

# Enacting European Citizenship: Challenging dominant conceptions

*The Enacting European Citizenship project of the Open University challenges dominant conceptions and ideas around the meaning of European Citizenship.*

*It highlights forms of active citizenship which are at risk of being forgotten by the European institutions.*

*In the European Year of Citizens, raising such difficult questions is important to challenge unspoken assumptions, and can also suggest ways out of impasses in European integration and the construction of the European Union.*

## *Other roads to Europe*

*When Turkish citizens claim their rights through the European Court of Human Rights, are they not acting as European citizens, despite not having EU citizenship?*

*When asylum-seekers and Roma stand together to call for more political rights and less discrimination, are they not acting as European citizens?*

*When campaigners for sex-worker rights throughout Europe organise a demonstration, are they not acting as European citizens even if they do not go through the formal channels of political engagement?*

These questions are posed by researchers of the project to challenge the idea that there is only one way of becoming a European citizen or building Europe.

The researchers argue that European integration cannot only be about granting rights 'from above' but also about fostering citizen activism 'from below' and that citizenship is about more than legal status.

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*Through theoretical and methodological innovations focussing on 'acts of citizenship' the research shows that European Citizenship cannot be reduced to citizenship of the EU and that active citizenship cannot be narrowed down to formal interactions through existing institutional channels*

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## *Enlarging horizons*

In a globalising world European citizenship cannot be understood in isolation from the evolution of forms of citizenship in other parts of the world, and trends and currents which traverse frontiers. **TURKISH CITIZENS** are increasingly making use of the European Court of Human Rights to claim their rights.

### **EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP, THE INDIGNADOS AND THE UPRISINGS IN THE ARAB WORLD**

The research investigates the links between forms of citizen mobilisation across Europe and in the Arab world, showing trends in forms of citizen engagement in politics.

## *Building collaborations; bridging institutions, civil society and citizens*

The Enacting European Citizenship Research is highly innovative in bringing together activists, researchers, organised civil society and representatives of institutions. In conducting the research activists from throughout Europe and North Africa were in frequent dialogue with the researchers.

The research has also attracted significant attention from the artistic community, and several collaborations between researchers and artists are in the making.

*The Enacting European Citizenship research project dialogues with policy makers. The EU Commission, Parliament and Council of Europe have all expressed strong interest in understanding citizenship goes beyond legal status and rights, and must be understood as enacted everyday.*

The research has been communicated and discussed with organised civil society and European institutions on numerous occasions, including:

Conferences in the **European Parliament** and **European Economic and Social Committee** (in March 2013)

Participation and events with the **European Year of Citizens Alliance** (2013)

Conference on 20 years after Maastricht, Budapest (organised by DG Research, 2013)

Citizenship without Community Conference, British library London (2010)

Conference on Reassessing European Citizenship at Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels (2010)

## *Public interventions*

Researchers from the Enacting European Citizenship project have been involved in making documentaries on citizenship with the BBC, Russia Today and Al Jazeera.

The research has been communicated extensively online and in an interactive way through videos, blogs, tweets and Facebook. It has been featured on many online portals and magazines such as opendemocracy.net

## Main Publications and References

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**Enacting European citizenship.**  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
Isin, E.F. and M. Saward eds. (2013).

Special issue of *Citizenship Studies: Citizenship after Orientalism, an Unfinished project* (2012 Routledge, London)

**The Routledge handbook of global citizenship studies** (2014)  
ed. Isin E.F and Nyers P.

**Citizens without Frontiers**  
Bloomsbury, Isin E.F (2012)