

# **Final Study Summary and Policy Recommendations**

Participatory Citizenship in the European Union  
Institute of Education

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Bryony Hoskins and David Kerr

Report 4

European Commission, Europe for Citizens Programme

Submitted 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**Commissioned by the European Commission, Europe for Citizens Programme, Brussels.**

Tender No. EACEA/2010/02

### **Contact information**

Name: Bryony Hoskins

Address: Southampton Education School, University of Southampton, UK

Email: [B.Hoskins@soton.ac.uk](mailto:B.Hoskins@soton.ac.uk)

Name: David Kerr

Address: Citizenship Foundation, London, UK

Email: [David.Kerr@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk](mailto:David.Kerr@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk)

### **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this study, in particular those who collected data from European countries. A complete list of contributors is at the back of this report.

All the reports for this study are available on the Europe for Citizens website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

Electronic copies may be obtained from Dr Bryony Hoskins (B.Hoskins@soton.ac.uk), to whom any queries relating to the copyright of this series should be addressed.

Final Study Summary and Policy recommendations: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union.

ISBN 9780854329403

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## Key Recommendations

The findings from the Participatory Citizenship in the European Union study suggest a number of key recommendations concerning policies, practices and effective approaches towards overcoming barriers to Participatory Citizenship in Europe. These key recommendations are summarised below and are explained in more detail in this report. The recommendations are as follows:

- R.1** Provide clarity and balance **in the underpinning** concept of citizenship. Citizenship should not only be understood as legal concept but one with a **core participatory element**; both aspects need to be present and balanced in order to safeguard democratic rights. Using the terminology ***Participatory Citizenship*** helps to emphasise this.
  
- R.2** **Establish a clear policy definition for Participatory Citizenship that is accepted across European countries.** We propose that Participatory Citizenship should be defined as: **'Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy'**.
  
- R.3** **Recognise the importance of the values base that underpins Participatory Citizenship that will help support democracy and human rights.** The promotion of the values of democracy and human rights that underpin Participatory Citizenship should be at the heart of all programmes, strategies and activities.
  
- R.4** **Promote the fact that Participatory Citizenship is primarily a learnt activity and ensure adequate support is given to the learning process in all learning contexts.** Participatory Citizenship is primarily a learnt activity and learning should be at the core of strategies designed to facilitate Participatory Citizenship. It is also important that there is adequate support to ensure the quality and consistency of the learning experiences that underpin Participatory Citizenship.
  
- R.5** Focus on learning in order to enhance individuals' quality of engagement. **It is important to fund and to monitor the effectiveness of specific citizenship programmes (both in schools and in communities) that enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for Participatory Citizenship.**
  
- R.6** **Target strategies at those groups and individuals who engage the least and who are most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion.** There needs to be a targeting of strategies on assisting hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups, including young people, who are most at risk from unemployment and exclusion, especially in the context of the current economic crisis. It is crucial for a healthy democracy that all groups engage and it may well improve social cohesion in times of economic difficulties if disadvantaged groups are involved in political decisions and economic governance issues that affect their lives.

- R.7 Support the use of 'situated learning' approaches that enable young people and adults to engage with and learn how to participate in decision-making in contexts that matter most to them.** Projects should be funded that use this approach to enable young people and adults to *engage with* and *learn* how to participate in decision making, including in economic governance issues and in contexts that are part of their daily lives and experiences, particularly at local and community level.
- R.8 Provide more long-term strategic and sustainable funding for projects, NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and programmes on Participatory Citizenship.** In the context of the financial crisis, Participatory Citizenship projects are being cut and NGOs are focused on how to survive. In this context the EC should provide more long-term support to ensure sustainability of Participatory Citizenship initiatives.
- R.9 Provide funding for projects that form collaborations between different types of partners that have different expertise and resources.** These partnerships enable the sharing of expertise, resources and responsibilities and can provide citizens with the opportunities for real and significant participation in their local communities. The partnerships between diverse partners can also provide the spark for social innovation.
- R.10 Explore the use of new technology and e-participation more widely in participatory projects.** New technologies and e-participation can enable wider participation in decision making and hold politicians and political institutions to account if utilised effectively. **However, for such projects to be effective, citizens have to have the civic competences and in particular the confidence to contribute and access to the internet or technology.**
- R.11 Adopt a flexible, long-term strategic approach to Participatory Citizenship through to 2020 that is detailed, balanced and targeted.** The approach must be sufficiently flexible and long-term to encourage and promote collaborative working between the EU, member states and EU citizens to address current and future challenges through to 2020. It should be supported by more detailed short- and medium-term actions and activities over the next two to five years. It must be balanced in promoting both political participation in civic society as well as voluntary and community action in civil society. It must be targeted, in particular, at recognising and responding to the impact of the economic crisis and needs at national and local level in member states.
- R.12 Raise the profile of the policy unit in the Secretary General of the European Commission that coordinates strategic policies on Participatory Citizenship.**
- R.13 Ensure a long-term strategic approach to Participatory Citizenship through to 2020 that promotes the links between Participatory Citizenship, social cohesion and economic competitiveness as a necessary foundation for building a strong and cohesive Europe.** The strategic approach should recognise that EU countries that are economically competitive are those that are also highly participatory with high levels of social cohesion. It should reinforce and strengthen the values that underpin

participatory citizenship at all levels and seek to build trust in politicians and political institutions, particularly those at a European level, among EU citizens.

- R.14 Use a bottom-up approach for the 2013 European Year of Citizens where citizens are involved in constructing and developing the programme and activities and the European Commission uses the Year as an opportunity to listen to citizens and focus on participatory forms of citizenship.** It is important that the EY2013 responds to the needs and interests of citizens as its starting point and includes the underlying values and "Rights" that inform Participatory Citizenship.
- R.15 Explain clearly to citizens why it is important that they vote in the 2014 European Elections,** not only to defend their individual legal rights and influence the direction of policy but to show their support for the common values of democracy, human rights, social cohesion and tolerance that underpin European citizenship and ensure the continued legitimacy of the EU and its institutions.
- R.16 Build flexibility** into the new phase of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014–2020 to respond to changing contexts. In the current context, **more emphasis should be placed on the actions of civic participation over remembrance and identity and focus on sustainable longer-term funding for those involved in programme actions and projects.**
- R.17 Support a long-term strategic vision and approach to Participatory Citizenship through to 2020 and beyond** in order to address **major issues** that face Europe in the **next decade**. This vision and approach should be grounded in the **active involvement and participation of EU citizens** in addressing these issues in order to safeguard the future of democracy in Europe, going forward.

## Introduction

The Participatory Citizenship in the European Union study has mapped the theory, policy, practices and levels of engagement across Europe into three reports; the Contextual Report<sup>1</sup>, the Analytic Report<sup>2</sup> and the Good Practice Report.<sup>3</sup> Data was collected from the 27 EU member states by experts in the project consortium, working in collaboration with experts in the countries in the completion of a detailed country fiche and description of good practices. This was complimented with the analysis of European and international datasets and the most up to date literature in the field. This combined evidence base, of qualitative and quantitative empirical and theoretical findings, provides the foundations from which the study summary and policy recommendations are drawn for this report. The policy recommendations are oriented towards the Europe 2020 strategy for ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ overall and, more specifically, to those policies and actions that relate directly to citizenship:

- 2013 European Year of Citizens
- 2014 European Parliament elections, and
- 2014–2020 New Europe for Citizens’ programme.

The immediate policy context for this study has been the **global economic and financial crisis**. This has been allied with a change in the political philosophy of governments across Europe in the past few years. This has seen more governments favouring support for community activity, as opposed to conventional political participation, with a smaller perceived role for government in society overall. The combined consequence of the economic crisis and the smaller perceived role of the state have meant that the field of Participatory Citizenship has fallen from prominence as a policy priority at national and local level and, as a consequence, there has been much less funding for the whole domain including through national, local and private sector contributions. The strains of the cuts in funding have been noted within civil society across Europe and at the European level. NGOs (non-governmental organizations), in particular, stress the difficulty in becoming more engaged and strategic at the European level when they are predominantly focused on finding funding just to keep their organisations afloat. Policies that have previously been put in place to support citizen participation in policy decision making have likewise been challenged in terms of their value and sustainability due to falling levels of financial support. The financial crises has also influenced citizens faith in current political leaders with levels of trust in European and national institutions dramatically decreasing in particular in those countries most effected by the economic crises. **In the context of the economic crisis, this report provides policy recommendations for developing a strategy towards effectively**

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<sup>1</sup> Hoskins, B. et al. (2012) *Contextual Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union*, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University, ISBN 9780854329373  
[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Hoskins, B. et al. (2012) *Analytic Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union*, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University. ISBN 9780854329380  
[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Krek, J. et al. (2012) *Good Practice Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union*, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University. ISBN 9780854329397  
[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

## **maintaining and enhancing democracy and social cohesion through Participatory Citizenship.**

The evidence from this study points towards the possible dangers of focusing on economic policies alone and in isolation. In fact what we have found is that strategies for growth need not compete with policies on democracy and social cohesion: rather, it is the case that **Participatory Citizenship, economic competitiveness and social cohesion** are **interrelated** and mutually reinforcing. Thus countries with characteristics of being highly competitive tend also to have high levels of participation and social cohesion. The Nordic countries are a case in point. Speculating from this evidence, we would suggest that focusing only on the short-term economic imperative may both miss and serve to weaken the broader and long-term perspective. Strategies that include innovative participatory and social cohesive elements that move beyond job-related skills could prove a useful balance in general, and more particularly for young people and marginalized groups, especially in periods of high youth unemployment that adversely affect these groups in society. They could mitigate against the danger of some in marginalised groups being attracted to anti-democratic movements and violent and illegal action as a way of expressing their inability to have their voices heard through peaceful and legal forms of participation.

This Study Summary and Policy Recommendations report is divided into four interrelated sections. In the first we provide a final summary of the study including the aims, methods and main findings from its other three reports (Contextual, Analytic and Good Practice), then we move on to the policy recommendations. These are divided into three parts, the first of which concerns the concept and definition of citizenship based on the findings from the Contextual Report. This is followed by recommendations for effective strategies for enhancing Participatory Citizenship, focusing on findings from the Analytic and the Good Practice reports. Finally, combining all the evidence, we propose the development of a European Commission (EC) led strategy for enhancing and sustaining measures to support democracy and promote cohesion through Participatory Citizenship. This strategy has short-, medium- and long-term objectives from 2012 to 2020. It is designed to address the current context of the continued global economic and financial crisis and also the years beyond.

# 1. Study Summary: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union

## Aims

The Participatory Citizenship in the European Union study was completed in 11 months from June 2011–March 2012 and was funded by the European Commission, Europe for Citizens' programme. The **aims of the study were to map the concepts, policies, practices and level of Participatory Citizenship** across the Europe and **to identify barriers and facilitators to encourage more citizen engagement** in Europe. The findings of this study were to inform European policy and funding programmes, in particular the:

- 2013 European Year of Citizens
- 2014–2020 Europe for Citizens Programme, and
- 2014 European Parliament elections and voter turnout.

The European Commission outlined a **set of questions that this study should address**:

- What is the relationship between local, national, regional and European forms of Participatory Citizenship?
- What are the most effective drivers and approaches to fostering participatory forms of citizenship at the different levels?
- How is it possible to overcome the barriers towards Participatory Citizenship at various levels, taking into account the quantity and diversity of European citizens?
- How does Participatory Citizenship contribute to achieving the EU 2020 goals in the social and economic sphere?
- What is the nature of relationship between individual and collective action?
- What is the nature of the relationship between Participatory Citizenship and education, lifelong learning and intercultural competence?
- What is the relationship between EU citizenship rights and Participatory Citizenship?

## Methods

The analysis for this report is based on two types of data:

- **qualitative data** that we have collected on current policies and practice from each of the 27 member states in the form of country fiches and through interviews with key experts and cross-European networks
- **quantitative data** from existing European and international studies, including the recent IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) and European Social Survey (ESS). For this report we have conducted fresh analysis on this quantitative data.

## Outputs

The findings from the research have been published in four reports (including this one):

- **Contextual Report<sup>4</sup>** – defines the concept of Participatory Citizenship
- **Analytic Report<sup>5</sup>** – maps out the current state of play on policy and engagement in Europe
- **Good Practice Report<sup>6</sup>** – identifies key features of effective practice
- **Study Summary and Policy Recommendation Report** – identifies an EC policy strategy on Participatory Citizenship.

All the reports are available on the Europe for Citizens website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

The key findings of these reports are summarized below.

### Defining citizenship: findings from the Contextual Report

Citizenship as a merely legal concept has been considered too narrow for modern democratic society for a number of reasons:

- **Having legal rights is insufficient to enable equal possibilities for all citizens to activate their rights.** Participatory Citizenship requires the **capability to exercise rights**. Capability includes having the knowledge, resources, connections, interest and power to activate rights.
- Gaining and maintaining rights requires **constant action and vigilance from citizens**, and a legal definition does not encompass these processes.
- The legal definition emphasizes rights and places **less emphasis on obligation**. Obligations of the state upon the citizen are not always legally framed, but occur as citizens' perception of norms. These participatory norms, for example voting, are crucial for the health of democracy.
- The legal definition focuses on the relationship between the state and the individual and ignores the relationship between citizens and the associations they form, as well as the importance of associative life in the balance of democracy. In this regard, **citizens need to participate in civic and political life in order to ensure the accountability of the state, and the legitimization of democracy.**

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<sup>4</sup> Hoskins, B. et al. (2012) *Contextual Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union*. Southampton: Southampton University, Institute of Education report for EU. ISBN 9780854329373 [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> Hoskins, B. et al. (2012) *Analytic Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union*. Southampton: Southampton University, Institute of Education report for EU. ISBN 9780854329380 [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Krek, J. et al. (2012) *Good Practice Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union*. Southampton: Southampton University, Institute of Education report for EU. ISBN 9780854329397 [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

**The concept of Participatory Citizenship was introduced to emphasize action and the agency of citizens as actors in relation to policy and the state.** The key to the long-term sustainability of democracy is **Participatory Citizenship**. The literature on both theory and empirical research has highlighted the fact that legal rights and institutions alone are rarely sufficient for a democracy to flourish and that the quality of democratic governance relies on the civic virtues and engagement of their citizens (Putnam 2000, 1993; Almond and Verba 1963; De Tocqueville 1863). **Vibrant democracies require active citizens** – both inside and outside the political system – to monitor the process and to be willing and able to act to create or resist change (Crick 2003). Recent research has shown that there has been a steady decline in citizens' engagement in formal political engagement and trust, which can be seen in the decreasing levels of participation in European elections and the resultant perception of a gulf between citizens and the European policy-making process.

The conceptualization of Participatory Citizenship in Europe has taken place in the context of four competing models of citizenship: the **liberal model**; the **communitarian model**, the **civic republican model**, and the **critical model**. These models of citizenship are now considered, in turn.

### ***The liberal model of citizenship***

The liberal model of citizenship is typically considered the least demanding. This means that **citizens' involvement in public life is minimal and primarily enacted through the vote** (Carpini and Keeter 1989). Citizenship within the liberal model emphasizes the right of individuals to participate politically or not, as the case may be, but it posits that, if the state is kept to a minimum, civil society will flourish. However, liberal ideals from the notion of the atomised individuals have been re-interpreted in recent years towards actively facilitating community-based civil society through volunteering. To some extent this has blended the liberal model with the communitarian model of citizenship.

### ***The communitarian model of citizenship***

The communitarian model **takes communities as its starting point**. Citizenship in this context **focuses on the identity and feelings of belonging to a group, and the need to work towards the collective benefit** of this group (Jochum 2010). Communitarian ideas have influenced both Christian theology and moral philosophy, and have led to an emphasis of the responsibility and duties of individuals to others in their community as well as the need to support structures that undergird and maintain communities and shared values (Etzioni 1993).

### ***The civic republican model of citizenship***

The Civic Republican model **places higher demands on the citizen in terms of the maintenance of the democratic processes and institutions**. From this perspective, citizens become the actors of positive laws for social change, and the instruments to prevent corruption (Lovett 2010). Based on Greek and Roman philosophical thought, civic republicanism has emphasized the need for citizens to act politically within the public sphere, and to be actively engaged within a political community as equal and free citizens. Thus the notion of civic responsibility developed from this view. The civic republican approach also **highlights the need for citizens to learn civic competences**, including the values of 'public spiritedness, solidarity, and the responsibility to act for the common good' (Honohan 2002, p. 147).

### ***The critical model of citizenship***

Critical citizenship has been a 'catch all' title for various new theories that try to frame Citizenship in different terms (Abowitz and Harnish 2006), for example, by **focusing on critiquing and improving society through social and political action** (Johnson and Morris 2010). These models focus on a more dynamic view on democracy that is grounded in critical and engaged citizens. Protest actions that promote social justice and accountability of both government and international corporations are promoted through this model.

### **Defining Participatory Citizenship**

The above four models of citizenship have influenced norms of engagement in Europe and have been taken into account when defining Participatory Citizenship. The definition that we propose for this study is:

**Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy.<sup>7</sup>**

The definition combines the different practices of citizenship models, blending the liberal and communitarian traditions of volunteering and community engagement, the civic republican traditions of political engagement, and the critical citizenship emphasis on demanding social justice through protest. The definition is equally inclusive with respect to new forms of civic and political participation such as one-off issue politics and responsible consumption, as well as the more traditional forms of membership in political parties and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The limitations provided by this definition of Participatory Citizenship are set by ethical boundaries: activities in which citizens participate should be based on the fundamental principles of human rights and democracy. Although Participatory Citizenship is specified and measured at the individual level in terms of action and values, the emphasis is on how these activities contribute to wider society in terms of ensuring the creation or continuation of democracy and good governance and, as a concept, is not only concerned with the specific benefits for the individual but for the common good.

### ***Political philosophy of recently elected governments***

The findings from our research show that all four models of citizenship (liberal, civic republican, communitarian and critical citizenship) are currently present in policy approaches to Participatory Citizenship in Europe to differing degrees. The traditional **civic republican model** remains historically strong in many of the older democracies in particular countries that have been influenced by the French model of citizenship. The **critical model of citizenship** has to some extent been promoted in the newer democracies in the transition to democracy. **The liberal model** of citizenship historically associated with UK and Ireland has also been found in Denmark and the Netherlands and UK (England) with policy programmes on volunteering community-based participation.

**However, there appear to be signs of a waning of policy support for the civic republican and critical models, with more of a shift to communitarian and liberal models**, as recently elected governments in many countries in Europe have had more liberal

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<sup>7</sup> This definition reflects the definition used by CRELL for the concept of Active Citizenship (Hoskins 2006).

political philosophies. The **challenge** will be how robust any of these citizenship models remain in the face of the growing economic crisis, where the cuts and fall-out are having most impact in local communities and civil society and on the people and organizations who work there. It will be interesting to see the **potential** for new policies and forms of Participatory Citizenship grow from the approaches that countries take to resolving the economic crisis.

### **The policy context and effective practices: Findings from the analytic and good practice reports**

The main factors that typically influence Participatory Citizenship norms of engagement are:

- history and length of time as a democracy
- cultural and ethnic mix
- political system and organization of government
- current government and its political philosophy
- length of time a government has been in power, and
- a country's wealth.

The findings from this study confirm that **there is still a gap for adults' rates of engagement between wealthier countries with long histories of democracy and the newer democracies**, and that this gap has not narrowed over the last 10 years. For the younger generations the newer democracies from former Communist countries in Europe have increased their levels of enthusiasm for engagement in the last decade. However, we are cautious to suggest that this will actually change engagement levels, as wealth and opportunities play a key factor in turning civic intentions into actual engagement.

The single most influential context factor that is informing current policies for Participatory Citizenship across Europe is the **global economic and financial crisis**.

#### ***The global economic and financial crisis***

Across many European countries the **economic crisis** has led to an increasing focus on internal national and local political concerns rather than broader European perspectives. The subsequent policy focus has turned almost entirely on **economic competitiveness**, with policies on education emphasising science and technology above social and political learning. Policies regarding Participatory Citizenship have yet to be placed at the forefront of policy solutions to the economic crisis and those policies that have emerged are situated in terms of the economic benefits, for example, the benefits of volunteering on skills for the labour market.

One of the main consequences of the economic crisis on the field of Participatory Citizenship has been the considerable **reduction in funding** across all levels and dimensions including national, local and private sector contributions. There remains funding for some citizenship integration projects, such as the courses for migrants on the learning of languages and job related skills, but much less funding remains for Participatory Citizenship projects in the broader sense of the term that we have used for this study that include: political civil society, traditional politics, democratic values and other forms of community projects. The strains of the cuts in funding have been noted in civil society across Europe and at the European level,

with **European-wide NGOs stressing the difficulties for national and local NGOs in becoming engaged at European level when they are focused on finding funding merely to keep their organizations afloat.** The effects have also been felt at all levels, challenging policies that have previously supported the participation and engagement in decision making of citizens in policies that influence their lives. Although European-wide, the analyses of the country fiches has indicated that the cuts on civil society activities have been felt the most in the newer democracies with fledgling civil societies (e.g. central and Eastern Europe).

Whilst **levels of engagement** amongst youth and adults have yet to be consistently influenced by the economic crisis (keeping in mind the caveat that the collection of quantitative data provides a picture of the state of play between 2008–2010, not 2012) we can already see a **loss of faith in politicians and political institutions** across EU member states. There has been a dramatic reduction in attitudes of trust in national and European Institutions, in particular in Spain, Ireland and Greece. The research shows that citizens across European countries are continuing to believe in the democratic process but consider that the current political leaders and political institutions, particularly at European and national level, are not engaging with and working for them as ordinary citizens. In the medium-and long-term we could expect that reductions in trust may well eventually lead to lower levels of engagement and disaffection with the political system at all levels. It will be interesting to monitor the turnout levels across EU countries in the 2014 European elections.

In the context of a growth strategy (such as EU 2020) to alleviate the economic crisis, the analysis conducted for this study has shown that **Participatory Citizenship, economic competitiveness and social cohesion** are **interrelated** and mutually reinforcing. Thus, countries with characteristics of being highly competitive tend also be highly participatory with high levels of social cohesion, for example, the Nordic countries (see Chapter 2 of the Analytic Report). Speculating from this evidence we would suggest that focusing only on the short-term economic imperative may miss the broader and long-term perspective. **Strategies that include innovative participatory and social cohesive elements that move beyond job related skills could prove a useful balance, particularly for disadvantaged groups and young people, especially in periods of high unemployment.**

### **Effective strategies for learning citizenship**

In the context of tight budgets and under societal stress of austerity, it is more than ever necessary to highlight and identify **effective strategies** for enhancing Participatory Citizenship in Europe. From the analysis conducted for this study, the evidence points towards the likelihood that the **main driver** for the enhancement of participatory forms of citizenship is **learning**. The results give general hints about the relationship between learning and citizenship and evidence for particular strategies that work. The evidence points towards learning broadly as a characteristic of the participatory citizen. An engaged citizen has higher levels of educational attainment, greater number of expected years of education, higher performance on a civic knowledge and skills test, higher rates of participation in lifelong learning, more informal learning through watching politics on the television and discussing political and social issues with parents and friends.

For adults, **education and lifelong learning** has a positive relationship with all forms of participation. Time spent on the internet also has a positive association with engagement of

adults, suggesting alternative forms of access to knowledge are becoming increasingly important. There has been a growing policy emphasis on **e-participation** across Europe with most of the dimensions of Participatory Citizenship. This includes not only programmes that keep citizens informed, but programmes to increase openness of government and gain citizens' perspectives in the policy process.

In addition to learning, the evidence suggests that **wealth** is also a factor that relates to all forms of adult participation, however, it does not have the same relationships with all forms of expected youth participation. This suggests that there are opportunities for preventing exclusion from engagement from the age group of 14 upwards. The place where most 14 years olds can be found is **school**. One way to support disadvantaged youth to engage more is through carefully constructed **citizenship programmes** in the school environment that focus on getting the most disadvantaged students involved.

### **Successful learning methods**

For young people the evidence (both from existing literature and from the analysis completed for this study) consistently points towards the fact that **situated forms of learning** of citizenship tend to be the most effective in facilitating all dimensions of participatory forms of citizenship. **Situated learning** means that it takes place in an environment relevant to the content. In a school this means that learning citizenship is effective when situated in a real life civic context, such as influencing decisions that have real consequences and influence on the lives of students and the how the school is run, making connections with decision making in their local communities and involvement in simulations of real events such as mock elections. In addition, an open and safe environment for discussion across all school subjects has, over the years, consistently been shown to be a crucial factor. A key characteristic of young people who have aspirations to engage was their levels of **efficacy**, both **political** – that it is worth engaging in politics and political processes in collaboration with others – and **personal** – that through their actions and engagement they believe that they can make a difference. It is rather likely that if young people experience **fruitful and meaningful civic opportunities** to engage in school and in their local communities in particular, where they can see that their actions can and have made a difference, they are likely to enhance their citizenship aspirations as they move into adulthood.

### **Key factors that enable and support the learning of Participatory Citizenship**

#### ***Collaboration***

Horizontal and vertical partnerships between different organizations (e.g., school, youth groups, universities, government, companies, trade unions and the media). This **enabled the pooling of resources, the sharing of expertise and provided a source of innovation.**

#### ***Structures which are well-organized and sustainable***

This is particularly important for engaging people in local and political decision making processes. People need to be provided with the space and support for participation, however it is important that a **balance** is struck **between structure and innovation**: structures need to be provided for participation but it is fundamental that there is still room for citizen innovation and self-directed participation within these structures.

### **Funding**

The sustainability of citizens engagement is in doubt in the current economic crises where funding has become limited and inconsistent. Non-Governmental Organizations and programs and initiatives that support Participatory Citizenship are more sustainable if there continues to be the possibilities for grants and that this funding is for long term rather than short term projects.

### **The internet and technology**

The internet can be used to **facilitate dialogue between government and citizens and hard-to-reach groups and majority populations**. It also is an important means to provide information to citizens on politicians and political corruption in their local municipalities.

### **Strategies for facilitating citizenship**

In terms of strategies that encourage political engagement, the evidence points towards the fact that **volunteering can increase the likelihood of voting**. As expected the relationship is stronger if the volunteering is **politically orientated**. This provides some evidence that promoting volunteering per se can enhance political engagement, or at least develop a resource for political engagement should political mobilization be necessary in times of political upheaval. Further research is needed on the processes that are involved in the relationship between volunteering and voting and the underlying factors that can enhance this relationship.

The evidence suggests that there are links between **different levels of participation**, for example, if you vote on a local and national level you are more likely to vote on a European level. However, there are challenges in bringing the different dimensions of participation together. Most projects that achieve a European dimension are funded by the European Union. European level NGOs and some local and national NGOs appreciate the European dimension but find it hard to achieve in terms of national funding and national requirements. This means that there is a clear risk to the impact sustainability of such projects. In the current economic crisis with policy agendas turning inwards towards national and local needs it could be that that the connection between the national and the European level becomes somewhat more strained.

### **Going forward**

In the current context of the economic crisis there are more **new barriers and key challenges** to Participatory Citizenship appearing within and across European countries than drivers. In this situation **innovative ideas** are needed that enable **effective citizen led engagement projects** to be developed and sustained. To support this process there is a need for the **evaluation** of effective strategies through an updated evidence base (including both qualitative and quantitative research) such as this study provides. This evidence can be used to inform decision making at European, national and local level. In addition, there is a need for mechanisms that help to share this **evidence base**, for example, the Active Citizenship<sup>8</sup> and Civic Competence Indicators,<sup>9</sup> proposed ICCS 2016 follow up study, the

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<sup>8</sup> Hoskins, Bryony and Mascherini, Massimiliano (2009) Measuring active citizenship through the development of a composite indicator. *Social Indicators Research*, 90, (3), 459-488. (doi: 10.1007/s11205-008-9271-2).

new Eurydice study, national (e.g. CELS/CiT (Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study/Citizens in Transition studies) in UK (England))<sup>10</sup> and local studies and evaluations. This evidence base would be especially beneficial if it goes beyond the traditional tried and tested approaches and forms of engagement to cover new and innovative practice. In addition, it would be necessary to capture how attitudes and beliefs are changing among differing age groups within and across countries. The strategy for such an evidence base agenda echoes similar calls to those that have been made within the debates concerning social innovation in Europe.

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<sup>9</sup> Hoskins, Bryony, Barber, Carolyn, Van Nijlen, Daniel and Villalba, Ernesto (2011) Comparing civic competence among European youth: composite and domain-specific indicators using IEA civic education study data. *Comparative Education Review*, 55 (1), 82-110. (doi:10.1086/656620), and

Hoskins, Bryony, Villalba, Cynthia and Saisana, Michaela (2012) *The 2011 civic competence composite indicator (CCCI-2): measuring young people's civic competence across Europe based on the IEA international citizenship and civic education study*. Ispra, Italy, European Commission, 100pp. (doi: 10.2788/67938).

<sup>10</sup> The CELS/CiT Study, conducted by NFER has tracked the first cohort of young people to have statutory citizenship education in schools in England from age 11 through to age 20/21. Further details about the Study and its reports can be accessed at: <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/cels-cit/>

# Section 2. Policy Recommendations for Participatory Citizenship

The policy recommendations are oriented towards the Europe 2020 strategy for ‘smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ overall and, more specifically, to those policies and actions that relate directly to citizenship:

- 2013 European Year of Citizens
- 2014 European Parliament elections, and
- 2014–2020 Europe for Citizens’ programme.

The policy recommendations are divided into 3 Sections: Concepts and definition of Participatory Citizenship, Effective strategies for facilitating Participatory Citizenship and an EU strategy for Participatory Citizenship in the economic crisis and beyond.

## 1. Recommendations on the concept and definition of Participatory Citizenship

**R.1** Provide clarity and balance **in the underpinning** concept of citizenship. Citizenship should not only be understood as a legal concept but one with a **core participatory element** and both aspects need to be present and balanced in order to safeguard democratic rights and society. Using the terminology ***Participatory Citizenship*** helps to emphasise this.

The legal dimension of citizenship alone has not been considered sufficient for maintaining democracy for a number of reasons. The two most prominent reasons are;

- **Having legal rights is insufficient to enable equal possibilities for all citizens to activate their rights.** Participatory Citizenship requires the **capability to exercise rights**. Capability includes having the knowledge, resources, connections, interest and power to activate rights.
- The legal definition of citizenship focuses on the relationship between the state and the individual, and ignores the relationship between citizens and the associations they form, as well as the importance of this form of associative life in the balance of democracy. In this regard, **citizens need to participate in civil society and political life in order to ensure the accountability of the state, and the legitimisation of democracy.**

In order to emphasise that citizens have an active role in enhancing and maintaining democracy and human rights, we have recommended that the word ‘citizenship’ is accompanied by a word that denotes action such as ‘participatory’, **thus we recommend the use of the terminology Participatory Citizenship.**

**R.2 Establish a clear policy definition for Participatory Citizenship that is accepted across European countries.** We propose that Participatory Citizenship should be defined as: '**Participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy**'.

Based on citizenship theory, we defined Participatory Citizenship as broad enough to include the different forms of participation from the diverse traditions of engagement across Europe. Thus it blended the civic republican traditions of political participation; the liberal communitarian citizenship traditions of community volunteering; and a critical citizenship's emphasis on protest and desire for social justice.

However, the definition does not include all forms of participation. The boundaries of Participatory Citizenship are the values which underpin the activities. Activities that are underpinned by the values of democracy, human rights and tolerance are considered to form actions that are defined as participatory democracy.

**R.3 Recognise the importance of the values base that underpins Participatory Citizenship that will help support democracy and human rights.** The promotion of the values of democracy and human rights that underpin Participatory Citizenship should be at the heart of all programmes, strategies and activities.

## 2. Policy Recommendations concerning effective strategies for facilitating Participatory Citizenship

In the context of the development of new EU funding programmes such as the 2014–2020 Europe for Citizens Programme, the 2013 European Year of Citizens and the wider education programme ‘Erasmus for all’ 2014–2020, there will be funding for Participatory Citizenship projects. In light of this, in this section we will highlight some effective strategies for Participatory Citizenship projects that can help to facilitate higher levels of engagement and reduce barriers for disadvantaged groups.

**R.4 Promote the fact that Participatory Citizenship is primarily a learnt activity and ensure adequate support is given to the learning process in all learning contexts.** Participatory Citizenship is primarily a learnt activity and learning should be at the core of strategies designed to facilitate Participatory Citizenship. It is also important that there is adequate support to ensure the quality and consistency of the learning experiences that underpin Participatory Citizenship.

Learning, at whatever stage of life, was found to be at the heart of the most effective strategies towards enhancing Participatory Citizenship. The study’s findings show that all forms of learning (in and outside formal education) were highlighted as the characteristics of the participatory citizen and this was strongest for voting.

**R.5 Focus on learning in order to enhance the individuals’ quality of engagement. It is important to fund and to monitor the effectiveness of specific citizenship programmes (both in schools and in communities) that enhance the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed for Participatory Citizenship.**

However, not everyone engages in the same amount of learning or achieves the same quality of learning outcomes. Inequalities in education and wealth are two explanatory factors that can explain why there are differences in levels of Participatory Citizenship between different groups of citizens. Inequalities in Participatory Citizenship are a concern as democracy is based on all voices being equally heard. At a young age (13–14), youth aspirations for engagement appear to be less effected by wealth and education than for adults.

**R.6 Target strategies at those groups and individuals who engage the least and who are most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion.** There needs to be a targeting of strategies on assisting hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups, including young people, who are most at risk from unemployment and exclusion, especially in the context of the current economic crisis. It is crucial for a healthy democracy that all groups engage and it may well improve social cohesion in times of economic difficulties if disadvantaged groups are involved in political decisions and economic governance issues that affect their lives.

Three approaches to achieving this are:

**Schools** – the place where most 14 year olds can be found is school. One way to support youth to engage is through **carefully constructed citizenship programmes in the school** environment that focus on getting particularly the most disadvantaged involved.

**Vocational education and training** – many disadvantaged youngsters are directed into vocational education. Programmes that support learning citizenship in the vocational setting are also a useful strategy to target disadvantaged youth, for example, the *UK Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme*.

**Youth work** – other successful strategies have been undertaken through youth work, in particular work that directly targets specific groups of disadvantaged youth. An example from this study of how disadvantaged youth can be assisted to engage politically was from the Danish Municipality of Aarhus example called '*Our country, our election*'. This example showed how in multicultural areas it was possible to initiate political engagement among migrant youth through collaboration between the town council, youth groups and local workers groups.

***Situated learning: a successful method for learning Participatory Citizenship***

If learning is to be at the heart of funded EU projects on Participatory Citizenship it is necessary to identify learning strategies that are most effective.

**R.7 Support the use of 'situated learning' approaches that enable young people and adults to engage with and learn how to participate in decision making in contexts that matter most to them.** Projects should be funded that use this approach to enable young people and adults to *engage with* and *learn* how to participate in decision making including in economic governance issues, and in contexts that are part of their daily lives and experiences, particularly at local and community level.

In order to ensure the worthwhile use of tight resources, funding should be focused on methods that have been demonstrated to be effective. For young people the evidence (both from existing literature and from the analysis completed for this study) consistently points towards the fact that situated forms of learning of citizenship tend to be the most effective for facilitating the learning of the qualities needed for Participatory Citizenship. **Situated learning** means that the **learning takes place in a relevant environment to the content**. In a school this means that learning citizenship is effective when situated in a **real life civic context**, for example, students **influence decisions that have real and tangible consequences which influence their lives**; they have a say in school governance (how the school is run and **how budgets are spent**); they also **participate in local community decision making, including governance issues**. Other effective and situated strategies are **involvement in simulations of real events** such as mock UN debates or mock elections. In addition, an **open and safe environment for discussion** across all school subjects has consistently, over the years, been shown to be a crucial factor. A **key characteristic** of young people who have aspirations to engage was their **belief in their**

**own ability** at politics and their **belief that their participation could make a difference**, what is commonly referred to as '**efficacy**'. Fruitful civic participation, where young people can see that their actions have made a difference, is likely to enhance citizenship aspirations and increase that sense of personal and political efficacy and trust for young people, particularly where young people feel part of the decision-making process and the politicians are actively engaging with them and involving them.

The Good Practice report gave a variety of examples of situated learning projects for young people and adults. A case in point is '*A Penny for Democracy*' from Sweden. Projects such as this provide young people with the opportunity to participate democratically in economic governance in the allocation of specific parts of school budgets. The key characteristics of these projects were that the young people who were engaged were given responsibility at each stage. The young people were;

- 1) involved in developing proposals for funding
- 2) given the chance to debate the proposals
- 3) given responsibility for economic governance of decisions on funding and these decisions were taken in a democratic way
- 4) able to see the visible consequences of their decisions through the projects being funded and realized.

**Participatory budgeting and economic governance were not only considered good practices for young people but also for adults.** These projects were also seen to be an effective strategy for including citizens in decision making in local communities, including around economic and resource issues. The good practices from the Netherlands '*The Forges of Hoogeveen*' and Germany '*eOpinio GmbH – Professional public participation*' used a similar approach involving adult citizens in decision making in their local community.

## **Strategic and sustainable funding**

**R.8 Provide more long-term strategic and sustainable funding for projects, NGOs and programmes on Participatory Citizenship.** In the context of the financial crisis, Participatory Citizenship projects are being cut and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) are focused on how to survive. In this context the EC can provide more long-term support to ensure sustainability of Participatory Citizenship initiatives.

Strategic and sustainable funding is a key component of Participatory Citizenship activities. The evidence from country policies have shown that governments have reduced state funding to the very organisations and projects which facilitate Participatory Citizenship. However it is questionable the extent people can or will cohere and participate in their communities (either local, national or international) with limited and inconsistent financial support. Equally, the effectiveness of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) is also reduced when they have to spend most of their efforts on fund-raising.

## Collaboration and partnerships leading to innovation

**R.9 Provide funding for projects that form collaborations between different types of partners that have different expertise and resources.** These partnerships enable the sharing of expertise, resources and responsibilities and can provide young people with the opportunities for real and significant participation in their local communities. The partnerships between diverse partners can also provide the spark for social innovation.

We noted that one of the key characteristics of successful projects for enhancing Participatory Citizenship were collaboration, networks and partnerships between different types of organizations (schools, universities, local authorities, national government, youth groups, youth councils, youth centres, NGOs, trade unions, companies, charities, media organizations and cultural organizations) and at different levels (local, national and European).

One such successful project described in the good practice report was the Young Social Innovators (YSI), project from Ireland. This project combined the leadership from government departments with a diverse range of learning environments (schools and youth centres) and with support from charities and business to facilitate young people to create their own social innovation projects.

## Use of new technology

**R.10 Explore the use of new technology and e-participation more widely in participatory projects.** New technologies and e-participation can enable wider participation in decision making and hold politicians and political institutions to account if utilised effectively. **However, for such projects to be effective citizens have to have the civic competences and in particular the confidence to contribute and the access to the internet or technology.**

Our findings from the Good Practice Report have shown that new technologies and the internet can be powerful tools that enable interaction amongst citizens and between citizens and policymakers. They can be used to provide information for citizens and provoke discussion on the experiences and challenges of hard-to-reach groups. In addition, online quality and transparent local and national information on politicians and political groups enables citizens to make informed choices when it comes to participating politically; they are also a way to maintain and keep governments in check, including in decisions about policy, budgeting and spending. However, citizens have to have the civic competences and access necessary to be able to engage with the online material and the confidence to contribute.

### 3. Policy Recommendations for an EU strategy for Participatory Citizenship in the economic crisis and beyond

This final section of the report sets out policy recommendations for developing a European Union (EU) led strategy for Participatory Citizenship that has the central aim of **supporting democracy** and **promoting cohesion** during the continued **economic and financial crisis and beyond**. The recommendations for the EU strategy are based on dovetailing two linked developments. First, the analysis in this study of the 27 EU countries country fiches that were compiled by experts. This includes the analysis of the barriers and key challenges to Participatory Citizenship and the actions proposed for the European Union institutions (e.g. European Parliament, Council of Ministers, European Commission). The experts have highlighted a series of **short- (i.e. this current year, 2012), medium- (i.e. two to three years, 2013–2015) and long-term (i.e. five to ten years, 2016–2020)** barriers and key challenges to Participatory Citizenship and proposed solutions to overcoming those barriers and challenges, including key actions by the European Union institutions.

The major barriers and key challenges identified in the country fiches for Participatory Citizenship include:

#### Short-term (2012)

- lack of trust in politicians and political institutions
- decline of Participatory Citizenship as a policy priority at national and local level
- need for real dialogue between ordinary citizens and politicians at all levels;

#### Medium-term (2013–2015)

- sustainability of policies and practices, particularly in civil society and among NGOs
- need for improved civic participation and programmes in schools
- greater use of e-participation;

#### Long-term (2016–2020)

- meeting the challenges posed by the globalised economy, climate change, an ageing population and an enlarged EU.

The second development drawn on here is the current plans of the European Union with regard to a longer-term strategy for Europe through the **EU 2020** vision for an integrated approach that brings '**smart, sustainable and inclusive growth**' allied with more concrete short- and medium-term policies and initiatives from the European Commission and European Parliament to bolster Participatory Citizenship. The latter include three particular actions concerning Participatory Citizenship:

- 1) **2013 European Year of Citizens** – designed to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the European Union Citizenship under the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. The aim of the 2013 Year is to raise awareness on Union citizens' rights and to increase the sense among European citizens of belonging to a common European Union

- 2) **2014 European elections** – the next opportunity for EU citizens to vote on European issues and elect Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to the European Parliament
- 3) **2014–2020 the new phase of the EC Europe for Citizens programme** – which builds on the previous phase but has two specific strands: "European remembrance and European citizenship" - to raise awareness of remembrance, the Union's history, identity and aim by stimulating debate, reflection and networking; and "Democratic engagement and civic participation". – to encourage democratic and civic participation of citizens at Union level, by developing citizens' understanding of the Union policy making process and promoting opportunities for societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

Taken together, these two developments allow the matching of existing planning by EU institutions for Participatory Citizenship with the up-to-date reality of what is happening in terms of policies and practices in the 27 member states. They also enable the bringing together of a top-down European perspective with a broader bottom-up perspective within and across EU countries. This matching process highlights synergy between existing EU Institutions plans and those suggested by key experts in EU countries concerning Participatory Citizenship. However, it also pinpoints considerable gaps in existing plans and expectations because of the rapidly changing context for Participatory Citizenship. The on-going global economic and financial crisis is altering considerably the parameters within which Participatory Citizenship is being considered and framed, particularly at national and local level. It is demanding an urgent review and redrawing of current policies and actions for this area and the drawing up of new and innovative approaches at all levels, including the European that support democracy and promote cohesion in this changed context.

What follows are a series of policy recommendations for Participatory Citizenship that taken together provide an EU strategy for this area from now through to 2020. They begin with **general recommendations** for the role and positioning of the EU institutions in response to the current global economic and financial crisis. These are followed by more **specific recommendations** concerning short- and medium-term policies for **2013 European Year of Citizens, 2014 European elections** and the **next phase of the Europe for Citizens programme** and longer-term policies supporting the **EU 2020 strategy**.

## **The role of the European Union institutions**

It is clear from the data sources used in this project, both qualitative and quantitative, that the current global economic and financial crisis has shaken the **trust and confidence** of citizens, including young people, in politicians and political institutions. It has shaken the trust at national and local level as well as at European level. Though people continue to have a strong belief in the values that underpin participatory citizenship they lack trust in those politicians currently in power and in the political institutions in which they work. On top of this situation, with many countries looking inward at **short-term domestic policies** to help ride out the economic crisis, there is a two-fold danger. First, that the broader European dimension of Participatory Citizenship could become neglected and separated from local and national dimensions, leading to countries becoming isolated and insular in their policies, practices and approaches in this area. Second that the role of the European Union institutions in working in partnership with EU member states and ordinary citizens to help overcome the effects of the global economic crisis is not given due consideration and attention. Indeed, in those countries facing the severest cuts there is a danger that the

European Union is seen as part of the economic problem rather than the solution and viewed as an economic rather than a political institution who is not on the side of ordinary citizens.

There is a concern about the cumulative effects if this situation continues unchecked. It may be, that a growing lack of trust will further reduce **efficacy levels** among citizens – the sense that their participation in combination with others can make a difference – leading to declining participation rates in political and civil society including elections (a particular concern for the forthcoming 2014 European Election), and undermine and weaken the values of democracy, human rights, social cohesion and tolerance that underpin citizenship and democratic society in Europe. Also that **short-termism** may become the norm, as countries look to address the immediate effects of the economic crisis. This could see economic competitiveness continue to be promoted at the expense of other dimensions, such as Participatory Citizenship and social cohesion, and lead to piecemeal, short-term solutions replacing more strategic and sustained medium-and longer-term planning. Finally that the European dimension, and the positive role that the European Union institutions can play in helping to address the economic crisis across Europe, by working in partnership with EU countries in bringing citizens across the EU together, may not be fully recognized and utilised.

**In this context, we therefore recommend that the European Union (EU) institutions, in particular the European Commission (EC) develop a strategy on Participatory Citizenship.**

**R.11 Adopt a flexible, long-term strategic approach to Participatory Citizenship through to 2020 that is detailed, balanced and targeted.** The approach must be sufficiently **flexible and long-term** to encourage and promote collaborative working between the EU, member states and EU citizens to address current and future challenges through to 2020. It is supported by more **detailed** short- and medium-term actions and activities over the next two to five years. It is **balanced** in promoting both political participation in civic society as well as voluntary and community action in civil society. It must be **targeted**, in particular, at recognising and responding to the impact of the economic crisis and needs at national and local level in member states.

**R.12 Raise the profile of the policy unit in the Secretary General of the European Commission that coordinates strategic policies on Participatory Citizenship.**

In order to mitigate against the cumulative effects of the economic **crisis now and into the future** this proposed strategy is to include general policy recommendations for EU institutions and specific recommendations for short-, medium- and long-term planning concerning Participatory Citizenship.

**R.13 Ensure a long-term strategic approach to Participatory Citizenship through to 2020 that promotes the links between Participatory Citizenship, social cohesion and economic competitiveness as a necessary foundation for building a strong and cohesive Europe.**

The strategic approach should recognise that EU countries that are economically competitive are those that are also highly participatory with high levels of social cohesion. It should reinforce and strengthen the values that underpin participatory citizenship at all levels and seek to build trust in politicians and political institutions, particularly those at a European level, among EU citizens. The strategy should be transformational and designed to lay the foundations for a strong and cohesive Europe going forward. Above all, the strategy should seek to strengthen the legitimacy of the EU to take action to support democracy and promote social cohesion among member states and with citizens and help to build a more effective and participatory Europe.

The **longer-term strategy for Participatory Citizenship** requires the EU institutions to help to tackle the barriers and key challenges identified through this study by providing:

- ***stronger political leadership*** – provide stronger leadership by addressing head-on the impact of the current economic crisis in countries on participatory citizenship so as to ensure that the EU is seen as leading the solution going forward rather than being part of the problem. This entails the EU institutions showing that it understands and feels the pain and suffering being experienced in countries, while also showing leadership in encouraging member states to continue to support and promote policies and practices for Participatory Citizenship.
- ***increased co-ordination and facilitation*** – bring together countries with similar issues and challenges and support cross-European sharing of information and solutions. Also encourage a pan-European approach to Participatory Citizenship that involves working with other European institutions and European countries beyond the EU.
- ***continued strategic funding*** – the continued strategic funding of projects and programmes that: create spaces for more cross-European dialogue and activity particularly among NGOs and citizens at grassroots level; provide greater information and access for young people and hard to reach groups in countries; and, encourage the sharing of experiences and solutions through exchange programmes and the funding of more cross-Europe research, such as the proposed IEA 2016 ICCS study, in order to strengthen the evidence base on which to make policy decisions in this area.

## Policy recommendations for short/medium-term policies, programmes and actions

Policy recommendations relate to three specific programmes and actions that the European Commission (EC) and European Parliament has already begun planning. Two can be classified as short- to medium-term, namely the designation of **2013 as the European Year of Citizens** and the **2014 European Elections** and the other, the next phase of the **Europe for Citizens programme (2014–2020)** as a link between medium- and longer-term planning

### **2013 European Year of Citizens**

Reviewing suggestions in the country fiches concerning the 2013 Year with existing initial planning by the EC leads to a number of recommendations:

**R.14 Use a bottom-up approach for the 2013 European Year of Citizens where citizens are involved in constructing and developing the programme and activities and the European Commission uses the Year as an opportunity to listen to citizens and focus on participatory forms of citizenship.** It is important that the EY2013 responds to the needs and interests of citizens as its starting point and includes the underlying values and "Rights" that inform Participatory Citizenship.

Specific recommendations for the 2013 European Year include the need to:

- Capitalize on awareness of and support for the EY2013 in the 27 EU countries through a series of clear, strategic actions that not only raise the profile of the Year but also ensure concrete activities and a legacy of momentum towards 2014 and onwards.
- Use the EY2013 to boost the profile of Participatory Citizenship as a policy priority from European level to local level and to encourage and support member states to review their policies and actions in relation to this area.
- Develop a clear vision as to the aims and objectives of the EY2013, with a clear overall slogan, that is understandable by all and accessible to all. It should not be a top-down EC approach but a vision that resonates with citizens in countries as well as with politicians at all levels. The use of an interactive website to promote the EY2013 will be important. The lack of this vision and accessibility could seriously undermine the potential and overall impact of the Year and weaken the authority and reputation of the EC in this area.
- Ensure that there is sufficient strategic funding and financial support to turn the aims of the EY2013 into concrete activities that are both cross-European but also national and local.
- Develop an inclusive pan-European approach to the EY2013 that actively involves partnership working with civil society organizations and other European institutions as well as with politicians and political institutions. This will ensure that the EY2013 has more buy in and take up beyond Brussels and bring together top-down EC elements with bottom-up aspects within and across EU countries. It will also ensure a much stronger European platform for moving the area forward.
- Build in monitoring and evaluation of the EY2013 and its actions and activities so that there is a clear record of what has worked and what still needs to be achieved

which can be used to take forward policies and practices beyond 2013 within and across EU countries.

- Underline the links of Participatory Citizenship to social cohesion and economic competitiveness so that it is viewed as part of the solution to the economic crisis.
- Consider actions and activities as suggested by experts in EU countries, and by cross-European NGOs and organizations. These include a mixture of mainstream actions and activities, such as information campaigns, participation days, education and training handbooks and materials for young people and teachers, intercultural activity weeks, a handbook on the history of the EU and of democracy in Europe, and more innovative approaches that look to maximise the power of social networking and digital platforms to stimulate greater dialogue with and discussion among EU citizens, within and across countries, on issues of common interest.
- Build momentum from the EY2013 into the 2014 European Elections and beyond rather than view the EY2013 as an isolated, one-off event.

### ***Policy recommendations for the 2014 European Elections***

With declining levels of trust in politicians and political institutions at all levels in Europe on the back of the economic crisis, and a diminishing European dimension in policy terms there is a need to ensure that EU citizens have the necessary civic competences, understanding, encouragement and motivation to participate in elections to vote in members to the European Parliament.

**R.15 Explain clearly to citizens why it is important that they vote in the 2014 European Elections**, not only to defend their individual legal rights and influence the direction of policy but also to show their support for the common values of democracy, human rights, social cohesion and tolerance that underpin European citizenship and ensure the continued legitimacy of the EU and its institutions.

Specific policy recommendations include the need to:

- Ensure that awareness-raising about the 2014 European Elections is built into the 2013 European Year of Citizens so that there is momentum from 2013 into 2014.
- Develop a specific campaign that explains how the European Parliament works and what MEPs do, underlines the importance of voting and reinforces the link between the EU and citizens.
- Provide education and training materials for all citizens, including young people in schools who are future voters, to build greater understanding about and awareness of European elections. Look to innovative programmes such as mock elections, links between national parliaments and the European, 'take your parents to vote' schemes within and across countries.
- Promote particular initiatives that are aimed at disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups and explain clearly why they should engage with and participate in the elections.
- Use social media and networking to engage people with the European elections and with the key issues that are dominating European politics, such as the economic crisis, youth unemployment and the future of the EU, so that they come

to understand how the European Parliament and their MEPs are central to the solution of these issues and how they are linked to policies and political institutions at national and local level.

***Policy recommendations for the new phase of the Europe for Citizens Programme (2014–2020)***

The new phase of the Europe for Citizens Programme will be critical in building on the momentum of the first phase and also taking forward actions from the 2013 European Year of Citizens. It will also provide a pivotal link between the short- and medium-term EC policies on Participatory Citizenship and a longer-term strategy through to 2020. Therefore it will be important that the planning for the next phase remains flexible to take account of rapid changes in policies and practices within and across EU countries, particularly in relation to the impact of the on-going global economic crisis, and also supports sustainable actions and projects over a period of time.

R.16 Build **flexibility** into the new phase of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014–2020 to respond to changing contexts. In the current context, **more emphasis should be placed on the actions of civic participation over remembrance and identity and focus on sustainable longer-term funding for those involved in programme actions and projects.**

Specific recommendations for the new phase of the Europe for Citizens Programme (2014–2020) include the need to:

- Ensure an appropriate balance between the funding of actions concerning civic participation and remembrance and identity. We consider a likely two-thirds funding for civic participation and one-third funding for remembrance and identity as the most appropriate given the context for Participatory Citizenship in Europe and the barriers and challenges that need to be addressed within and across EU countries.
- Fund actions and projects that equally support and promote both political participation in civic society and voluntary and community action in civil society. This will ensure that all aspects of Participatory Citizenship, as defined in this Study, are addressed and mitigated against an imbalance in policies, approaches and practices in this area.
- Support actions and projects that explore how the links between economic competitiveness, participatory citizenship and social cohesion can be made real and tangible at local, national and European levels.
- Build links to the Europe 2020 Strategy through projects and actions so as to ensure that the goals of building a stronger, more inclusive and cohesive European society are supported by concrete policies, practices and actions.
- Look to ensure a degree of sustainability of funding for those involved in Programme actions and projects, so that funding covers both operating and action costs and seeks to ensure that sustainability and transferability of outcomes is built into the Programme from the outset.
- Support new and innovative practices in Participatory Citizenship, such as those that build new partnerships within and across EU countries and involve a range of organisations and networks; promote peer learning and the drawing up of new

approaches and practices; involve the use of social media and information and communications technologies to engage larger numbers and/or disadvantaged and hard-to-reach groups; and encourage grassroots initiatives to engage with the decision-making process all the way up to European level.

Build sustainability into the Programme so that it can begin to set out new priorities for the changing context for participatory citizenship in Europe, in terms of policies, practices and approaches, that will help to ensure the EU strategy for this area remains relevant, strategic, flexible and targeted through to 2020 and beyond.

## **Longer-term strategy and policies**

Although in this study we found that the experts who contributed to the country fiches in the 27 EU member states found it difficult to suggest concrete actions that the EU and its institutions should take in relation to Participatory Citizenship within the next five to ten years (i.e. from 2016 to 2020), there was a recognition that the EU still required a long-term strategic vision and plan that needed to be populated with policies, programmes and activities. Such a strategic vision was considered necessary for two main reasons. First because experts in member states supported the notion of a strong, united, cohesive and participative Europe going forward into the third decade of the 21st Century and the benefits that this would provide for EU citizens, member states and the EU and its institutions.

The second reason was because of recognition that there are major issues looming on the political horizon to which the EU and its institutions, in partnership with member states and ordinary EU citizens would need to respond decisively and collectively in order to solve them. These issues concern:

- Climate change that will bring major social and economic change to parts of Europe
- Ageing population with a longer life expectancy and how to support that population
- EU enlargement and whether there would be new accession states joining in the coming years
- The global economy and the growing power of economies in other parts of the world, notably China and Latin America.

All these issues presented problems and challenges that required a long-term strategic perspective and involved a balancing of Participatory Citizenship, social cohesion and economic competitiveness in order for the values and practices of democracy to flourish in Europe. What remains crucial, above all else, is that EU citizens remain actively involved in shaping the EU response to addressing and solving these issues and in engaging and participating with politicians and political institutions at all levels, including the European. To achieve this objective it is necessary to continue the strategic support for Participatory Citizenship across all these levels, including from EU institutions.

**R.17 Support a long-term strategic vision and approach to Participatory Citizenship through to 2020 and beyond** in order to address **major issues** that face Europe in the **next decade**. This vision and approach should be **grounded in the active involvement and participation of EU citizens** in addressing these issues in order to safeguard the future of democracy in Europe going forward.

## Contributors to the Country Fiches and Good Practices

### **Austria**

Georg Heller, BA, Assistant at the Centre for Democracy Vienna (Demokratiezentrum Wien) and Werner Wintersteiner, Professor at the University of Klagenfurt and Founding Director of the Centre for Peace Research and Peace Education.

### **Belgium**

*French speaking region*

France Clément, Alain Michel and Luce Pepin, European Institute for Education and Social Policy (EIESP), France

*Flemish speaking region*

(FeProf. Dr Wiel Veugelers, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, Netherlands, Dr Anton Derks, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training and Dr Dimokritos Kavadias, Vrije Universiteit, Brussels

### **Bulgaria**

Dr Svetla Petrova, Head of Department 'Analyses and International Projects', Centre for Control and Assessment of the Quality in School Education Ministry of Education, Youth and Science

### **Cyprus**

Bruno Losito, Associate Professor and Paola Mirti, Researcher, Roma Tre University

### **Czech Republic**

Dr Dana Moree, Assistant Professor, Charles University of Prague, Faculty of Humanities

### **Denmark**

Hans Dorf, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark

### **Estonia**

Einar Värä, Chief Expert, Department of General Education, Ministry of Education and Research

### **Finland**

Tom Gullberg, PhD and Senior Lecturer in didactics of history and civics, Abo Akademi University

### **France and European interviews**

Jean Gordon European Institute for Education and Social Policy (EIESP), France  
Antoine Bevort, National Academy for Arts and Crafts (CNAM), France; and  
Alain Michel, European Institute for Education and Social Policy (EIESP), France

**Germany**

Hermann J. Abs, Professor of Education Research. Institute for School Pedagogy and Citizenship Education, University of Giessen, Germany

Tilmann Kammler, Research Assistant at the Institute for School Pedagogy and Citizenship Education, University of Giessen, Germany

**Greece**

Eleni Kostelidou, MA Education and Human Rights, Institute of Education, University of London & National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece; Bruno Losito, Associate professor, and Paola Mirti, Researcher, Roma Tre University. Italy

**Hungary**

Eniko Pap, Programme Manager, Active Citizenship Foundation, Hungary and Zsuzsanna Szelényi, Foundation Chair; in consultation with Judit Lannert and Annamária Gáti, TÁRKI-TUDOK Educational Research Ltd and Rita Galambos, Foundation for Democratic Youth

**Ireland**

David Kerr, NFER Research Associate and Professor of Citizenship Education, Birkbeck College, University of London

**Italy**

Bruno Losito, Associate Professor, Roma Tre University

**Latvia**

Dr Paed. Liesma Ose, Associate Professor at the Higher School of Management and Social Work, Attistiba, Riga

**Lithuania**

Hans Dorf, Associate Professor, Aarhus University, Department of Education, Denmark

**Luxembourg**

Prof. Dr Wiel Veugelers, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, Netherlands

**Malta**

Bruno Losito, Associate Professor, and Paola Mirti, Researcher, Roma Tre University, Italy

**Netherlands**

Prof. Dr Wiel Veugelers and Drs. I. de Groot, Researcher, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, Netherlands

**Poland**

Professor Marek Kwiek, Centre for Public Policy Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences. Poznan University, Poland.

**Portugal**

Bruno Losito, Associate Professor, and Paola Mirti, Researcher, Roma Tre University, Italy

**Romania**

Monica Maria Dvorski, Executive President of the Foundation Centre of Education 2000+. Romania

**Slovakia**

Marian Kisdurka, Project Manager, Slovak Governance Institute, Slovakia

**Slovenia**

Janez Krek, Associate Professor, and Mateja Peršak, Research Assistant, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education

**Spain**

Bruno Losito, Associate Professor, and Paola Mirti, Researcher, Roma Tre University, Italy.

**Sweden**

Emily Rainsford, PhD student, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Southampton, England.

**United Kingdom**

David Kerr, NFER Research Associate and Professor of Citizenship Education, Birkbeck College, University of London and Lisa Nash, NFER Research Associate

## **Organisation of Participatory Citizenship in the European Union Study**

This study was commissioned by the European Commission, **Europe for Citizens Programme**. It was led by the Institute of Education, University of London

**Project leader, Bryony Hoskins, School of Education, University of Southampton**  
**Co-leader, David Kerr, Citizenship Foundation, London**

The consortium partners:

**Denmark: Aarhus University, Department of Education**  
Hans Dorf

**France: European Institute for Education and Social Policy (EIESP)**  
Jean Gordon  
Antoine Bevort  
Alain Michel

**Germany: Institute for School Pedagogy and Citizenship Education, University of Giessen**  
Hermann J. Abs  
Tilmann Kammler

**Italy: Roma Tre University**  
Bruno Losito  
Paola Mirti

**Slovenia: Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana**  
Janez Krek  
Mateja Peršak

**Netherlands: University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht**  
Wiel Veugelers

**UK: Institute of Education, University of London**  
Germ J. Janmaat  
Christine Han  
Andy Green  
Yvette Ankrah

**National Foundation for Educational Research, Slough**  
Juliet Sizmur  
Jo Morrison

**Southampton Education School, University of Southampton**  
Rebecca Ridley

## Other reports from this study

Hoskins, B. et al. (2012) **Contextual Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union**, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University, ISBN 9780854329373.

Hoskins, B. et al. (2012) **Analytic Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union**, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University. ISBN 9780854329380.

Krek, J. et al. (2012) **Good Practice Report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union**, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University. ISBN 9780854329397.

Hoskins, B. and Kerr, D. (2012) **Final Study Summary and Policy Recommendations report: Participatory Citizenship in the European Union**, Institute of Education report for EU. Southampton: Southampton University, ISBN 9780854329403.

All the reports for this study are available on the Europe for Citizens website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/about-the-europe-for-citizens-programme/studies/index_en.htm)

Electronic copies may also be obtained from Dr Bryony Hoskins (B.Hoskins@soton.ac.uk), to whom any queries relating to the copyright of this series should be addressed.