of the DG Employment, **Christine Aumayr-Pintar*** - Minimum income researcher, **Sabato Sebastiano*** - Researcher representative of the European Social Observatory, **Kelig Puyet*** - Director of Social platform.

Afternoon Session

The afternoon session will also foresee two group discussions:

i) EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL CITIZENSHIP

*Chaired by **Marta Ballesteros***, Representative of MILIEU*

When the Spanish government first proposed **Union citizenship** other new citizen concerns were being added to the Maastricht Treaty too- an **environment chapter, public health, education, youth and culture** with which a link to citizenship was proposed but never materialised. *Should the right to a healthy environment which is now included in many national constitutions be added to EU citizenship?* This is generally interpreted as a right to clean air, soil and drinking water. **In article 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**, a high level of environmental protection is called for placing an obligation on the EU to act rather than giving citizens rights they can invoke directly in a European court. Rights can and are invoked stemming from EU legislation on the environment and there is an important body of case law in the European Court of Human Rights making environmental protection a fundamental right linked to the rights to life, health or property. *This event will be designed to bring together proponents of EU citizenship and environmental NGOs to start a process leading to this addition to European rights. As Europe emerges from the pandemic, there is some consensus that there*

should be a radical shift towards a greener economy and that there are new opportunities to combat climate change. This is therefore an opportunity to raise issues about environmental rights.

Speakers:

Anais Berthier* - Representative of Client Earth, **Priska Lueger*** Representative of Justice and Environment, **Jeremy Wates*** - Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau

ii) EUROPEAN HEALTH CITIZENSHIP

Chaired by Tony Venables, Founder of ECIT

The EU has rightly been criticized for its **late response to the pandemic** and has often appeared behind the curve **calling too late for coordination** after Member states had taken unilateral action. Does not some of the criticism miss the point **that the EU has no power to act in a health crisis**? Could a **European right to health protection**, particularly against cross-border epidemics be added to the rights of Union citizens under Article 20 TFEU? Such a right would be as relevant to EU citizens on the move as to the majority in their own country. It would be additional to and in no way replace national rights to health care. The issue of insufficient EU powers has been raised in letters and petitions and resolutions of the European Parliament. It will take more grass-roots activism though to change the status quo. *This is why ECIT is looking at the possibility of launching an ECI which will be described in a discussion document to be sent to participants.*

Speakers:

Representatives of the **European Public Health Alliance**, the **Good Lobby** and **European Alternatives**.

Final Plenary

i) FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDAS

Chaired by Petar Markovic, ECAS

The volume of research and publications related to European citizenship is impressive and has highlighted the **importance of this spread of grassroots activity**. Inevitably, findings are influenced by differences in perception as to how the EU might develop either in a **more intergovernmental or more common European or federal direction**. Perceptions of how this first transnational citizenship of the modern era might develop differ among researchers. On the one hand it has become more popular, whilst on the other providing no answers to the series of crises the EU has faced. *What are the future perspectives for research on European citizenship in the light of the current health and economic crisis?*

Speakers:

Dora Kostakopoulou - *Professor of European Law at the Warwick University,*
Maarten Vink* - *Co-Director of the Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT),*
Luis Bouza-Garcia* - *Member of the OpenEUdebate Jean Monnet network*

ii) ACTION AGENDAS

Brief reports from the previous evening debate, each of the 2 working groups in the morning and the 2 groups in the afternoon; debate in small groups on the outcomes; **final coming together** to agree immediate action points for civil society, **recommendations to the EU and changes to ECIT demands to the Institutions.**