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Digital educational guide on civic education



Bulgaria



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Spain

Digital educational guide on civic education

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1. Introduction

“Opening insight”

“Let’s NOT lose hope in humanity, instead LIVE to help others.”

~ we can make a difference ~

At the beginning of each chapter, you will find a thought-provoking quote to inspire reflection. Additionally, feel free to create your own quote after reading the chapter and gaining a deeper understanding of the topic!

Welcome to the “Digital educational guide on civic education!” We are delighted to have you here, whether you are seeking factual knowledge about Civic Education, the European Union, European, Active or Digital Citizenship, Non-formal Education, or if you are looking for inspiration through practical examples of Non-formal Education practices or intercultural dialogue! You have landed in the right place.

Each chapter is designed to lead you to a deeper understanding, providing practical examples, and offering a curated selection of useful videos for you to watch. Get ready to embark on a journey of discovery and enrichment in the world of civic education!

The main aim of this guide is to provide an innovative and accessible tool that can be used by young people and youth workers across Europe to deepen their understanding of civic education and European citizenship, and to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage actively in public life. We are focusing on contributing to a pan-European network of youth organizations that can develop further projects in the youth sector, with a focus on encouraging

young people to take an active part in public life. We want to develop innovative practices and tools for youth work and strengthen young people's sense of initiative in the social field.

This guide is a crucial step toward achieving the project's objectives of fostering European citizenship, broadening and developing social and intercultural competences and critical thinking of young people, enhancing partnerships, and developing new initiatives for civic education across Europe, and raising awareness among young people, especially in rural areas, on activities provided by the European Union for them.

Evropa na dlan (Bulgaria) spearheads this initiative, with key partner organizations including the *New Europe Foundation* (Poland), *Asociacija Tavo Europa* (Lithuania), *Educación e Ingenio s.s.* (Spain), and *European Youth Center Breclav z. s.* (the Czech Republic). However, our intention extends beyond these organizations and countries in the reach and impact of this digital educational guide.

“Watch & Learn”

At the end of each chapter, you will discover a couple of useful videos for you to watch. These will encompass educational content, explanations, as well as songs and movies related to the given topic.

2. Civic Education

“Opening insight”

“We pay a price when we deprive children of the exposure to values, principles, and education they need to make them good citizens.”

Justice Sandra Day O’Connor

In its broadest definition, **civic education** means all the processes that affect people’s beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members or prospective members of communities (Crittenden and Levine, 2023). Civic education is the provision of information and learning experiences designed to equip and empower citizens for active participation in democratic processes. The methods of delivering this information encompass traditional classroom-based learning, informal training, experiential learning, mass media campaigns, families, governments, religions, and various other approaches. The overarching objective of civic education is to **foster civic engagement and bolster democratic and participatory governance**. It encompasses three key elements: **civic knowledge**, **civic skills**, and **civic disposition** (Rietbergen-McCracken, 2018).

A significant approach within the process of political sophistication and crucial resource for encouraging youth to participate in political and civic life is formal, school-based civic education (Galston, 2001). Multiple facets of teaching quality play a pivotal role in civic education, providing teachers with methods to actively involve students in political and civic content. This engagement aims to cultivate political knowledge and interest, ultimately equipping students with the necessary competencies and skills to effectively participate in political and civic life (Alscher *et al.*, 2022).

In summary, civic education equips citizens of all age groups with the **competences** needed for an active life. Civic education has to be understood as a lifelong process (Crittenden and Levine, 2023) since it is being cultivated from young age into adulthood and it is influenced by the surrounding of the individual. It relies on a set system and one of the highest expectations is the active participation of individuals.

According to the **Council of Europe** competence model, there are twenty civic competences which are divided into four areas: (1) *Values*, (2) *Attitudes*, (3) *Skills*, and (4) *Knowledge and critical understanding*.

CIVIC COMPETENCES:	
<i>Values</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Valuing human dignity and human rights</i> ▪ <i>Valuing cultural diversity</i> ▪ <i>Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality, and the rule of law</i>
<i>Attitudes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices</i> ▪ <i>Respect</i> ▪ <i>Civic mindedness</i> ▪ <i>Responsibility</i> ▪ <i>Self-efficacy</i> ▪ <i>Tolerance to ambiguity</i>
<i>Skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Autonomous learning skills</i> ▪ <i>Analytical and critical thinking skills</i> ▪ <i>Skills of listening and observing</i> ▪ <i>Empathy</i> ▪ <i>Flexibility and adaptability</i> ▪ <i>Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills</i> ▪ <i>Co-operation skills</i> ▪ <i>Conflict-resolution skills</i>
<i>Knowledge and critical understanding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Knowledge and critical understanding of the self</i> ▪ <i>Knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication</i> ▪ <i>Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability</i>

Council of Europe (2018), page 63

In order for this model of competences to work, it needs to be put into action. Based on the principles for equitable and inclusive civic engagement, we can identify six essential elements of effective civic engagement: (1) *Embracing the gifts of diversity*, (2) *Realizing the role of race, power, and injustice*, (3) *Radical hospitality: invitation and listening*, (4) *Trust-building and commitment*, (5) *Honoring dissent and embracing protest*, (6) *Adaptability to community change*.

1. Embracing the gifts of diversity	Intentionally building the engagement of community.
2. Realizing the role of race, power, and injustice	Honestly confronting histories characterized by racism, classism, and unjust abuses of power.
3. Radical hospitality: invitation and listening	Inviting people to have difficult conversations. Framing engagement in terms of shared values and cultivating a sense of belonging.
4. Trust-building and commitment	Shared leadership and shared accountability.
5. Honoring dissent and embracing protest	The strengths of the diversity rely on the ability to accept and respect the differences.
6. Adaptability to community change	Continual changes require navigating a stressful process of inner psychological adjustment.

(Holley, 2016).

“Watch & Learn”

What is civic education?

[SWI, 3:26](#)

Meaning and components of civic education

[Examhood, 1:41](#)

The power of civic education – learning world

[Euronews, 10:08](#)

3. The European Union

“Opening insight”

“The European Union, a project of peace and prosperity.”

Helmut Schmidt

The European Union (EU) is a unique entity. It is not neither a country nor a federation. It is a supranational organization with a current state of 27 members. The European Flag feature a circle of 12 gold stars on a blue background (Fig. 1). They stand for the ideals of freedom, unity, equality, solidarity, and harmony among people of Europe.



Fig. 1: The European flag. The flag of the EU represents freedom, unity, and equality.

The European Union (EU) has its roots in the aftermath of World War II, with the aim of fostering economic cooperation and preventing another devastating conflict in Europe. We can sum up the main events and dates connected to the history of EU into these:

1	1951	The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) , six founding members – Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands – signed the Treaty of Paris .
2	1957	The success of ECSC led to signing of the Treaties of Rome , establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) .

3	1986	The Single European Act aimed to remove trade barriers and enhance economic cooperation among member states.
4	1992	The Maastricht Treaty formally established the European Union. It introduced the concept of European citizenship, created the pillar of the European Community, and paved the way for the creation of the Euro currency.
5	2009	The Lisbon Treaty aimed to streamline the decision-making process within the EU and enhance its role on the global stage.
6	2016	In historic referendum, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, a process commonly known as Brexit . The withdrawal was officially completed on January 31, 2020.

The main functions of EU are:

- (1) **Economic integration**
- (2) **Common policies**
- (3) **Fundamental human rights:** freedom of expression, privacy, and non-discrimination.

The main governmental institutions of EU are:

- European Council**
- European Parliament**
- European Court of Justice**
- European Commission**
- European Central Bank.**

These institutions produced five types of policies: regulatory, expenditure, macroeconomic, citizen and foreign policies. EU citizens, the nationals of all member states, represent the base of the EU political system (Fig. 2). EU citizens make demands on the EU system through several channels:

- **National elections**, election of members of their national parliaments who in turn form the governments that are represented in the EU Council.
- **European elections**, election of members of the EP.
- Joining **political parties** and **interest groups**.
- Taking legal actions in **national courts and the Course of Justice**.

All of these actions create “feedback” between policy outputs from the EU system and new citizen demands on the system (Hix, 2005).

For a long time, it seemed as if the story the European Union would be one of continual progression and enduring success. The number of member states has expanded from originally 6 to 28, widening the territorial dominion of the EU. The EU has become more democratic by strengthening the European Parliament and introducing the co-decision procedure, even if those who demand a democratization of the EU are not yet satisfied with the European Parliament’s power. Nowadays, all EU citizens have the right to settle and work in any member state, and many of them have made use of this new opportunity.

The great success story of European Union was acknowledged by the Norwegian Nobel Committee that gave the European Union the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. However, the Nobel Peace prize award came at a time when the pendulum of European integration had already started swinging in the opposite direction. Since 2010, the European Union has found itself in the greatest crisis since its emergence. In fact, the crisis is not just one but three separate crises: (1) the sovereign debt crisis of some member states, which almost led to a collapse of the euro, (2) the Great Recession, which was exacerbated by the sovereign debt crisis and led to negative growth rates and high employment rates, especially in southern European countries, and the (3) refugee crisis, triggered by the surge in refugees arriving from war-torn regions, especially from Syria (Gerhards *et al.*, 2019).

Gerhards *et al* conducted a survey in 13 EU member states in 2016 by empirical analysis which led to some unanticipated results. Europeans display a notably higher degree of solidarity than many politicians and social scientists have presumed so far. This especially applies to the support of people in need (**welfare solidarity**) and the reduction of territorial disparities between rich and poor EU countries (**territorial solidarity**), but also to the domain of **fiscal solidarity** (financial support of indebted EU countries). This optimistic view is less true for the domain of refugee solidarity. While citizens of western and southern EU countries accept the accommodation of refugees and their allocation between European countries, the majority of people in eastern European countries do not share this point of view (Gerhards *et al.*, 2019).

It is important to note that vulnerable social groups and citizens from economically weaker countries are more in favor of European welfare solidarity than affluent individuals and citizens from affluent countries. Thus, affluent people, who are the main beneficiaries of European integration and the main supporters of the European project, oppose European welfare solidarity. This ultimately threatens the future of the European project. Such structural cleavages pose a moderate threat to European integration. Even though European welfare solidarity is a widespread and accepted norm in European societies, it is important to continue to foster this domain of European solidarity. It was shown that the interests of all member states have to be taken into account, which is especially salient when combined with the net contributor debate and Brexit. The diverging approval levels of European territorial solidarity in the different member states indicate that enforcing a one-sided transfer system may result in further tensions withing the EU or even mean the exit of countries from it altogether.

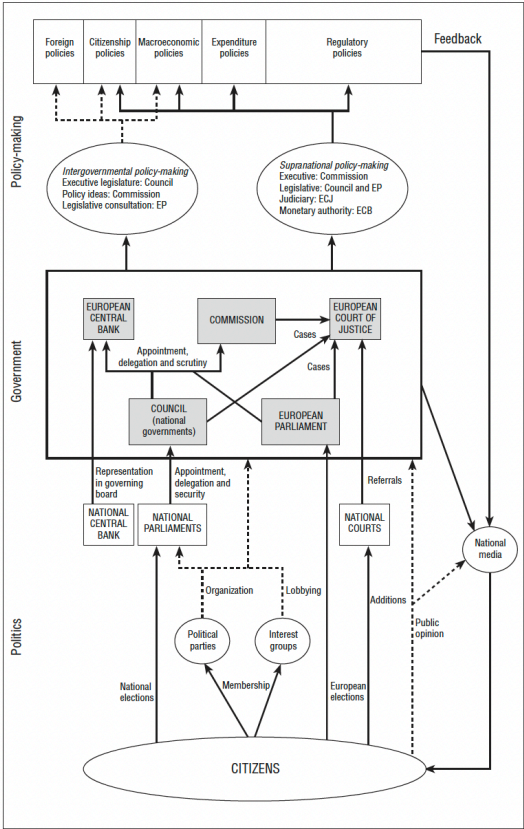


Fig. 2: The EU political system. Basic interests, institutions, and processes in the EU political system. The arrows indicate the direction of connections: complete arrows indicate a strong/direct link, and non-continuous arrows indicate a weaker/non-direct connection (Hix, 2005).

“Watch & Learn”

Here will be links to **educational videos** from reliable sources, as well as **inspirational videos** and **TED talks** related to the give topic.

What is the European Union?

[EU Made SIMPLE, 3:43](#)

The benefits of the European Union

[European Parliament, 0:59](#)

Towards a Citizen-Centric European Union | Formal and informal civic education

[ECASBrussels, 1:23](#)

The European flag: a symbol of fundamental values

[European Parliament, 1:17](#)

Main institutions of European Union:

What is the Council of the EU?

[EU Made SIMPLE, 3:37](#)

What is the European Commission?

[EU Made SIMPLE, 3:36](#)

What is the European Parliament?

[EU Made SIMPLE, 3:05](#)

4. European Citizenship

“Opening insight”

“A day will come when all nations on our continent will form a European brotherhood...A day will come when we shall see...the United States of America and the United States of Europe face to face, reaching out for each other across the seas.”

Victor Hugo

Based on European Commission, any person who holds the nationality of an EU country is automatically also an EU citizen. EU citizenship is additional to national citizenship and does not replace it. The introduction of a European form of citizenship with precisely defined rights and duties was considered in 1960s, but the roots of the “the key rights of EU citizenship – primarily the right to live and the right to work anywhere within the territory of the Member States – can be tracked back to the free movement provisions contained in the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, which entered into force in 1952. The citizenship of the European Union was first introduced by the Maastricht Treaty and was extended by the Treaty of Amsterdam. Prior to 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the European Communities treaties provided guarantees for the movement of economically active people, but not, generally, for other.

The **Treaty on the functioning of the European Union** (Article 18) and the **Charter of Fundamental Rights** (Chapter V) give EU citizens the right to:

- non-discrimination on the basis of nationality,
- move and reside freely within the EU,
- vote for and stand as a candidate in European Parliament and municipal elections,
- consular protection (help from the embassy or consulate of any other EU country to EU citizens in distress in a country outside the EU where they have no embassy or consulate of their own country),

- petition the European Parliament and complain to the European Ombudsman,
- launch or support a European citizens' initiative, asking the European Commission to propose legislation on an issue that matters to them,
- contact and receive a response from any EU institution in one of EU's official languages,
- access European Parliament, European Commission, and Council documents under certain conditions.

EU citizenship and the rights it confers lie at the heart of the EU. As young people of today are shaping the EU policies of tomorrow, they are an essential part of the whole process of building a better future.

European Commission, online source: [EU citizenship](#).

EU citizens have the legal protections of EU law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and acts and directives regarding protection of personal data, rights of victims of crime, preventing and combating trafficking in human beings, equal pay, as well as protection from discrimination in employment on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation, and age.

As a result of the withdrawal of the UK from EU, the opinion of both the EU and the British government has been that British citizens would lose their EU citizenship and EU citizens would lose their automatic right to stay in the UK. To account for the problems arising from this, a provisional agreement outlines the right of British citizens to remain in the EU (and vice versa) where they are resident in the Union on the day of the UK's withdrawal. EU citizens may remain in the UK post-Brexit if and only if they apply to the EU settlement scheme. On 9th June 2022, the Court of Justice of the European Union delivered its judgment in case C-673/20 EP. The decision clarified that all British nationals lost their EU citizenship after the UK's withdrawal.

Having an EU passport is highly beneficial in terms of social, economic, and personal security. European citizenship can be obtained by one of three ways:

- By descent – if you have a family member that can pass on EU citizenship to you.
- By naturalization – if you lived and worked long enough in an EU country to qualify for citizenship. That is usually minimum of five years (or more depending on the country). The application process varies depending on which pathways to citizenship was followed (work or marriage). In addition, evidence of language proficiency in chosen EU country must be shown to qualify for citizenship by naturalization.
- by investment – by investing in an EU country and receive citizenship. This type of program is also known as Golden Visa. The most common investments include real estate or purchasing government bonds. Then, within three or five years, EU passport is gained. No language requirements are needed.

“Watch & Learn”

Here will be links to **educational videos** from reliable sources, as well as **inspirational videos** and **TED talks** related to the give topic.

European Citizens’ Initiative: what is it?

[European Commission, 1:28](#)

Your EU citizenship rights

[European Parliament, 1:42](#)

Your Rights as a European

[EU Justice and Consumers](#)

5. Active Citizenship

“Opening insight”

“Citizens of Europe are engaged in our politics more than ever, but it is never enough. Your active participation in civil society is crucial for healthy democracies.”

Robert Biedroń

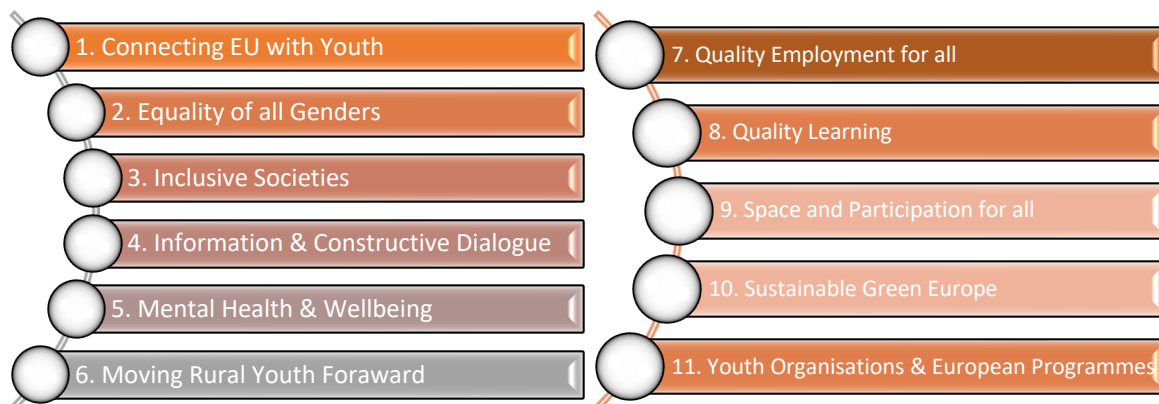
EU Youth Strategy created by EU serves as an encouragement to young people to engage and become active citizens involved in democracy and society, be active citizens. This framework fosters youth participation in democratic life and it supports **social and civic engagement**. Furthermore, one of its main aims is to ensure that all young people have the necessary **resources** to take part in society.

Young people are key for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They not only represent a growing share of the population in many of the EU’s partner countries, but they are also driving change for a sustainable future. They are increasingly concerned, as their future is put at risk by inequalities, climate change, and a conflict-ridden world. The Youth Action Plan is the EU’s operational roadmap for engaging young people in EU external action.

The Youth Action Plan will enhance the EU institutional engagement with young people globally. This will be achieved through, for instance, the Youth Sounding Board for EU International Partnerships and youth advisory structures of EU Delegations, the set-up of a platform for regular dialogue with youth organizations as a new element of the Policy Forum on Development, and mandatory consultations of youth organizations in partner countries in the Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)-Global Europe programming process. The Youth Action Plan will also contribute to the implementation of the UN Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda.

The current EU Youth Strategy is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for **2019-2027**, based on the Council Resolution of 26th November 2018 and it represents **the 6th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue**. As a result, **eleven European Youth Goals were developed**, and these reflect the views of European youth and represent the vision of those active in the EU Youth Dialogue.

There are 11 European Youth goals, and these goals identify cross-sectoral areas that affect young people's lives and point out challenges.



There are **three core areas of action**:



Engage: Increase young people's voices in policy and decision-making at all levels.

Empower: Fight inequalities and provide young people with the skills and resources they need to prosper and fulfil their potential.

Connect: Foster opportunities for young people to network and exchange with their peers.

European Union. Online source: [EU Youth Strategy](#).

European Commission. Online source: [Youth Action Plan 2022-2027](#).

One of the opportunities for young to strengthen the sense of their active citizenship is to participate in EU's Erasmus+ programme that supports education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. The 2021-2027 programme places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital

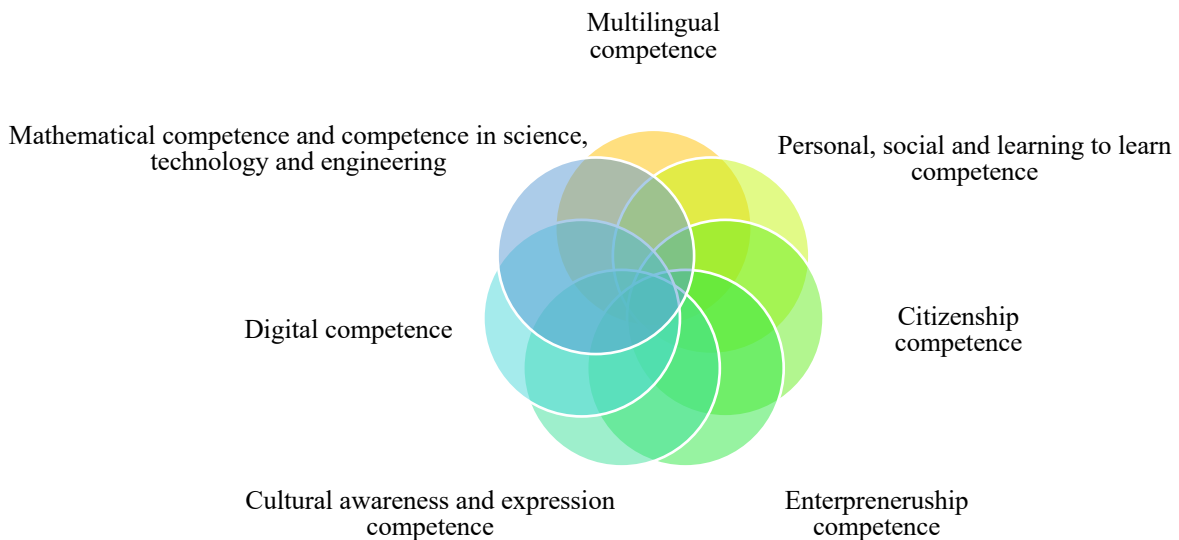
transitions, and promoting young people’s participation in democratic life. Erasmus+ offers mobility and cooperation opportunities in higher education, vocational education and training, school training, adult education, youth, and sport.

Erasmus+. Online source: [What is Erasmus+?](#)

Young people can engage in Erasmus+ projects, which facilitate educational exchanges, volunteering, and collaborative initiatives across European countries. This program offers opportunities to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds, fostering cultural understanding and active participation in a broader European context.

Erasmus+ projects use key competence framework in their Youthpass to describe learning outcomes of young participants in Youth Exchanges, or Youth Participation Activities, as well as European Solidarity Corps (Volunteering and Solidarity projects).

The Key Competences Framework:



Youthpass, online source: [Youthpass](#)

Practical examples of how young people can engage in active citizenship on various levels:

Local level

Community Clean-Up Initiatives:

Young people can organize a local clean-up event to improve the environment in their community. This hands-on activity not only addresses immediate issues like litter and pollution but also fosters a sense of pride and ownership among participants. Collaborating with local environmental groups or city officials can enhance the impact of these initiatives.

Youth-led Workshops and Skill-building Sessions:

Organizing workshops or skill-building sessions for peers and community members is a proactive way for young people to contribute to local development. These sessions can cover topics such as digital literacy, financial planning, or mental health awareness. Sharing knowledge and skills empowers individuals within the community and strengthens social bonds.

Youth-led Cultural Events and Celebrations:

Organizing cultural events and celebrations allows young people to showcase the diversity of their community and promote inclusivity. This could include festivals, art exhibitions, or cultural exchange programs. By celebrating local traditions and fostering understanding among diverse groups, young citizens actively contribute to building a more cohesive and harmonious community.

Other examples: (a) Advocacy for Community Improvement Projects, (b) Community Gardens and Sustainable Practices, (c) Local Volunteering and Social Services, (d) Organizing event for youth and/or elderly people.

National level

Youth Advocacy and Lobbying:

Young people can form or join advocacy groups to address national issues. This could involve lobbying policymakers, participating in public consultations, and using social media platforms to raise awareness about specific causes. By actively engaging with elected officials and decision-makers, youth can influence policies and contribute to national-level change.

Youth-led Social Media Campaigns:

Utilizing social media platforms, young people can launch awareness campaigns on national issues. By creating and sharing impactful content, they can mobilize a broader audience, encouraging discussions and raising awareness about critical social, political, or environmental issues. This can lead to increases public engagement and consciousness.

National Youth Conferences and Summits:

Participating in or organizing national youth conferences and summits allows young people to collaborate, exchange ideas, and propose solutions to national challenges. These events often attract policymakers, providing an opportunity for direct engagement with key decision-makers.

Other examples: (a) National Youth Council Participation, (b) Youth-led Research and Policy Analysis, (c) National Youth-led Initiatives and Projects.

European level

Participation in European Youth Organizations:

Young people can join or actively participate in European youth organizations and networks, such as European Youth Forum. These platforms provide opportunities to engage in discussions, share perspectives, and contribute to shaping policies that affect the entire EU youth community.

European Parliament Youth Events:

Participation in events organized by the European Parliament such as youth conferences, forums, and consultations, allows young individuals to voice their opinions on European issues. These events often involve direct interactions with policymakers and contribute to the dialogue on matters affecting the European Union.

Digital Advocacy and Social Media Campaigns:

Leveraging social media platforms, young people can initiate pan-European digital advocacy campaigns. By using hashtags, creating shareable content, and organizing virtual events, they can raise awareness about European-wide issues and mobilize support across borders.

Other examples: (a) Participation in European Youth Conferences, (b) Collaborative European Youth Projects, (c) European Solidarity Corps platform.

“Watch & Learn”

Here will be links to **educational videos** from reliable sources, as well as **inspirational videos** and **TED talks** related to the give topic.

EU Active Citizenship – a definition

[easyeu, 0:16](#)

Learning to live together in peace through Global Citizenship Education

[UNESCO, 2:39](#)

What are Active Citizens?

[bctivecitizens, 1:38](#)

EU Youth Strategy

[European Union, 1:15](#)

Netflix series:

We The People | Active Citizenship (H.E.R.)

[Netflix, theme song, 4:37](#)

6. Digital Citizenship

“Opening insight”

“We need a digital transition which is European by design and nature. One that rebuilds trust where it is eroded and strengthens it where it exists.”

Ursula von der Leyen

The concept of digital citizenship has evolved from one of the first definitions of digital citizenship written by Ribble and Bailey, which focused only on technological aspects and digital competencies: *“Digital citizenship is a concept which helps teachers, technology leaders, and parents to understand how use technology appropriately.”* (Ribble and Bailey, 2007, p. 10), further, more and more ideas and concepts have been added to this definition, for example, encompassing social justice, emancipatory and alternative technologies: *“A process by which individuals and groups are committed to social justice deliberately and take action to build alternative and emancipatory technologies and technological practices.”* (Emejulu and McGregor, 2019, p. 140). Most recent publications call for an urgent need to agree internationally on a definition of digital citizenship with its corresponding dimensions to elaborate a reliable and valid measuring instrument (Fernandez-Prados *et al.*, 2021).

The definition of Digital citizenship by Council of Europe is as follows:

“Digital Citizenship may be said to refer to the competent and positive engagement with digital technologies and data (creating, publishing, working, sharing, socializing, investigating, playing, communicating and learning); participating actively and responsibly (values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding) in communities (local, national, global) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural, and intercultural); being involved in a double process of lifelong learning (in formal, informal, non-formal settings) and continuously defending human dignity and all attendant human rights.”

Council of Europe, 2017 (p.10)

The use of digital tools in recent years has become a necessity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and everyone has started to use digital tools extensively for various purposes. The burning topics around digital citizenship are in establishing safe online communication and collaboration.

The digital citizenship is as broad as sharing photos, videos, drawings, work, wide range of social media, working environment, attending conferences, retreats, and other various events. It enables connection of people across the world and is a fertile ground for international cooperation and projects. Digital citizenship takes place within community and includes both rights and responsibilities. For example, there are rights like the right to speak freely, and there are responsibilities along with these rights as well. Responsibilities are the boundaries within which community members have to live. Traditionally, the basic principles of citizenship are reported to include being respectful and polite, responsible and making positive contributions to the society.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) reports the characteristics of a good citizen and those of a good digital citizen as follows:

	A good citizen	A good digital citizen
1	Advocates equal human rights for all.	Advocates equal digital rights and digital access for all.
2	Treats other people with respect.	Tries to understand all points of view.
3	Does not damage or steal other people's belongings (assets).	Respects the digital privacy, intellectual property and other rights of online people.
4	Communicates openly, respectfully, and empathetically.	Communicates and empathizes with other people through digital channels and treats them with empathy.
5	Speaks honestly and does not repeat unconfirmed news.	Uses critical thinking for all online resources and does not share unreliable sources such as fake news or advertisements.
6	Works to make the world a better place.	Uses technology to support and develop social goals.

7	Protects himself and other people from harm.	Gives importance to physical, emotional, and mental health while using digital tools.
8	Works with other people in social projects.	Uses digital tools to collaborate with other people.
9	Always maintains a positive self-image.	Understands the permanence of the digital world and manages his/her digital identity by taking the necessary measures.

ISTE, 2016, 2018.

In this day and age, there is a need for teaching digital citizenship and its elements. New curricula should be prepared and implemented to teach digital citizenship and all its aspects and elements. The growing number of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is also an indicative for the need of these curricula to be constantly updated. AI tools have attracted a lot of attention, and they have a lot of potential for solving problems as well as a lot of controversial opinions that need to be addressed.

“Watch & Learn”

Here will be links to **educational videos** from reliable sources, as well as **inspirational videos** and **TED talks** related to the give topic.

What is Digital Citizenship? Digital Citizenship, Part 1

[Center for Civic Education, 1:09](#)

The EU’s Commitment to Cybersecurity

[Parlement europeen Strasbourg - Euroscola, 0:58](#)

What is Digital Citizenship?

[Common Sense Media, 0:40](#)

A song:

[We the Digital Citizens, Common Sense Education, 1:53](#)

7. Non-formal Education

“Opening insight”

“We are the voice of non-formal adult education in Europe.”

European Association for the Education for Adults | Brussels

In the framework of youth projects: *“non-formal education refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum.”* On the other hand, informal education, in general, refers to a lifelong learning process, whereby everyone acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily practice. This is usually unplanned and unstructured.

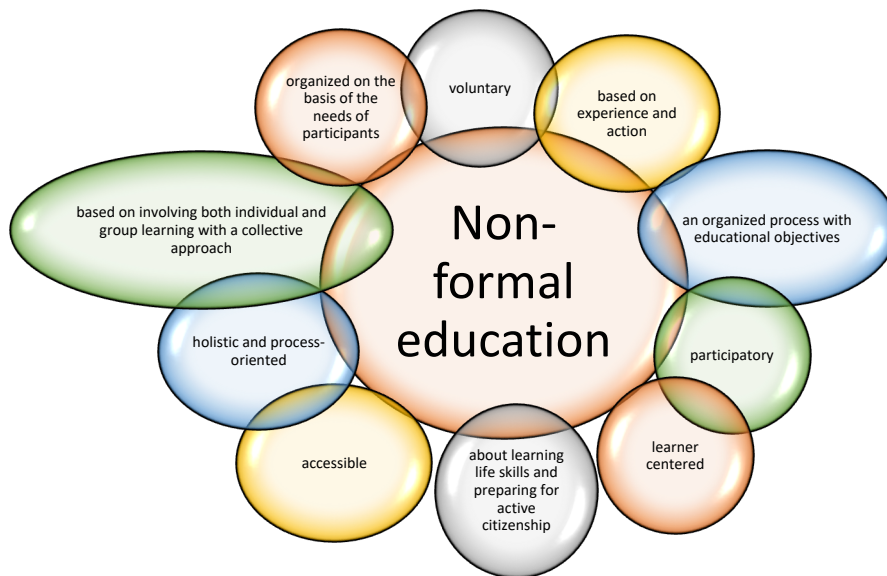


Fig. 3: Non-formal education. An organized process with educational objectives, it is learner centered and participatory. It is about learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship. It is accessible, holistic and process oriented. It is based on involving both individual and group learning with a collective approach. It is organized based on the needs of participants. It is based on experience and action, and it is voluntary.

Formal, non-formal and informal education are complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of a lifelong learning process.

Council of Europe. Online source: [Definitions](#)

Examples of methods of non-formal education:

- Experiential Learning, Workshops and Trainings, Role-Playing and Simulations, Peer-to-Peer Learning, Community Service and Projects, Discussion Groups and Dialogues, Problem-Based Learning, Outdoor Education, Civic Engagement and Action Projects, Mentorship Programs, Digital Learning Platforms, Storytelling and Narrative-Based Learning, Art and Creativity-Based Methods, Field Trips and Excursions.

Examples of tools of non-formal education:

- Digital Learning Platforms, Collaboration and Communication Tools, Simulations and Games, Digital Storytelling Tools, Social Media Platforms, Online Surveys and Quizzes, Collaborative Document Creation, Digital Mapping Tools, Learning Management Systems, Augmented and Virtual Reality, Podcasting Platforms, E-learning Authoring Tools, Online Forums and Discussion Forms, Mobile Apps for Learning.

Practical examples of how civic education can be implemented in non-formal settings:

Methods	Tools
<p>Simulations and Role-Playing Exercise: Engage participants in simulations and role-playing activities that replicate real-world civic scenarios. This method allows individuals to step into the shoes of decision-makers, advocates, or community members, promoting a deeper understanding of civic processes and encouraging critical thinking about social issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ scenario development □ physical or video conferencing platform □ physical or online collaboration tools □ character assignment and tracking tools □ feedback and reflection tools □ resources and information platforms □ evaluation and assessment tools □ facilitator guide and training material

<p>Community Service Projects:</p> <p>Encourage participants to take part in community service projects that address local needs. This hands-on approach not only instills a sense of civic responsibility but also provides tangible benefits to the community. Whether it involves organizing clean-up campaigns, volunteering at local charities, or initiating awareness programs, community service fosters active citizenship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> project management platform <input type="checkbox"/> communication and collaboration tools <input type="checkbox"/> volunteer management software/system <input type="checkbox"/> social medial platform <input type="checkbox"/> online fundraising platform <input type="checkbox"/> survey and feedback tools <input type="checkbox"/> event planning tools <input type="checkbox"/> document sharing and collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> task-specific Apps
<p>Debates and Discussion:</p> <p>Facilitate structured debates and discussions on commemorative civic issues. This method encourages participants to research, analyze, and present their viewpoints on topics such as social justice, human rights, or environmental sustainability. Debates stimulate critical thinking, enhance communication skills, and promote a culture of open dialogue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> physical or online discussion platform <input type="checkbox"/> debate platform <input type="checkbox"/> collaborative document creation tools <input type="checkbox"/> polling and survey tools <input type="checkbox"/> research databases and resources <input type="checkbox"/> communication and chat tools <input type="checkbox"/> timer tools <input type="checkbox"/> visual aids tools <input type="checkbox"/> debate evaluation form
<p>Civic Workshops and Training Sessions:</p> <p>Conduct workshops and training sessions that focus on specific civic skills, such as advocacy, community organizing, or media literacy. These sessions can provide practical tools and strategies for effective civic engagement. Workshops may include guest speakers, interactive activities, and resources that empower participants with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed civic contribution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> workshop platform <input type="checkbox"/> learning management system <input type="checkbox"/> presentation tools <input type="checkbox"/> collaborative document creation <input type="checkbox"/> interactive polling and quizzing tools <input type="checkbox"/> video content platform <input type="checkbox"/> discussion forums <input type="checkbox"/> survey and feedback tools <input type="checkbox"/> social media integration

<p>Civic Action Projects:</p> <p>Guide participants in designing and implementing their own civic action projects. This approach empowers individuals to identify issues relevant to their community, develop action plans, and execute initiatives that bring about positive change. Civic action projects provide a tangible and impactful way for participants to apply civic education principles in real-life contexts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> project management platforms <input type="checkbox"/> collaborative document creation tools <input type="checkbox"/> communication and collaboration tools <input type="checkbox"/> survey and feedback tools <input type="checkbox"/> social media platforms <input type="checkbox"/> community mapping tools <input type="checkbox"/> digital storytelling platforms <input type="checkbox"/> event planning tools <input type="checkbox"/> budgeting tools <input type="checkbox"/> evaluation tools
European level	
Methods	Tools
<p>Model European Union (MEU) Simulations</p> <p>Organize MEU simulations where participants take on the roles of EU representatives, engaging in debates, negotiations, and decision-making processes similar to those within the EU institutions. This hands-on approach provides insights into European governance and encourages participants to understand the complexities of decision-making at the European level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> role-playing <input type="checkbox"/> debates <input type="checkbox"/> discussions <input type="checkbox"/> case studies <input type="checkbox"/> research <input type="checkbox"/> analysis <input type="checkbox"/> networking <input type="checkbox"/> collaboration
<p>European citizenship workshops</p> <p>Conduct workshops focused on European citizenship, covering topics such as the history and values of the EU, the rights and responsibilities of European citizens, and the impact of EU policies on individuals and communities. These workshops can incorporate interactive activities, group discussions, and guest speakers to enhance participants' knowledge and awareness of European issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> interactive presentations <input type="checkbox"/> group discussions <input type="checkbox"/> role-playing <input type="checkbox"/> case studies <input type="checkbox"/> guest speakers <input type="checkbox"/> hand-on activities

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Specific examples of non-formal education tools for the activities mentioned above	
Video conferencing platforms	Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet
Communication and collaborative tools	Google workspace, Microsoft 365, Slack, Microsoft Teams, Discord
Character assignment and tracking tools	Spreadsheets, interactive tools
Feedback and reflection tools	Surveys, discussion forums, reflective journals
Evaluation and assessment tools	Rubrics, quizzes, self-assessment forms
Project management platforms	Trello, Asana, Monday.com
Volunteer management software	VolunteerHub, SignUpGenius, Better Impact
Social media platforms	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
Online fundraising platforms	GoFundMe, Kickstarter, Donorbox
Survey and feedback tools	SurveyMonkey, Google forms
Event planning tools	Eventbrite, Meetup
Mapping tools	Geographic information system, google maps, ArcGIS
Debate platforms	Debate.org, procon.org
Polling and survey tools	Mentimeter, Poll Everywhere, Kahoot!
Research databases and resources	JSTOR, Google Scholar
Visual aid tools	Canva, Piktochart

Learning management systems	Moodle, Canvas, Blackboard
Presentation tools	Microsoft PowerPoint, Google slides, Prezi
Video content platforms	YouTube, Vimeo
Digital storytelling platform	Blog, podcast, video-sharing platforms

“Watch & Learn”

Here will be links to **educational videos** from reliable sources, as well as **inspirational videos** and **TED talks** related to the give topic.

Non-formal learning in a nutshell

[SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, 6:34](#)

Types of Education: Formal, Informal, Non-formal, Face-to-face, Distance

[PHILO-notes, 12:02](#)

Education: Formal, Non-formal, Informal

[Fractal Thought, 4:02](#)

8. Intercultural Dialogue

“Opening insight”

“One of the most effective ways to learn about yourself is by taking seriously the cultures of others. It forces you to pay attention to those details of life which differentiate them from you.”

Edward T. Hall

Intercultural dialogue is vital for young people in fostering social cohesion and promoting European integration. Intercultural dialogue serves as a dynamic platform for meaningful exchanges between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, enabling them to share perspectives, values, and traditions. For young people, this engagement not only cultivates mutual understanding but also plays a pivotal role in nurturing a sense of unity amid diversity. By embracing intercultural dialogue, young individuals contribute to the broader goal of European integration, forging connections that transcend national borders. This inclusive approach not only enriches the cultural tapestry of Europe but also lays the foundation for a harmonious and interconnected European society.

Milton Bennett’s **Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity** describes the developmental stages along which people can progress toward a deeper understanding and appreciate cross-cultural differences. It is one of the influential models in the fields of intercultural communication, engagement, and equity, it is sometimes called the “**Bennett Scale.**” This Model has been widely used and adapted by practitioners working in fields as varied as parent and youth engagement, deliberative dialogue, racial equity, and organizational diversity.

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity describes six developmental stages of intercultural sensitivity and communication (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, the “Bennett Scale. From ethnocentrism (denial, defensiveness, and minimization) to ethnorelative worldviews (acceptance, adaptation, and integration).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity	
Denial	The perception that one’s cultural perspective is the only real, accurate or valid interpretation of reality.
Defense	Perception of other cultures in polarized, competitive, or us-against-them terms; exaltation of one’s culture over the culture of others; or feeling victimized or attacked in discussions about bias, bigotry, or racism.
Minimization	When people assume that their distinct cultural worldview is shared by others, when they perceive their culture’s values as fundamental or universal human values that apply to everyone, or when people obscure, disregard, or neglect the importance of cultural differences.
Acceptance	When people recognize that different beliefs and values are shaped by culture, different patterns of behavior exist among cultures, and that other cultures have legitimate and worthwhile perspectives that should be respected and valued.
Adaptation	Adaptation of the perspective of another culture, empathizing intellectually and emotionally with the experiences of others, or interaction in relaxed, authentic, and appropriate ways with people from different cultures.
Integration	The internalization of multicultural awareness and the ability to interact productively across cultural differences.

8.1. Bulgaria, Europe in your Hand



Association Europe in your Hand is a Bulgarian non-governmental, non-profit organization inspired by Bulgaria's integration into the European Union. This integration numerous and varied activities aimed at promoting the European policies, values, and cooperation among the Bulgarian populace. Before establishing itself as an association, the founders and associates of Europe in your Hand were actively involved in a number of local and European initiatives as an informal youth organization. In partnership with other organizations in the youth sector, its leaders and volunteers participate in various Erasmus+ projects.

The goals of the association include:

- supporting and assisting non-governmental organizations in the Haskovo region and beyond in defining useful project ideas,
- encouraging, supporting and assisting these non-governmental organizations in the Haskovo region in preparing quality project proposals for funding opportunities from the European Union donor programs and funds. Including the legitimate implementation and the effective management of the funded projects,
- raising awareness among non-governmental organizations in the Haskovo region and beyond about the variety of project funding opportunities,
- building, developing, contributing, and including Bulgarian and foreign citizens and organizations in activities and services related to educational advancement and the successful realization of young people in Bulgaria and the European Union.

To achieve its goals, the association employs several means:

1. Development and participation in European cross-border, educational, cultural, and scientific programs, and projects of non-governmental organizations in the Haskovo region and beyond.
2. Providing consultations for the preparation of the project proposals for private entities and NGOs.
3. Facilitating translations between Bulgarian and foreign languages for various European projects and programs.
4. Collaborating with experts in the association's field of activity of the association and making contacts with international organizations working in the same field.
5. Assisting in the selection of consultants, partners, and financing institutions project preparation proposals and offers for tender procedures.
6. Engaging in any other activities not prohibited by law to achieve its objectives.

The target groups of the Association Europe in your Hand are:

- young people aged 13 to 30,
- young people in disadvantaged social and economic situations,
- marginalized communities facing social risks and educational dropout,
- young migrants,
- young people deprived of the right to education, personal and professional development, regardless of the social and demographic factors placed on the person,
- young people with an interest in civic participation and human rights.

CURRENT STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Civic education is a subject with over a hundred years of history in Bulgaria. One of the first textbooks: "*Manual of civil studies and private law*" was prepared based on the example of French secondary schools and it states that: "*every Bulgarian citizen... must know the political and civil system of the Bulgarian state, because only in this way they can be useful to themselves and to the motherland*" (Bukov, 1913). This subject adapted European ideas, traditions, and experience in the

field of civic education to the Bulgarian context and provided Bulgarian students with information about their rights and obligations as citizens, about their participation in governance, about the structure and functions of state institutions (Balkanski, 1997).

After the end of the Second World War and the changes in the socio-political system in the period 1944-1989, the subject of civic education was replaced by the subject of foundations of communism. In it, the construction of a certain ideological worldview among young people displaces the need to know their rights and duties as citizens and is highly politicized.

Attempts to return civic education to school began after the social changes of the early 1990s, mainly on the initiative of non-governmental organizations and associations, as well as individual teachers. It was initially introduced as an optional subject for students in grades 1-12, and only in 2020 the subject became part of the compulsory program for students in grades 11 and 12, replacing and expanding the existing subject world and personality.

The international research "Civic competences and attitudes for active civic behavior of students" 2016 shows that Bulgarian students' understanding of democracy and the rule of law (485 points) is closer to that of students in South America than to that of students in Europe - (where Denmark has the highest score of 586 points, Slovenia has 532 points, and Russia 545 points), with an average score of the studied countries of 517 points (Petrova, 2017). This in itself is quite worrying and means that Bulgarian students do not know how to defend their rights and are more inclined to resort to extreme and violent measures of protest (such as occupying buildings, closing roads and writing slogans with spray on the walls).

Therefore, the main goal of civic education training is to prepare students to be good citizens, to be responsible, to show sympathy for the weaker and to help them, to care for nature and to clearly distinguish benevolence from malice in human actions. In the long term, the development of civic activity skills among adolescents should support the construction of an adequate civil society capable of dialogue in Bulgaria, which will maintain order and justice in the country with its self-awareness, and not with force.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Bulgarian center for Not-for-Profit Law (BCNL)

BCNL is part of the network of the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ECNL) which operate in more than 100 countries around the world to protect the right of association and develop the legal framework for civil society organizations. Their mission is to improve the legislation and the environment in Bulgaria, so that people can freely associate and be civically active. Their top priority is the well-being of civil society organizations, which are the engine of any prosperous civil society. Link: <https://bcnl.org/en>.

Their main activities are:

- Legislative initiatives, advocacy campaigns and support to NGOs and institutions in the preparation and implementation of legislation.
- Enhancing NGOs' knowledge of legislation relevant to their activities and their capacity for advocacy and good governance.
- Providing legal support to NGOs.
- Monitoring and research on topics related to the legal framework for NGO activities.
- Piloting new models and researching them in order to improve the environment and present sustainable models (self-empowerment, business development, fundraising, etc.) in legislation.
- Trainings aimed at enhancing the capacity and sustainability of NGOs on topics such as:
 - NGO legal framework and tax regime,
 - Advocacy,
 - organizational development and good financial management,
 - fundraising,
 - preparation and development of sustainability plans,
 - communication and mobilization of support,
 - systematic research and promotion of good practices and approaches in Bulgaria and abroad in the areas of BCNL's activities.

Their current projects can be found on the following link:

<https://bcnl.org/en/projects/category/current-projects.html>

Other initiatives:

Civil Hitchhiker Club, Civic Academies, Digital Democracy, and other -
<https://bcnl.org/trainings/category/k.html>

This is just one of many Bulgarian NGOs that specialize in citizenship and prioritize this topic for their activities.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Activities to develop students' civic participation adapted from Civic Education

Teacher's Guide, European Commission, Publications Office, 2021

[Гражданско образование, 11. клас - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

The refusal of a large part of young people to vote is a serious social problem, which brings with it a number of other problems for democracy, such as the principle and form of government (greater weight of the so-called bought vote, political and civic apathy, misinformation and others.). At the same time, according to the results of an international study of civic competences and attitudes towards active civic behavior of students, the share of Bulgarian students who are inclined to block roads and occupy buildings in protest (over 30%) is nearly twice as high as the average result of the students in the other studied countries (15-20%). In the lessons of civic education or in class time, they can work purposefully to balance these extremes, related to the lack or too extreme manifestations of civic participation, characteristic of Bulgarian students.

This guide is in support of the teachers, shouldered with the responsible task of helping young people in Bulgaria to become active citizens of a democratic European society. The help is the result of the teamwork and knowledge of some of the biggest experts in the field of civic education

in Bulgaria, civil society practitioners, experts with institutional experience, Europeans, political scientists, historians, lawyers, journalists, Methodists, and philosophers. The aid is structurally and semantically divided into two large parts. The first of them examines important principled issues related to Civic education, among which are assessment and different approaches in teaching it. The second major part provides readers with theoretical and methodological materials for teaching the subject. It follows the 11th-grade curriculum for general education, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of Bulgaria, and the nine topics/subtopics contained therein. This approach to structuring the aid according to the curriculum helps it to be easily used in conjunction with any of the available subject textbooks, as well as independently of them. The material provided in the nine chapters is graphically presented in a way that allows for easy copying and, in general, direct use in the classroom.

The European Commission in Bulgaria

#AreYouAwake campaign

[#БуденЛиСи: кампания в подкрепа на гражданското образование образование \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu)

In 2022, the European Commission in Bulgaria launched a new online campaign #AreYouAwake, with which it aims to engage more young people in a conversation about civic education and active citizenship.

From September 2020, students in grades 11 and 12 are studying Civics as an independent subject at school for the first time. In order to support the introduction of the new subject and make the experience more interesting and useful, the European Commission in Bulgaria, the educational portal Ucha.se and the Sofia platform created 36 video lessons for 11th grade and 33 lessons for 12th grade on the educational content.

The Citizen Participation Forum (CPF) Association

A network of over 100 NGOs from around Bulgaria actively working to improve the environment and practices of participation in decision-making at the local and national level. The aim of the network is to create genuine conditions and to provoke more activity among civil society

organizations to participate fully in the process of formulating policies and demand accountability from public authorities.

In response to these issues, the Citizen Participation Forum undertook the challenging task to monitor on regular basis three interconnected aspects of civic participation. On the one hand – the environment in which it develops: under what conditions and on what legal basis the dialogue between citizens and institutions has been occurring. On the other hand – how often and what tools citizens and organizations use in order to get involved in the decision-making process. And, above all - what the effect is from the application of various mechanisms of citizen participation, what their impact is on the operation of local and national authorities and the decisions they make.

[Index 2023 / 2024 - Citizen Participation Index \(fgu.bg\)](https://fgu.bg)

Civil Society Development Council (CSDC) under the Council of Ministers

This council consists of civil organizations that have been elected by other civil organizations, precisely with the task of providing more opportunities for dialogue and discussions to support civil initiatives in Bulgaria. In other words, this council will have the function of civil control over the decisions that the rulers make about civil society - what ways of participation to use, to promote civil activity, to solve specific problems that are relevant to the entire civil sector. Every three years, civil organizations vote and elect 14 organizations for public benefit, which are part of the Council. The Council of Ministers appoints one of the Deputy Prime Ministers as the Chairman of CSDC. Thus, it is guaranteed that there will be a dialogue between the civil organizations and the rulers, who will sit at the same table. The main task of CSDC is to help the state in developing and following a clear policy for promoting civil activity and supporting civil organizations that contribute to public development. SRGO's priority is also to guarantee that the state will allocate funds to support various civic initiatives and that this will be done on a competitive basis, transparently and accessible to all civic organizations.

European Citizens' Initiative Forum

An online collaborative platform that offers support to citizens when organizing a European citizens' initiative. It is a space for anyone to get practical information and advice about the

European citizens' initiative (ECI), and to discuss any topics related to it. The European Citizens' Initiative is a unique way for one to help shape the EU by calling on the European Commission to propose new laws. Once an initiative has reached 1 million signatures, the Commission will decide on what action to take. Link: https://citizens-initiative-forum.europa.eu/_en.

More info on how the European Citizens' Initiative works: https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/how-it-works_en

8.2. Czech Republic, EYCB



EYCB is non-profit nongovernmental organization founded by young people for young people in 2007. Our main aims and activities are informing and raising awareness of the European Union and its educational programmes, promoting self-fulfillment and personal development of young people through educational programs of the European Union and developing non-formal education, intercultural dialogue, international cooperation and active civil society.

Altogether, we also organized 8 Youth in Action and Erasmus+ funded training courses and youth exchanges since our foundation. You can find out more about them [here](#).

We are an active youth NGO focusing on the programme Erasmus+: Youth in a rural area of the Czech Republic, on the borders of Austria and Slovakia. Because of our rural location, unemployment is high, and youth unemployment is rocketing. Public life and possibilities of active participation in our town are not much developed. Therefore, in our youth work we try to offer the youths we work with as many possibilities for their self-development by encouraging them and enabling them to attend educational projects funded through the EU programmes, such as Erasmus+ Youth or Visegrad Fund. We also offer youths the opportunity to become a volunteer

in our NGO, so that they can learn how to independently come up, plan, execute and lead their own activities – be it local, regional, or international. We strongly believe that by showing youths that they are capable of creating their own goals, plans and personal projects and then successfully executing them, these youths grow internally, they build confidence in their capabilities, skills and knowledge and they become leaders of our communities. For youths who want to volunteer abroad long-term we also offer European Solidarity Corps (ESC): <https://eycb.eu/en/category/past-esc-projects/>.

We also strongly believe that it is crucial to give as many possibilities as possible to youths who are economically disadvantaged. Therefore, in March 2014 our organization established a financial fund for socio-economically disadvantaged youths who cannot afford to take part in EU-funded educational programmes without financial aid. Through this fund we completely cover all travel costs as well as pocket money for the socio-economically disadvantaged youth that attends a project in which we are partners. You can see more information about this fund here: <https://eycb.eu/en/eycb-grant-programme/>

Each person we sent to a project abroad is a significant investment for us. We see the potential in each person who attends a project/seminar/training course, and we hope that when these people return to their home community they will come back with a mind that has been enlightened, eyes have been open, ideas have taken root and will grow into actions. We believe that the youths/youth workers/leaders sent to your project will return home and will become the leaders of tomorrow, inspiration and leaders in their communities, model citizens inspiring change, active citizenship and improvement in our society.

To promote and support active participation and active citizenship of young people in our community, we also organize interactive workshops for high-school students focused specifically on a topic of active citizenship. We also organize, promote, and participate in volunteering activities in our town.

Our work with minorities: Our town (Břeclav) has a large Roma minority and we therefore cooperate with the Roma NGO in our home town, offering Roma youths educational opportunities

through the ERASMUS+ programme. Our NGO also organized a Youth in Action training course in 2013 which focused on discrimination as a social disability. You can find more information about this TC here: <https://eycb.eu/en/see-new-possibility-in-disability-2/>.

CURRENT STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION

The state of civic education in the Czech Republic is characterized by ongoing efforts to enhance democratic values, civic engagement, and awareness of rights and responsibilities among citizens, particularly youth.

The key aspect of the current state of civic education are:

1. **Curricular integration:** Civic education is integrated into the national curriculum of primary and secondary schools. It typically encompasses subjects such as civics, social studies, and ethics, which an emphasis on democratic principles, human rights, and active citizenship.
2. **Government initiatives:** The Czech government has implemented various initiatives to promote civic education, including the provision of educational materials, training programs for teachers, and support for extracurricular activities focused on civic engagement.
3. **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs):** Civil society organizations play a significant role in supplementing formal civic education efforts. NGOs often organize workshops, seminar, and campaigns at raising awareness about democracy, human rights, and social justice issues among young people.
4. **Challenges and criticisms:** Despite these efforts, there are challenges facing civic education in the Czech Republic. Critics argue that the curriculum lacks depth and fails to adequately prepare students for active participation in democratic processes. Additionally, there have been concerns about the politization of education and the influence of partisan interests on the content of civic education programs.
5. **Digital citizenship:** With the increasing use of digital technology, there is growing recognition of the importance of teaching digital citizenship skills. Efforts are being made to integrate topics such as online safety, media literacy, and responsible use of social media into civic education curricula.

6. European integration: As a member of the European Union, the Czech Republic also emphasizes European citizenship and the values of the EU in its civic educational programs. This includes educating students about the institutions of the EU, the rights of EU citizens, and the importance of cross-border cooperation.

Overall, while civic education in the Czech Republic has made strides in promoting democratic values and active citizenships, there is ongoing debate and effort to address challenges and ensure that education in this area remain relevant and effective in preparing citizens for their roles in society.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Community Action Projects

Youth workers from the Czech Republic can organize community action projects where young people identify and address local issues. For example, they could plan a neighborhood cleanup day to raise awareness about environmental stewardships and civic responsibility. Through this project, participants would learn about the importance of community engagement, teamwork, and environmental sustainability. Youth workers can facilitate discussions before and after the project to reflect on the impact of their actions, discuss the role of citizens in creating positive change, and brainstorm future initiatives.

Simulated Governance Exercises

Youth workers can organize simulated governance exercises where young people role-play as government officials, policymakers, and community representatives. For instance, they could simulate a town hall meeting to discuss a hypothetical policy issue such as youth unemployment or access to education. Participants would research the topic, develop proposals, and engage in debates and negotiations. Through this activity, they would gain a deeper understanding of democratic processes, decision-making, and civic engagement. Youth workers can debrief the simulation to discuss the challenges and opportunities of participatory democracy and encourage participants to take active roles in real-life civic activities.

These activities provide hands-on experiences that promote civic education principles such as civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions. They empower young people to become informed, engaged, and responsible citizens within their communities.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Local level

Community Action Projects

Youth workers can facilitate community action projects where young people identify local issues or concerns and develop solutions to address them. These projects could involve initiatives such as creating community gardens, organizing neighborhood watch programs, or hosting cultural exchange events. Through hands-on involvement in these projects, young people learn about active citizenship and civic responsibility while making a positive impact in their local communities.

Youth-led Social Innovation Workshops

Youth workers can organize workshops focused on social innovation, where young people collaborate to develop creative solutions to local challenges. Participants can brainstorm ideas, conduct research, and prototype solutions to issues such as youth unemployment, environmental sustainability, or social inclusion. These workshops empower young people to become agents of change in their communities and foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for addressing societal issues.

National level

National Youth Forums

Youth workers can organize national youth forums or conferences that provide a platform for young people to discuss and debate pressing national issues. These events could focus on topics such as education reform, youth empowerment, or social justice. Participants can engage in workshops, panel discussions, and policy debates, allowing them to voice their opinions, share perspectives, and advocate for change at national level.

Youth Policy Advocacy Campaigns

Youth workers can lead advocacy campaigns aimed at influencing national policies and legislation on issues relevant to young people. These campaigns could involve activities such as petition drives, social media campaigns, or lobbying efforts targeting policymakers and government officials. By mobilizing young people to advocate for policy changes, these campaigns promote active citizenship and civic engagement at the national level.

European level

European Youth Exchanges

Youth workers can organize European youth exchanges that bring together young people from different countries to participate in cultural change and collaborative projects. These could focus on themes such as intercultural dialogue, environmental sustainability, or human rights. Through cross-border cooperation and collaboration, participants learn about European citizenship, solidarity, and cooperation while addressing common challenges facing Europe.

European Civic Engagement Seminars

Youth workers can host seminars or workshops focused on European civic engagement and participation in democratic processes. These events could explore topics such as EU governance, democratic values, and civic rights and responsibilities. Participants can learn about the role of citizens in shaping European policies and institutions, engage in discussions on EU citizenship and identity, and explore ways to actively participate in European democracy. These seminars promote active citizenship and civic engagement at the European level.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Cultural Exchange Workshops

Youth workers can organize cultural exchange workshops where young people from diverse backgrounds come together to share and celebrate their cultural heritage. These workshops could include activities such as traditional dance performances, cooking classes featuring cuisine from different cultures, art exhibitions showcasing cultural artifacts, and storytelling sessions where participants share personal experiences and traditions. Through interactive and participatory

activities, young people have the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the richness of cultural diversity while fostering mutual respect and understanding.

Interfaith Dialogue Forums

Youth workers can facilitate interfaith dialogue forums that bring together young people from various religious and spiritual backgrounds to engage in open and respectful discussions about their beliefs, values, and traditions. These forums provide a platform for participants to explore commonalities and differences among different faith traditions, address misconceptions, and promote religious tolerance and acceptance. Through guided dialogue sessions, workshops on interfaith cooperation, and visits to religious institutions, young people gain insights into different religious perspectives and learn to navigate cultural and religious diversity in their communities.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Youth Policy Forums

Youth workers from the Czech Republic could support youth-led forums where young people can discuss and debate pressing European issues, such as environmental sustainability, digital innovation, and social inclusion. These forums can provide a platform for youth to voice their opinions, propose solutions, and engage in constructive dialogue with policymakers and experts. By facilitating these discussions, youth workers can empower young people to actively participate in shaping the future of Europe.

European Simulation Exercises

Youth workers could host interactive simulation exercises that simulate decision-making processes within European institutions, such as the European Parliament or European Council. Participants can take on roles as representatives from different countries and work together to negotiate and draft policies on various European issues. These exercises can help youth workers educate young people about the complexities of European governance while fostering teamwork, critical thinking, and diplomacy skills among participants.

8.3. Poland, New Europe Foundation



The New Europe Foundation, established in 2015, is a unique example of an NGO playing a key role in shaping the future of Central and Eastern Europe. The relevance of this foundation goes beyond the traditional understanding of NGO activities, fitting into the broad context of the region's socio-economic and scientific development.

Mission and vision

The New Europe Foundation's mission goes beyond conventional NGO activities by focusing on promoting the potential of Central and Eastern Europe. The Foundation seeks to portray the region as dynamic and full of opportunities, which translates into concrete initiatives and projects. A key aspect of this mission is to strive to reveal not only the challenges but also the opportunities that the region offers, both locally and internationally.

Projects and activities

New Europe Foundation has carried out many initiatives with a significant impact on local and international communities. As an organization we work with many different groups. We help foreigners adapt to Poland, train young people in social, ecological and digital competences, run sports projects for families, seniors and other groups, and build lasting international cooperation. One example is a project to organize youth meetings in the Mountains to integrate and educate young people from different countries. Another project - building houses in Armenia - supported families affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, demonstrating the Foundation's commitment to solving real social problems. Support for entrepreneurs in Georgia, through development aid, in turn underlines the Foundation's drive to build sustainable economic development.

Examples of our projects:

- "Silesian Multicultural Centre" - It focuses on supporting foreigners in Poland, creating the Silesian Multicultural Center operating in eight cities. It offers comprehensive legal, psychological, advisory and translation assistance, with an emphasis on legalizing stay and improving the legal and labor situation of immigrants, supported by a free hotline and training cycles on labor rights.
- Polish-Czech Fake News Academy - The mission of this initiative is to strengthen bonds between Polish and Czech society by jointly fighting Russian disinformation. The main goal is to permanently establish a Polish-Czech community that will regularly analyze entries on the Internet, social networking sites and online forums.
- Activation of young people in local governments - the project focuses on increasing the involvement of young people in local politics, through training, workshops and mentoring programs.
- Intensive Energy-Saving Training - Educational workshops aimed at promoting energy efficiency, both in households and in public spaces. As part of the project, an educational platform is being created containing films, e-courses, guides and games for learning energy saving.

International cooperation

The New Europe Foundation is actively developing a network of international cooperation, especially with NGOs from the Tri-Countries. This cooperation contributes to the exchange of experiences, best practices and joint problem-solving, which significantly increases the effectiveness and reach of the Foundation's activities. Through such a network of partnerships, the organisation can better respond to the changing needs of the region, which is key to achieving long-term development goals.

Our website: <https://neweurope.pl/>

Our contact: contact@neweurope.pl

CURRENT STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION

The evolution and current state of civic education in Poland is a multi-faceted and dynamic landscape influenced by historical, political, and social changes. Drawing on a variety of sources, we can outline key aspects of civic education in Poland, its recent changes, and the challenges it faces.

Recent developments in civic education

Digital skills and cybersecurity education: Recent initiatives such as Cyber Lessons 3.0, run in partnership with the Ministry of Digitalisation and the Scientific and Academic Computer Network, have been key. This programme provides comprehensive lesson plans aimed at educating primary and secondary school students about online safety, digital identity and responsible online behaviour. The curriculum is aligned with the core educational requirements at different stages of education and includes a variety of teaching materials such as infographics, multimedia presentations and expert videos.

The 'Laboratories of the Future' programme: This initiative has been extended to secondary schools, involving an investment of PLN 1.2 billion. It gives students access to modern educational tools such as 3D printers, VR goggles and various scientific instruments. The programme aims to integrate modern technology into the classroom, enhancing the educational experience and preparing students for life in a technologically advanced society.

Enhancing digital competence

The government is focusing on improving digital literacy by providing laptops to fourth-grade students and initiating the 'Laptop for Teacher' programme. These efforts emphasize a commitment to integrating digital tools into the educational process, for both students and teachers.

Challenges and observations

Emphasis of civic education on knowledge rather than active participation: research indicates that although Polish schools have included civic education in their curricula, they focus on imparting knowledge about democracy rather than practicing it. This approach limits the opportunities for

students to actively engage in or experience democratic processes first-hand. As a result, citizenship education is often more about learning about democracy than learning in democracy.

Demographic changes affecting education

Poland is facing significant demographic changes, including a declining population and an ageing population, which are likely to put a strain on public services. These changes may also affect the education system, potentially leading to changes in policy and resource allocation.

In conclusion, while Poland has made significant progress in integrating digital skills and modern technologies into its education system, challenges remain in making civic education a more active and participatory experience for students. These efforts are part of a broader context of demographic changes and international influences that continue to shape the educational landscape in Poland.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

In Poland, civic education outside the formal school system can be implemented in various ways. Two examples are given below.

Organization of workshops and public debates

Informal civic education can be implemented by organizing workshops and public debates on topics related to citizenship, human rights, democracy, and public participation. These activities can be conducted by NGOs, public libraries, or community centers. Examples include workshops on electoral rights, the importance of participation in elections, or the role of citizens in decision-making processes at the local and national level. Participants in these workshops can learn how to actively participate in social and political life, as well as how to effectively express their opinions and influence decisions that are important for their communities.

Voluntary and community activation programmes

Another form of civic education is volunteer and community activism programmes. NGOs often run projects that involve people in activities for the local community, such as volunteering in care homes, schools, environmental organisations or cultural initiatives. Participation in such programmes allows participants to develop skills in teamwork, communication and understanding

of social needs. In addition, through direct involvement in solving local problems, participants in these programmes learn responsibility, empathy and effectiveness in serving others.

These examples show how citizenship education can be delivered in a practical and engaging way, going beyond traditional teaching methods and teaching through experience and active participation.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

National level

Young Poles who want to participate in active citizenship at a regional level can participate in the National Network of Volunteer Centers and help people.

The second option is to actively participate in youth organizations for the benefit of the community, e.g. organizing charitable, educational, or environmental events.

European level

Thanks to programmes such as ERASMUS+, young people can participate in exchanges abroad, which allow them to gain international experience and develop their interests. As a result of these exchanges, young people can participate in active civic life at European level, working with other young people from other countries and participating in social and political life on the European continent.

Young people can participate in active civic life at European level by working together in youth organizations such as the European Youth Forum and the European Youth Parliament. This allows young people to gain knowledge about European politics, citizenship rights and institutions, as well as developing their communication and interpersonal skills.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Young people can participate in international youth exchange programmes such as ERASMUS+, which allow them to interact with peers from other countries, exchange experiences and views and develop mutual understanding and respect for other cultures.

Another example is the possibility of working in NGOs as volunteers or assistants, carrying out educational, cultural, or social projects to promote intercultural dialogue. For example, participating in educational projects, seminars or cultural events that encourage an open exchange of views and experiences with representatives of other cultures.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Through the European Solidarity Corps initiative, young people have the opportunity to focus on the process of shaping Europe's future. Through these programmes, young people can learn about the project both in their own country and in other European Union countries.

The Discover EU programme is also an opportunity for development. The project aims to promote tourism and culture among young people. Thanks to this project, young people have the opportunity to discover new places both in Poland and in other parts of Europe.

8.4. Lithuania, Tavo Europa



Tavo Europa, established in Lithuania, provides an environment where young individuals can gain practical experience and insights into European matters and civic responsibilities. Our passionate team of 9 is a melting pot of visionaries, ranging from dedicated social workers and inquisitive researchers to insightful psychologists. Moreover, every year, we open our doors to over 20 local

university students, offering them hands-on internships that immerse them in real-world challenges. At Tavo Europa, we believe in more than just education; we believe in transformative experiences. Annually, we involve over 1,000 learners, ranging from 14 to 30 years old. Through our advanced training programs, we elevate the expertise of at least 200 youth workers each year, propelling them towards lifelong learning.

Our mission? Empowering EVERY young individual, especially those with fewer opportunities. Whether they're from rural areas, living with disabilities, representing minorities, or navigating life as refugees, we're here to ensure they not only fit in but stand out.

Objectives that drive us:

- To promote and support sustainable and eco-friendly initiatives,
- To equip our participants with the necessary skills and attitudes that can directly uplift the cultural quality of our shared world,
- To inspire and guide the youth in launching and leading new projects that bring tangible benefits to their local communities,
- To actively involve individuals from marginalized sections in our international projects, ensuring that the call for a sustainable future is a collective chant,
- To promote youth participation in both community-driven cultural projects and volunteerism.

We educate, motivate, and arm the younger generation with the necessary tools to make long-lasting positive impacts on our environment and communities. Through constructive dialogues and action-oriented programs, we encourage them to identify and deploy practical, community-based solutions using the principles of non-formal education.

Rooted deep in the heart of Lithuania, we serve as a platform where demanding youth learning needs are met by non-formal education opportunities. An organization that is geared towards constructing a robust sustainability oriented civil society.

More information:

www.tavo.europa.eu, <https://www.facebook.com/TavoEuropa>

CURRENT STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION

The Lithuanian Civic Empowerment Index, launched in 2007, is one of the tools used to measure the civic engagement of the public. The COVID-19 pandemic that started in 2020 encouraged many people to get involved in various public initiatives, which is why the index's highest score of 39.7 out of 100 was recorded that year. It is particularly important that the increase in civic influence was felt by vulnerable groups in society.

The most recent data, for 2022, shows a similar level of public engagement in civic initiatives, but the most recent mobilizing factor is the new scale of Russian aggression against Ukraine since February 2022. Despite growing public confidence in influencing important decisions, there is still a need for citizenship education in schools, as teachers are often the ones who act as civic leaders for young people. Citizenship education is one of the priorities for teacher professional development in 2023-2025. Public funding is being made available to teachers to strengthen their competences in several areas - citizenship and national security fundamentals, media literacy, critical thinking, and school community activities.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

- Extra-curriculum activities for youth and children in cultural centers, libraries, museums.
For example - **Nature school of Panevezys (Panevėžio gamtos mokykla)**

Panevėžys Nature School is a non-profit educational organization and children after school center, financed from the municipal budget. The school focuses on advertising the importance of harmonious relationship between Man and Nature, development of visitor values and cognitive competencies, also development of public responsibility in relation to environmental issues.

Panevėžys Nature School welcomes everyone who is interested in an environmentally friendly lifestyle, longing for closer contact with nature, is willing to learn more about animal care, and how to look after plants. The center hosts non-formal environment educational programmes or

activities for school groups, organizes field trips, summer camps, competitions, exhibitions and so on. It is also possible to become a volunteer and propose your ideas to the center.

Students to the parliament / Annual event for school pupils.

Graduates of Lithuanian general education schools and foreign Lithuanian general education schools and future 12th (4th) high school students are invited to participate.

Project participants take part in activities throughout the week that help them get to know the work of the Government better. Divided into pairs, they do a week's practice in one of the fourteen ministries or the Government Chancellery. During the whole week, the participants get to know the activities of the institutions and perform the tasks assigned to them.

Part of the project activities are organized jointly for all 30 project participants: they take part in informal conversations with well-known Lithuanian people, brainstorming or other activities. Project participants have the opportunity to communicate with the Prime Minister, his political team, ministers, participate in meetings and meetings.

The students also prepare a joint weekly project, the purpose of which is to share their vision and expectations on various issues of public administration.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Local level

Participatory budget in the municipalities

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a way to decide together with the community on the use of public funds. In this format, community members propose ideas for municipality, school or organization and vote for the ones they like the most. Participatory budgeting was implemented by or started to be implemented by 22 municipalities and at least 30 schools from various Lithuanian cities (2021 data) Also at least 13 municipalities are planning to implement PB in the near future.

According to the representatives of the municipalities, the main goal of participatory budgeting is more active involvement of residents in the decision-making process. According to them, it can be good means of promoting the trust of the population in the local government and its representatives decisions. However, it is still poorly known across the society and needs more information and dissemination of the possibility as well as of winner projects.

DAROM - ecological initiative

Annual general action when garbage is collected throughout Lithuania in the green areas (parks, forests, riverbeds). The campaign started in 2008, after a successful campaign of this type in Estonia. ~3,000 volunteers participated in the first campaign. It has become an annual event and attracts more and more enthusiasts of clean nature. On the website www.mesdarom.lt, the first platform for sustainability initiatives in Lithuania "Darom kartu" has been created, where everyone can register their organized initiative, discover opportunities to volunteer in the field of environmental protection and share inspiring stories of sustainable change.

Municipality's youth council

On the basis of equal partnership, the Youth Council is made up of representatives of Municipal institutions and representatives of youth organizations.

Goals of the Youth Council:

- to help implement the functions of the Municipality in the areas of youth policy implementation;
- coordinate the implementation of the Municipality's youth policy;
- to ensure the participation of young people in solving issues relevant to them;
- to strengthen cooperation between Municipal institutions or institutions and youth and organizations working with youth.

The initiatives, projects and activities financed by the municipalities and the youth work groups (where the local youth can participate freely) helps to develop a greater understanding of the work of the non-governmental organizations and local self-government youth policy activities.

National level

KONSTITUCIJOS EGZAMINAS - the exam of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, organized for 17 years already. Participants compete in this knowledge test, which is organized by the Ministry of Justice together with the patron of the exam, the President of the country Gitan Nausėda.

- There are several categories:
 - the student who knows the Constitution the best (by class),
 - a person studying law or a citizen with a legal education,
 - the most active school,
 - the oldest participant,
 - the best Constitution knowledgeable Lithuanian of the world (expats).

This is an expression of civic responsibility, because knowing and defending one's rights and responsibilities every day allows creating a just, open, harmonious, active society that strengthens the foundation of statehood. It is also important that during this exam, everyone can feel that the provisions established in the Constitution are like a moral compass for each person and the entire state.

Volunteering

In modern society, the notion that fostering democracy is becoming more and more established success depends on the active participation of citizens in managing public and state affairs. Therefore, the principle of democratic life is defined more and more often as democratic participation, especially actively manifested by the voluntary participation of citizens in social activities.

Volunteering reflects human development, socialization, abilities and skills, important opportunities for acquisition and non-formal education. These are important measures, intended for self-government of citizens and their obligations as active members of the community to form Volunteering also contributes to solidarity, social cohesion and strengthening of communal development. It highlights the following payback aspects: economic, social, environmental and other benefits to the state are emphasized. There are various types of volunteering opportunities in Lithuania: occasional, long term, online etc.

Young people can find a suitable option on the platforms online, like: ???.

European level

EU Youth forum

The European Youth Forum is the biggest platform of youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 youth organisations, which bring together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe. The European Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives and advocates for their rights. The Youth Forum promotes youth participation, making young people catalysts for positive change and contributors of innovative solutions to Europe's challenges. Member of youth forum from Lithuania is LiJOT - Lithuanian Youth Council: www.lijot.lt.

Voting in EU parliament elections

The elections to the European Parliament (EP) represent a crucial moment in EU democracy: they give citizens a say in the EU's political direction. In the 2019 elections reached an unprecedented 50.6% (8% more compared to the previous one). This increase was largely the result of greater youth participation - it is demonstrating young people's desire for active political participation. In 2024, four Member States (Belgium, Germany, Malta and Austria) will allow their citizens to vote from the age of 16, and in Greece the voting age is 17. Lowering the voting age is one way to increase youth participation in elections; other instruments include introducing youth quotas,

providing for online or postal voting, decreasing the age to stand as candidate, or promoting civic education in school curricula.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

European projects for youth

A rapidly developing Europe offers more and more opportunities to young people. In the past, projects in other cities were feared, and international connections seemed like real exoticism. Today, however, young people have more opportunities: from the freedom to choose a free year after school to Erasmus+ projects in Lithuania or Europe. There are different types of opportunities for all - from short- and long-term individual volunteering to cultural exchanges in groups departing together from the same countries.

Volunteering - Asylum and Migration Program (RED CROSS)

What do volunteers do in the program? Both adults and children will find volunteering opportunities in the Asylum and Migration Program. Choose regular or irregular volunteering and contribute to foreigners' better emotional well-being, dignity, and faster integration in Lithuania.

Red cross volunteers distribute humanitarian aid in camps; provide psychosocial assistance to foreigners in camps; conduct various groups and activities for adults and children; teach the basics of the Lithuanian language; help children prepare homework; and help foreigners to be integrated to go to the necessary institutions, explains how to use services in the city.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Supporting Ukraine's joining the European Union

Lithuania is one of the most active supporters of Ukraine's efforts to join the European Union. On 20 June 2022, before the European Council meeting in Vilnius, a campaign in support of Ukraine was organised by the Council of Lithuanian Youth Organisations (LiJOT) and the European Movement for Europeans (EME), called "For Ukraine's EU Candidate Status!". This is just one

example of how politicians' decisions are influenced. Among other things, according to a Eurobarometer survey conducted in October-November 2023, as many as 79% of Lithuanian citizens support granting candidate status to Ukraine (the average in other EU countries is 61%).

Promoting responsible consumption

Various youth organizations and community leaders have been talking a lot in the public sphere, especially on social media, about the businesses still operating in Russia and encouraging consumers to move away from these producers' products. In particular, the Lithuanian company Viciunai Group, one of the biggest producers of fish and seafood products in the region, is receiving a lot of attention. Indeed, some buyers in Lithuania are boycotting the brand.

8.5. Spain, MentoraE English



MentoraE English is an organization that is based on the following values:

- **Innovation:** MentoraE English is committed to innovation in English language teaching. The organization seeks to develop new methods and approaches to language learning that are effective and engaging for students.
- **Diffusion:** MentoraE English aims to spread English throughout Europe. The organization believes that English is an essential language for communication and success in the globalized world.
- **Emotional focus:** MentoraE English believes that learning English should be a positive and motivating process. The organization focuses on the emotional needs of students to create a learning environment that is enjoyable and productive.

The goals of Mentorae English are as follows:

- **Promote English learning in Europe:** Mentorae English wants to help people from all over Europe learn English. The organization offers a variety of courses and programs to meet the needs of all levels of learners.
- **Develop new methods of English teaching:** Mentorae English is committed to innovation in English language teaching. The organization seeks to develop new methods and approaches that are effective and engaging for students.
- **Create a positive and motivating learning environment:** Mentorae English believes that learning English should be a positive process. The organization focuses on the emotional needs of students to create a learning environment that is enjoyable and productive.

CURRENT STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION

Civic education in Spain is a subject that has been debated for many years. Some people believe that it is important to teach students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, while others believe that it is too political and should not be taught in schools.

In 2012, the Spanish government changed the name of the subject from "Education for Citizenship" to "Civic and Constitutional Education." This change was made in an effort to make the subject more objective and less likely to be seen as political indoctrination. Despite the change in name, there is still debate about the effectiveness of civic education in Spain. Some people believe that the subject is not taught adequately, while others believe that it is too focused on theoretical concepts and not enough on practical skills.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in civic education in Spain. This is likely due to a number of factors, including the rise of populism and nationalism, the increasing diversity of Spanish society, and the need for citizens to be more engaged in the political process.

It is unclear what the future holds for civic education in Spain. However, it is clear that the subject is becoming increasingly important in a democratic society.

Here are some of the challenges facing civic education in Spain:

- **Lack of resources:** Schools often do not have the resources they need to teach civic education effectively. This includes qualified teachers, up-to-date materials, and opportunities for students to participate in civic activities.
- **Political polarization:** The subject of civic education can be controversial, as it can be seen as a way to promote a particular political ideology. This can make it difficult to reach consensus on the content of the subject.
- **Lack of student interest:** Some students may not be interested in learning about civics, as they see it as irrelevant to their lives. This can make it difficult to engage students in the subject.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Workshops on Citizen Participation

Collaborate with local organizations in Bulgaria, for example, to organize interactive workshops on civic topics in schools and youth centers in Spain. These workshops could address issues such as the political system, citizen rights and responsibilities, fostering open dialogue.

Cross-Border Volunteer Projects

Establish volunteer programs between young people from Bulgaria and Spain, focusing on activities that promote community well-being and civic engagement. This approach will allow participants to learn about the differences and similarities in active citizenship between the two countries.

Local level

Local Youth Forums

Support the creation of youth forums in Spanish cities where young people can express their concerns, propose solutions, and work on community projects. These forums could be linked to local policies and serve as a platform for young people to influence local decisions.

Urban Environment Improvement Initiatives

Promote projects involving young people in improving local public spaces, such as parks or recreational areas in Spain. Active participation in the planning and execution of these projects will promote a sense of civic responsibility and connection with the community.

National level

Voter Awareness and Registration Campaigns

Collaborate with local and international organizations to organize voter awareness campaigns among young people in Spain. Additionally, facilitate the creation of voter registration programs to increase participation in national elections.

Civic Experience Exchange Programs

Establish exchange programs between young people actively engaged in citizenship in Bulgaria and Spain. These exchanges would allow sharing experiences, best practices, and effective methods of civic participation, thereby strengthening the network of committed youth at the national level.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Community clean-up day

A clean-up of a natural park, or a forest near the city where people pass by, young people could actively participate in cleaning and caring for the environment, promoting values of environmental responsibility and civic awareness.

Collaborative urban art project

This would involve working together with local urban artists to create a collaborative urban art project that reflects shared European themes, such as cultural diversity, unity, and collaboration, allowing young people to express themselves creatively while promoting shared European values.

INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

An example of how young people in Spain could participate in intercultural dialogue would be through the organization of cultural events, in which young Spaniards can dialogue and participate in the native culture of their peers, or learn about new cultures, cuisines, music, dances and traditions of which they were previously unaware. This type of event could create a pleasant environment where they could communicate openly about intercultural differences without fear of judgment, thanks to mutual interest and understanding.

In addition to organizing these events, as a second example, student exchange programs can also be proposed, such as the one we are trying to implement for these purposes. Thanks to these exchanges, young Spaniards will be able to have a completely culturally different experience that will allow them to open their eyes beyond their horizons. This implies that they will be able to immerse themselves in the culture of another country, where they will be able to share their own traditions and be told about the traditions of their place of stay, which will allow them to tell those same experiences to their Spanish classmates upon their return, fostering intercultural dialogue even more.

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Interactive workshops could be organized in which young people would be introduced to political processes, as well as debates (or history), together with activities to understand well these concepts of responsibility as citizens (care for the environment for example) and the functioning of the political system.

Participation in community projects addressing local problems such as lack of food for immigrants or pollution in the sea, encouraging young people to promote solutions against these problems and how to cooperate to solve them. Thus, helping to promote their citizenship and social responsibility.

“Watch & Learn”

Here will be links to **educational videos** from reliable sources, as well as **inspirational videos** and **TED talks** related to the give topic.

What does Intercultural Dialogue mean?

[UNESCO, 1:41](#)

Gestures around the World

[The World is our Thing, 2:00](#)

9. Conclusion

“Closing insight”

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Mahatma Gandhi

As we draw the curtains on this digital educational guide on civic education, it is paramount to reflect on the journey we have embarked upon together. From the foundational understanding of civic education to the exploration of European citizenship, active engagement, and intercultural dialogue, each chapter has been a steppingstone toward a more informed and empowered youth across Europe. Let us take a moment to encapsulate the essence of our collective exploration and the significance it holds for shaping the future of Europe.

Throughout this guide, we have delved into the multifaceted realm of civic education recognizing it not just a subject matter but as a fundamental pillar of democracy and social cohesion. It has been our endeavor to equip young people and youth workers alike with the knowledge, skills, and inspiration to engage meaningfully in public life, fostering a sense of responsibility and agency within their communities. From understanding the intricacies of European institutions to embracing the principles of active and digital citizenship, our journey has been marked by enlightenment and empowerment.

One of the most profound revelations of this guide has been the recognition of non-formal education as a powerful tool for nurturing civic engagement and intercultural understanding. Through the exemplary practices showcased by organizations like Evropa na dlan (Bulgaria), the New Europe Foundation (Poland), Asociacija Tavo Europa (Lithuania), Educacion e Ingenio s.s. (Spain), and European Youth Center Břeclav z.s. (the Czech Republic), we have witnessed the transformative potential of non-formal education in shaping the minds and hearts of young Europeans.

Moreover, our exploration of intercultural dialogue has underscored the importance of embracing diversity as a cornerstone of European identity. By fostering meaningful exchanges and interactions across cultural boundaries, we lay the groundwork for a more inclusive and harmonious society, where mutual respect and understanding reign supreme.

As we conclude this guide, let us not forget the profound impact each individual can have in shaping the future of Europe. Every voice, every action, no matter how small, contributes to the collective tapestry of European citizenship. Let us heed the call to action embedded within these pages and strive to be active participants in the democratic process, advocates for social justice, and ambassadors of solidarity. Let us express the deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the creation of this guide, from the authors and organizers to the funders and supporters. May this guide serve as a beacon of knowledge and inspiration for generations of young Europeans to come, guiding them on their journey toward a brighter, more inclusive future for Europe and beyond. Together, let us continue to strive for a world where the principles of democracy, equality, and human rights are upheld and cherished by all.

In the words of Margaret Mead, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” As we bid farewell to this guide, let us carry forth this spirit of optimism and determination, knowing that indeed, we can make a difference.

“Watch & Learn”

Is Peace on Earth Possible? | The Story of Us

[National Geographic, 2:30](#)

Time Story. A Motivational Story.

[Alpha Life, 3:31](#)

Other Side of Storms in Life | A Life Lesson Story to teach you importance of obstacles

[Wise Vibes, 4:24](#)

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