The links between education and active citizenship/civic engagement

Ad hoc report

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ABOUT US

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INTRODUCTION

Youth civic engagement and the role of education in developing active citizenship have become increasingly urgent topics of debate throughout the European Union. The growth of nationalist, radical and populist discourses and politics have revealed the need for a better understanding of what factors may encourage young people's social participation and civic engagement. The inflow of a significant number of immigrants and the refugee crisis further sharpens the challenges associated with positive active citizenship.

An essential and characterising value of the EU is the free movement of citizens and workers, realised and formalised by the creation of the Schengen Area. Alongside its formal requirements, free movement also requires competences that empower citizens and workers to move between, and be active contributors within, Member States across Europe.

Official efforts to reaffirm and promote these values and competences are multiplying. The recently proposed *Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning[1]*, intended to replace the document currently in use that was adopted in 2006[2], highlights the important role of active citizenship, shared values and fundamental rights. In 2016, the Council of Europe published a seminal work, *Competences for Democratic Culture[3]*, which summarizes the competences necessary for living together as equals in culturally diverse, democratic societies[3]. Next, it intends to develop and pilot a *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* and a *Portfolio for Competences for Democratic Culture*. The proposed *Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning[1]*, the *Reference Framework of Competences for democratic Culture,* and the *Portfolio* (currently under development) each aim to offer clear guidance on citizenship education.

Formal education is the most appreciable setting for citizenship education, and to date, efforts have most typically been targeted at young students around the age of 14. Outside secondary school, the possibilities afforded by Informal and non-formal education have received significantly less attention. The role of social networks — potentially powerful activators of civic engagement among teenagers and young adults — has largely been neglected. Also, the lifelong learning perspective may require further diligence.

This scoping report provides an overview of the link between education and active citizenship/civic engagement, and answers the following questions advanced by the EC:

- What does active citizenship entail?
- What are the different manifestations of active citizenship?
- To what extent is education a predictor of social participation and civic engagement?

[1] European Commission (2018). Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. Brussels, 17 January 2018, COM(2018) 24 final 2018/0008 (NLE) [hereafter Council Recommendations on Key Competences for LLL]

[2] European Commission (2006). Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.

[3] Council of Europe (2016). Competences for Democratic Culture: Living Together as Equals in Culturally Diverse Democratic Societies. Strasbourg.

- Is there a pattern between volunteering and education?
- What is the role of NGOs?

This report addresses each of these questions and can serve as a point of discussion, a discussion with an aim to (a) sharpen the understanding of active citizenship in terms of learning and outcomes, (b) stress the role of education in enhancing civic engagement around the European Union, and (c) establish the scope of active citizenship education with a strong emphasis on its lifelong-learning character. The overview also aims to support the preparation of the Education and Training Monitor 2018, which may have a special focus on citizenship education.

1. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

There is an extensive amount of academic literature on citizenship/civic education, which generally follows the traditional view of citizenship. Much less research has sought to understand citizenship from a broader perspective, of belonging to a transnational community, in this case the EU.

In the traditional understanding, **citizenship** is viewed as a set of political rights and duties, with citizens participating in the life of a sovereign nation state; it is associated with belonging to or identifying with a particular nation or country. However, in today's interconnected world this understanding seems to be too narrow. This is especially true in the context of the European Union; the EU builds on the core shared values enshrined in the Treaties and guarantees free movement of persons. Moreover, the competencies of EU citizenship intrinsically require knowledge about the core values, rights, duties and responsibilities that are shared across Member States, and about the unique aspects of history and cultures of the Member States. EU citizens need to acquire **active European citizen competences** to be able to live together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and responsibility, and to be able to participate in labour markets and be socially integrated into Member States across the EU.

Citizenship as a concept has traditionally been studied by scholars from certain fields such as civics, education, political science, social sciences or social psychology. It is also now gaining relevance in the field of intercultural education, where a new concept – **'intercultural citizenship'** – has been coined to encompass the new ideas and modern views related to one's participation in broader, culturally diverse

communities[4]. This has brought a new perspective to discussions of citizenship by placing an emphasis on **attitudes**, **values** and the **sense of belonging**[5].

Each of these fields have valuable knowledge to offer, and it would be wise to develop a multidisciplinary approach to studying the factors which influence citizens' attitudes towards social, political and civic engagement[6]. '**Active citizenship**' is a complex and multidimensional notion, which can only be properly understood if multiple perspectives are applied and insights are gained from diverse fields such as education, intercultural communication, political science, psychology, sociology and other social science disciplines[7].

'Active citizenship' can be defined as '**[p]articipation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterized by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy**'[8]. This definition is comprehensive in nature and embraces such key notions as **participatory activities**, **attitude of mutual respect**, **valuing of non-violence**, **human rights and responsibilities**, and **democracy**.

Critical thinking is another component, which can be considered as crucial or even a prerequisite for active citizenship. In an era when social media has a determinative impact on shaping public opinion and people's political views and behaviour, the development of critical thinking skills as **a tool for understanding, appropriating and acting upon information** is critically important.

Active citizenship should be viewed as a process requiring a **set of competences,** whereby the **intercultural dimension** and **critical awareness** both play salient roles[9]. Following this intercultural

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[4] See, e.g.
- Byram, M. (2008). From Foreign Language Education to Education for Intercultural Citizenship. Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.
- Byram, M. (2012). 'Conceptualizing Intercultural (Communicative) Competence and Intercultural Citizenship', In: Jackson, J. (ed.) Routledge Handbook of Language and Intercultural Communication, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 85–97.
- Byram, M. (2014a). 'Competence, Interaction and Action. Developing Intercultural Citizenship Education in the Language Classroom and beyond' In: Dai, X.; Chen, G. (eds.) Intercultural Communication Competence: Conceptualization and Its Development in Cultural Contexts and Interactions, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, pp. 190–198.
- Byram, M. (2014b). 'Twenty-five Years On – From Cultural Studies to Intercultural Citizenship', Language, Culture and Curriculum 27(3), pp. 209–225.
- Byram, M.; Golubeva, I.; Han, H.; Wagner, M. (eds.) (2017). From Principles to Practice in Education for Intercultural Citizenship, Multilingual Matters, Bristol.
- Golubeva, I.; Wagner, M.; Yakimowski, M. E. (2017). 'Comparing Students' Perceptions of Global Citizenship in Hungary and the USA'. In: Byram, M.; Golubeva, I.; Han, H.; Wagner, M. (eds.) From Principles to Practice in Education for Intercultural Citizenship. Multilingual Matters, Bristol, pp. 3-24.
- Gundara, J. S. (2014). 'Global and Civilisational Knowledge: Eurocentrism, Intercultural Education and Civic Engagements.' Intercultural Education, 25(2), pp. 114-127.
- Porto, M. (2014). 'Intercultural Citizenship Education in an EFL Online Project in Argentina', Language and Intercultural Communication 14(2), pp. 245–261.

[5] See, e.g., Harris, A. (2013). Young People and Everyday Multiculturalism, Routledge, New York.

[6] See Barrett, M.; Zani, B. (eds.) (2015). Political and Civic Engagement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives. Routledge, London.

[7] Golubeva, I.; Gómez Parra, Ma. E.; Espejo Mohedano, R. (2018). 'What does 'active citizenship' mean for Erasmus students?', Intercultural Education, 29(1), January 2018, pp. 40-58. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2017.1404741

[8] See Hoskins, B.; Campbell, J.; D'Homber, B. (2008). 'Does Formal Education Have an Impact on Active Citizenship Behaviour?' European Educational Research Journal, 7(3), pp. 386-402. https://doi.org/10.2304/eerj.2008.7.3.386
referring to Hoskins, B. (2006). Draft Framework on Indicators for Active Citizenship, CRELL, Ispra.

[9] See:

paradigm, becoming an **active citizen** should involve not only increasing one's understanding of others and **one's role in the society/community**, but also developing **self-perception, self-reflexivity, and self-criticality**.

Active citizenship education should embrace the development of **values, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and critical understanding**[10]. And, in addition to the model of *Competences for Democratic Culture*, it should promote civic engagement and active participation in community activities at all levels: **local, national and international**[11].

To summarize, active citizenship – as **the ultimate outcome of active citizenship education (both formal and informal)** – cannot be viewed as simply social, civic or political participation; it should incorporate an **interior process of personal growth** that involves the development of democratic values; an appreciation of cultural diversity, human rights and responsibilities; attitudes of mutual respect and open-mindedness; openness to dialogue and to change; empathy; co-operation skills; knowledge of related issues; and critical thinking. Therefore, active citizenship education should be conceptualized as **a lifelong learning process**[12].

2. MANIFESTATIONS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Active citizenship goes beyond the traditional understanding of citizenship as merely denoting a legal status. Active citizenship makes prominent the so-called **performative dimension** of citizens' participation in community life (be it social or political activity)[13].

- Byram (2008).
- Byram (2012).
- Byram (2014a).
- Byram (2014b).
- Byram et al. (2017).
- Council of Europe (2016).
- Golubeva, Gómez Parra and Espejo Mohedano (2018).

[10] See footnote 3

[11] Golubeva, Gómez Parra and Espejo Mohedano (2018).

[12] As in:

- Bagnall, R. (2010). 'Citizenship and belonging as a moral imperative for lifelong learning', International Journal of Lifelong Education, 29(4), pp. 449–460.
- Ebner, G. (2009). Lifelong learning, a key to achieve European active citizenship. European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong learning. http://www.efvet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=208&Itemid=226.
- Hingels, A.; Saltelli, A.; Manca, A.R.; Mascherini, M.; Hoskins, B. (2009). 'Growing cohesive societies: the characterization of active citizenship', Paper presented at 3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: Charting Progress, Building Visions and Improving Life, 27-30 October 2009, Busan, Korea, Available at: www.oecd.org/site/progresskorea/44120679.pdf.
- Zepke, N. (2013). 'Lifelong education for subjective well-being: how do engagement and active citizenship contribute?', International Journal of Lifelong Education 32(5), pp. 639-651. https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2012.753125.
- Zepke, N. (2016). Student Engagement in Neoliberal Times: Theories and Practices for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, Springer, Singapore.
  etc.

[13] See Peucker, M.; Ceylan, R. (2017). 'Muslim community organizations – sites of active citizenship or self-segregation?' Ethnic and Racial Studies, 40(14), pp. 2405-2425. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1247975

Many recent studies have looked at the ways in which citizens participate in the social and political life of their immediate societies/communities[14]. Indeed, in the social sciences, this research theme is the most common way to approach the subject[15]. These studies tend to focus on the motivations for and mechanisms of civic participation, and on the role that new social media plays in it[16]. Also, the problem of decline in civic activity among the youth population is of special interest to many scholars[17]. However, in a recently published paper, Chryssochoou and Barrett[18] argue that the claim that young people are not sufficiently engaged in civic and/or political activities is probably incorrect, and rather that youth today are engaged through nonconventional means. The contexts of civic participation continue to change as technology advances[19], and as a consequence, **new (non-conventional) forms of active citizenship manifestations** have emerged, namely, participation in online social networking sites, discussion forums, chat rooms, etc. The younger generation (aged between 16 to 24) especially are reported to communicate via **social media** on daily basis[20].

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[14] See, e.g.:
- Albanesi, C., Mazzoni, D., Cicognani, E., & Zani, B. (2015). 'Predictors of civic and political participation among native and migrant youth in Italy: The role of organizational membership, sense of community, and perceived social well-being', In Barrett, M.; Zani, B. (eds.) Political and Civic Engagement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives. Routledge, London, pp. 268-291.
- Barkas, D.; Chryssochoou, X. (2017). 'Becoming Politicized: Political Socialization and Participation of Young People in the December 2008 Revolt in Greece', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4), pp. 324–335, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000311.
- Brunton-Smith, I.; Barrett, M. (2015). 'Political and civic participation: Findings from the modeling of existing data sets', In Barrett, M.; Zani, B. (eds.) Political and Civic Engagement: Multidisciplinary Perspectives. Routledge, London, pp. 195–212.
- Chryssochoou, X.; Barrett, M. (2017a). 'Civic and Political Engagement in Youth: Findings and Prospects', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4), pp. 291–301, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000315.
- Chryssochoou, X.; Barrett, M. (2017b). 'Editorial: Youth Politicization Viewed From the Perspectives of Social Psychology and Developmental Psychology', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4), pp. 289-290, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000312.
- Dahl, V. (2017). 'Reducing Adolescents' Approval of Political Violence: The Social Influence of Universalistic and Immigrant-Friendly Peers', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4),pp. 302–312, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000298.
- Šerek, J.; Machackova, H.; Macek, P. (2017). 'The Chicken or Egg Question of Adolescents' Political Involvement. Longitudinal Analysis of the Relation Between Young People's Political Participation, Political Efficacy, and Interest in Politics', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4), pp. pp. 347–356, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000297.
- Strohmeier, D.; Barrett, M.; Bora, C.; Caravita, S.C.S.; Donghi, E.; Dragoti, E. et al. (2017). 'Young People's Engagement with the European Union: The Importance of Visions and Worries for the Future of Europe', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4), pp. 313-323, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000314.
- Van Stekelenburg, J.; Klandermans, B. (2017). ' Protesting Youth Collective and Connective Action Participation Compared', Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 225(4), pp. 336–346, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000300.
- Zani, B.; Barrett, M. (2012). 'Engaged citizens? Political participation and social engagement among youth, women, minorities and migrants', Human Affairs, 22, pp. 273–282, https://doi.org/10.2478/s13374-012-0023-2.
to name just a few.

[15] Ekman, J.; Gherghina, S.; Podolian, O. (2016). 'Challenges and realities of political participation and civic engagement in central and eastern Europe', East Europen Politics, 32(1), pp. 1-11, https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2016.1141091.

[16] See Schulz, W.; Ainley, J.; Fraillon, J.; Losito, B.; Agrusti, G. (2016). IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016: Assessment Framework, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

[17] discussed in Dalton, R. (2002). 'The decline of party identifications'. In Dalton, R., Wattenberg, M. (eds.) Parties without partisans, (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, pp. 19–36.

[18] Chryssochoou and Barrett (2017a).

[19] See footnote 16.

[20] Eurostat (2017). Social participation and integration statistics. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Social_participation_and_integration_ statistics

In today's societies, both **positive and negative** examples of social and political activation can be observed[21]. It is often taken for granted that active citizenship is/should be associated with positive intentions and **non-violent behaviour.** Yet, an active citizen may also share the views and values of radicals, populists, or football hooligans, even leading one to commit acts of terrorism, vandalism or participation in riots and violent protests. There are very good reasons, then, to intensify citizenship/civic education to empower individuals to act in a **socially responsible way**. For this, one's intercultural skills and media literacy should be strengthened.

There are some **good practices** in the EU that can be shared among Member States. For example, in the Flemish community of Belgium, the 'Action plan on the prevention of the processes of radicalisation which may result in extremism and terrorism' has been in operation since 2015[22]. Among other issues, this action plan promotes **intercultural dialogue** and provides guidance for those who are confronted with radicalisation. According to the same overview of education policy developments[23], in Italy, a Law[24] was passed which, among other things, emphasises citizenship education — not only civic knowledge, but also skills, attitudes and values. In France, an action plan[25] dedicated to 'Equality and citizenship: The Republic in action' was published in 2015. Luxemburg has replaced religious education with a compulsory course on 'Life and Society' to ensure that schools become a place where children learn respect for others. In the Netherlands, teachers were offered training[26] to help them manage classroom discussions on social issues related to democratic values. Like these, many more examples of practices that have proven to be effective could be systematically collated and shared among the Member States.

3. PREDICTORS OF SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The main expressions of active citizenship that are measurable are **social participation** and **civic engagement**. Research in the field of social psychology has been intensively studying the topic of citizens' participation in social, civic and political activities, and studying the **factors** which affect (**facilitate** or **impede**) participation[27]. Researchers have identified several factors that may predict participation and

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[21] see, e.g.:
- Barkas and Chryssochoou, X. (2017).
- Chryssochoou and Barrett (2017a).
- Chryssochoou and Barrett (2017b).
- Dahl (2017).
- Šerek, Machackova and Macek (2017).
- Van Stekelenburg and Klandermans, B. (2017).

[22] European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2016). Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education: Overview of education policy developments in Europe following the Paris Declaration of 17 March 2015. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxemburg.

[23] See footnote 2222.

[24] Law 107, available at http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2015/07/15/15G00122/sg.

[25] Égalité et citoyenneté: La République en actes, available at http://www.ville.gouv.fr/?egalite-et-citoyennete-la,3813

[26] Methodiek Dialoog als burgerschaps-instrument, available at http://downloads.slo.nl/Documenten/dialoog-als-burgerschapsintrument-po.pdf

[27] see, e.g.:

engagement, or non-participation and disengagement: demographic (e.g. age, gender and ethnic group), education and income, and attitudinal or individual characteristics (e.g., sense of civic responsibility)[28].

Three main factors have been identified as predictors of political participation[29]:

- resources enabling individuals to participate (time, knowledge);
- psychological engagement (interest, efficacy); and
- 'recruitment networks' (social movements, church, groups, and political parties, which help to attract people into political activities).

Measurable indicators that allow for a certain level of comparability across countries are generally limited to education and income, and data can be broken down by age and gender. According to Eurostat data from the *EU SILC ad-hoc 2015 Module on Social and cultural participation and Material deprivation[30]*, there are no significant differences when it comes to active citizenship[31] **by gender** at the EU-28 level (the average rates are 11.7 % for women and 12.2 % for men). Greece stands out as exception, where women are less active compared to men (6.4 % for women and 10.4 % for men). By contrast, in Finland, women are more active relative to men (18.4 % for women and 15.6 % for men) (see Table 1).

- Chryssochoou and Barrett (2017a).
- Hingels et al. (2009).
- Orford, J. (2008). Community psychology: Challenges, controversies and emerging consensus. Wiley, Chichester, United Kingdom.
- Pancer, S. M. (2015). The psychology of citizenship and civic engagement. Oxford University Press, New York, NY, USA.

[28] Stevenson, C.; John Dixon, J.; Hopkins, N.; Russell Luyt, R. (2015). 'The Social Psychology of Citizenship, Participation and Social Exclusion: Introduction to the Special Thematic Section', Journal of Social and Political Psychology, 3(2), pp. 1-19, https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v3i2.579 reffering to Arnstein, S. R. (1969). 'A ladder of citizen participation', Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35(4), pp. 216-224, https://doi.org/10.1080/01944366908977225 and Kagan, C.; Castile, S.; Stewart, A. (2005). 'Participation: Are some more equal than others?' Clinical Psychology Forum, 153, pp. 30-34.

[29] Verba, S.; Schlozman, K. L.; Brady, H. E. (1995). Voice and equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics. Cambridge, MA, USA: Harvard University Press as referred in Schulz et al. (2016). IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016: Assessment Framework, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

[30] Eurostat (2017).

[31] Note that 'active citizenship' in the 2015 ad hoc module is understood as "participation in activities related to political groups, associations or parties, including attending any of their meetings or signing a petition" (Eurostat, 2017), and is measured accordingly.

Table 1. Active citizens[32] by educational level, by income, and by gender 2015 (% of people aged 16 and over).

	Total	Education			Income		Gender	
		Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)	Quintile with 20 % lowest income	Quintile with 20 % highest income	Women	Men
EU-28	11,9	5,6	11,4	20,8	8,9	17,2	11,7	12,2
Belgium	4,9	1,6	4,1	8,3	3,0	7,6	3,6	6,2
Bulgaria	3,7	1,5	3,1	8,3	1,6	7,7	3,3	4,1
Czech Republic	4,2	2,0	3,8	7,3	2,9	5,1	3,7	4,7
Denmark	6,8	4,3	6,0	10,1	8,0	6,9	6,3	7,4
Germany	13,9	7,2	13,1	21,7	11,2	18,2	13,5	14,3
Estonia	8,7	4,6	7,9	12,1	7,2	11,0	8,4	9,0
Ireland	8,7	5,3	7,5	12,4	6,9	12,3	9,3	8,1
Greece	8,4	5,7	8,9	11,9	6,3	10,7	6,4	10,4
Spain	7,9	3,9	9,5	13,8	4,9	14,1	7,3	8,4
France	24,6	12,4	22,6	39,8	17,4	35,0	25,3	23,9
Croatia	5,6	1,9	6,3	9,8	3,5	7,5	4,8	6,4
Italy	6,3	3,5	7,5	11,7	4,0	10,0	5,7	6,8
Cyprus	2,1	1,3	1,8	3,4	0,6	4,5	1,2	3,1
Latvia	5,6	2,4	4,3	10,6	2,5	9,2	5,5	5,7
Lithuania	6,3	1,8	4,5	12,6	2,4	11,9	6,6	5,9
Luxembourg	16,3	9,8	17,8	23,8	10,1	23,0	15,2	17,4
Hungary	4,7	1,6	4,2	9,0	3,0	7,5	4,3	5,2
Malta	9,6	9,4	9,0	11,1	7,0	10,1	8,7	10,6
Netherlands	17,8	8,3	17,1	26,6	17,5	20,9	17,9	17,7
Austria	11,9	3,7	10,2	21,7	8,7	17,8	10,3	13,5
Poland	7,3	3,0	6,4	13,1	4,6	12,5	6,3	8,4
Portugal	9,8	5,2	12,4	25,6	4,9	18,0	8,7	11,0
Romania	3,6	2,0	3,5	9,3	1,6	6,4	3,3	3,9
Slovenia	6,5	2,8	5,4	11,7	5,0	9,3	6,3	6,6
Slovakia	2,8	1,1	2,3	5,5	1,9	3,6	2,5	3,1
Finland	17,0	9,3	16,6	23,3	16,4	18,7	18,4	15,6
Sweden	22,1	16,7	21,6	27,8	22,0	22,9	22,8	21,5
United Kingdom	14,5	6,0	13,5	24,5	10,4	22,6	15,0	13,9

Source: Eurostat: Social participation and integration statistics. Online data code: ilc_scp19 and ilc_scp20.

Income may be a reliable predictor: higher income earners are more politically engaged than the total population (Table 1). The average participation rate at EU-28 level for persons in the highest income quintile was 17.2 %, compared to the total population's average of 11.9 %. The percentage of politically

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[32] The survey's definition of 'active citizenship' can be found in footnote 31.

engaged persons in the lowest income quintile was 8.9 %, a lower figure than the EU-28 average (Table 1).[33]

These statistics support the findings of Hingels et al.[34], who used a multilevel regression model to identify the drivers for active citizenship. They concluded that, at the country level, "a higher [...] GDP with a more equal distribution of income and a more heterogeneous religious climate" correlate with a higher level of active citizenship[35]. And, at the individual level, **education** and **participation in lifelong activities** are '**the strongest determinants**' of active citizenship[36].

It is not surprising that **education** is viewed as one of the most important factors that influence active social participation and civic engagement. People with high educational attainment tend to be more active citizens. According to 2015 data, EU-citizens with higher education degrees (ISCED 5-8) are much more active than people with upper-secondary (ISCED 3-4) and those with less than primary education (ISCED 0-2): 20.8 %, 11.4 % and 5.6 % respectively (see Table 1). In some countries, the difference between the activity level of highly-educated and less-educated people is even more significant (cf. %-s for France, Portugal and the United Kingdom, Table).

However, the most striking difference is between countries; note the large range between the high rate in France (24.6 %), and the low rate in Cyprus (2.1 %) (Table 1). Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia are far below the EU-28 average. Meanwhile, Finland, France, the Netherlands and Sweden display leading levels of active participation.

When respondents were asked for their **reasons of non-participation** in citizenship activities and volunteering, their most frequent answer was "other reasons" (see Figure 1). This points to the strong

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[33] Denmark stands as an exception, as persons with the lowest income appear to be somewhat more active citizens than persons with the highest income (see Table 1). However, one must take into account the statistical significance of the difference including the margin of error, sample size, etc. In all cases, more refined data would necessary to determine the causal link between income quintiles and active citizens, as there may be many mediating factors.
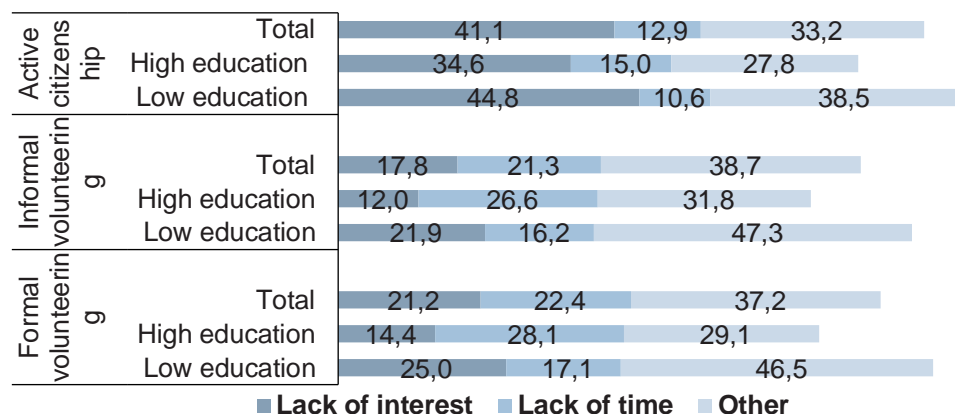
[34] Hingels et al. (2009).

[35] See footnote 34, (pp. 1-2).

[36] See footnote 34, (p. 2).

likelihood that differences between countries, particularly in volunteering rates, may be attributable to historical and cultural particularities, and the institutional channels of activation and social solidarity.

Figure 1. Reason for non-participation in volunteering and active citizenship, by educational level EU-28, 2015.

	Lack of interest	Lack of time	Other
Active citizenship Total	41,1	12,9	33,2
High education	34,6	15,0	27,8
Low education	44,8	10,6	38,5
Informal volunteering Total	17,8	21,3	38,7
High education	12,0	26,6	31,8
Low education	21,9	16,2	47,3
Formal volunteering Total	21,2	22,4	37,2
High education	14,4	28,1	29,1
Low education	25,0	17,1	46,5

■ Lack of interest ■ Lack of time ■ Other

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp21)

In the case of all three questions (on active citizenship, informal volunteering, formal volunteering), EU-citizens with low educational attainment were more likely to express a "lack of interest" in participating in these activities, while highly-educated people more so than others indicated their "lack of time" (see Figure 1).

While acknowledging differences between countries, the **role of education** in active social, political participation and civic engagement cannot be underestimated.[37] The *International Civic and Citizenship Education Study 2016* (ICCS 2016)[38] highlights trends in citizenship/civic education in schools. The study examined the civic attitudes and behavioural intentions which adolescents at around the age of 14 are exposed to in their school environments. Reviewing curricula, the study revealed that in many countries citizenship/civic education for youth is led through non-formal learning, such as, for example, participation in social school activities[39].

To summarize, there is a general consensus among researchers that **education impacts social participation and civic engagement**[40]. Even marginalized young people's interest in politics can be ignited

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[37] The importance of education for active political participation was confirmed by the international studies referred to in Chryssochoou and Barrett (2017a).

[38] Schulz et al. (2016).

[39] Schulz et al., 2016 referring to:
- Ainley, J., Schulz, W., & Friedman, T. (eds.) (2013). ICCS 2009 Encyclopedia. Approaches to civic and citizenship education around the world. Amsterdam, The Netherlands, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.
- Eurydice (2005). Citizenship education at school in Europe. Author, Brussels, Belgium.
- Schulz, W.; Ainley, J.; Fraillon, J.; Kerr, D.; Losito, B. (2010). ICCS 2009 International Report. Civic knowledge, attitudes and engagement among lower secondary school students in thirty-eight countries. International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

[40] See:
- Nie, N. H.; Junn, J.; Stehlik-Barry, K. (1996). Education and democratic citizenship in America. Chicago, IL, USA: University of Chicago Press.
- Pancer (2015).

by education programmes[41]. It should be noted that both approaches — specific citizenship curricula, and less formalized learning in school environments (including the open-school model and the organizational culture of schools) — have merit. Moreover, one cannot overestimate the importance of lifelong learning, especially given the freedom EU citizens have to move throughout the EU and how quickly learning environments are changing.

4. A PATTERN BETWEEN VOLUNTEERING AND EDUCATION

One standard display of active citizenship is **volunteering**. The 2015 EU-SILC ad hoc module gathered information on EU citizens' participation in both **formal and informal voluntary activities**. According to 2015 survey data, at EU-28 level, participation in informal voluntary activities was slightly higher than in formal ones that are organized by a club or a charitable foundation (cf. 20.7 % versus 18.0 %, Figure 2). While there were a few countries in which more people participated in formal voluntary activities than in informal ones, the difference was generally not significant (such as in Austria, Italy, Luxemburg, the UK, and Spain). Only in Germany, Cyprus and Malta were there significantly more people who participated in formal than in informal voluntary activities (see Figure 2Figure 2). The explanation of such differences across the Member States is complex, and according to Eurostat experts[42] may be attributed to the fact that cultural or social structures differ from country to country.

Analysis of the Eurostat data[42] has not shown any sharp differences with respect to gender or age. However, **a strong pattern between volunteering and education** is quite evident (see

Table 2). In 2015, the participation rate for formal voluntary activities was 26.2 % for people with tertiary education (ISCED 2011 levels 5-8) and 10.6 % for people with less than primary, primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 2011 levels 0-2) (see
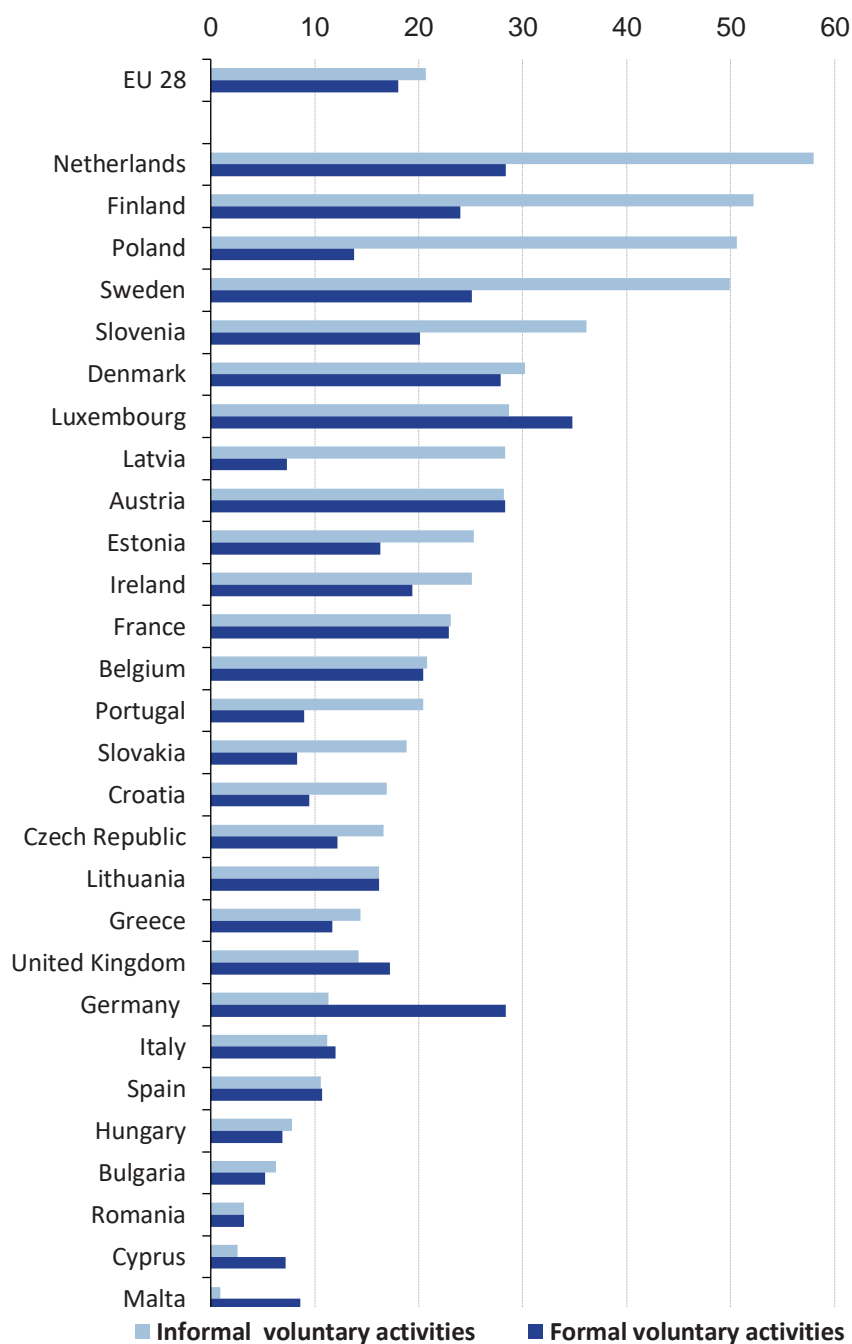
Table 2).

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41 Chryssochoou and Barrett (2017a, p. 295)
42 See footnote 2020.

Figure 2. Participation in voluntary activities (formal and informal), 2015 (% of people aged 16 and over).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp19) (Note: the figure is ranked on 'Informal voluntary activities').

Table 2. Participation in voluntary activities (formal and informal), by educational level, 2015 (% people aged 16+).

	Formal voluntary activities				Informal voluntary activities			
	Total	Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)	Total	Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)
EU-28	18,0	10,6	18,7	26,2	20,7	13,5	22,3	27,3
Belgium	20,4	13,2	18,4	28,0	20,8	16,3	20,9	24,2
Bulgaria	5,2	1,7	3,8	13,3	6,3	3,9	5,6	11,3
Czech Republic	12,2	7,6	11,5	18,4	16,6	11,4	15,8	23,5
Denmark	27,9	22,5	28,5	31,6	30,2	23,3	32,0	33,2
Germany	28,4	19,3	28,5	36,3	11,3	8,3	11,6	13,3
Estonia	16,3	10,4	15,4	21,1	25,3	20,4	24,4	29,6
Ireland	19,4	12,5	16,6	27,2	25,1	19,7	21,7	32,3
Greece	11,7	8,5	11,9	16,6	14,4	11,5	14,8	18,5
Spain	10,7	7,2	11,7	16,5	10,6	7,9	11,3	15,1
France	22,9	14,8	23,6	29,6	23,1	18,1	24,4	25,8
Croatia	9,5	4,8	9,9	16,5	16,9	10,0	17,8	26,5
Italy	12,0	8,4	14,6	16,8	11,2	8,0	12,6	17,1
Cyprus	7,2	3,2	6,4	12,2	2,6	1,6	2,2	4,2
Latvia	7,3	4,5	6,0	11,8	28,3	16,3	27,7	38,2
Lithuania	16,2	8,0	13,1	27,5	16,2	10,0	15,2	22,2
Luxembourg	34,8	25,5	37,3	45,1	28,7	24,1	31,4	31,7
Hungary	6,9	4,5	5,7	12,3	7,8	4,9	7,1	12,6
Malta	8,6	5,8	9,9	16,6	0,9	0,9	0,7	1,1
Netherlands	28,4	19,8	27,5	36,4	58,0	46,2	59,6	65,7
Austria	28,3	15,7	29,9	35,6	28,2	18,9	29,2	34,0
Poland	13,8	8,3	11,2	24,6	50,6	35,9	49,9	63,7
Portugal	9,0	5,9	13,4	16,6	20,4	16,8	24,4	30,5
Romania	3,2	2,1	2,7	8,2	3,2	1,6	3,2	8,2
Slovenia	20,1	12,2	20,3	25,9	36,1	26,4	36,4	43,1
Slovakia	8,3	4,5	7,5	13,6	18,8	13,9	18,1	24,6
Finland	24,0	16,9	24,0	29,5	52,2	42,3	55,0	56,3
Sweden	25,1	19,6	25,7	29,0	49,9	43,2	51,4	53,4
United Kingdom	17,2	9,3	15,1	27,5	14,2	8,1	13,4	21,3

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp19)

In general, higher rates of active volunteering was reported in the Netherlands (58.0 % for informal volunteering and 28.4 % for formal), Finland (52.2 % informal and 24.0 % formal) and Poland (50.6 % informal and 13.8 % formal). Less active participation was found in Romania (3.2 % for both informal and formal), Cyprus (2.6 % informal and 7.2 % formal) and Malta (0.9 % informal and 8.6 % formal).

According to Schulz and others[43], young people's volunteering depends on the social climate of their local community; volunteering is supported by safe environments that foster participation, while the presence of conflict in an environment may lead to disengagement and non-participation.

To conclude, it is important to note that in the case of volunteering — and in the case of participation in active citizenship (see the previous section) — the data should be interpreted with caution simply because volunteering strongly depends on political culture, traditions and institutions. And of course, the importance that certain personality traits such as "openness and agreeableness on civic engagement"[44] cannot be neglected.

5. PARTICIPATION IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Citizens' involvement in non-governmental organizations is an indicator of **civic engagement.** Despite the fact that the data on participation in NGOs cannot be considered reliable, it is widely acknowledged that non-governmental organizations do play an important role in **sustainable social development**.

Although no proof of a strong direct link between associational membership[45] and active citizenship has been found to date, the role of NGOs and associational membership in changing people's mind-set should not be ignored. What makes NGOs undoubtedly important is that they **create safe spaces to engage** in various social and political debates[46]. In the field of civic engagement and education, NGOs — due to their particular capabilities — may provide strong support for non-formal learning, especially for people from **vulnerable groups** such as minorities, migrants, citizens from a disadvantaged socio-economic background, persons with special needs, or homeless persons.

Non-governmental organizations are regularly involved in education through activities such as social events and training, and frequently target difficult to reach groups. Being more flexible than governmental institutions, NGOs are often able to respond quickly to instances of social problems such as, for example, bullying at schools, xenophobia, or radicalization. In some cases, it is easier for NGOs than for schools to get funding for summer school activities, or field trips. In many EU countries, NGOs actively participate in training activities, and thereby "fill the gap" which exists in many school systems. According to a NESET II report[46] — on education policies and practices to foster tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility in children and young people in the EU — youth organizations are often involved in awareness-raising activities on the topic of citizenship and related issues. The authors identify some good practices, e.g. the *Facing History and Others* programme, which develops critical thinking, civic

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[43] Schulz et al. (2016, p. 45).

[44] Chryssochoou and Barrett, 2017a, p. 294 referring to Luengo Kanacri, B. P.; Rosa, V.; Di Giunta, L. (2012). 'The mediational role of values in linking personality traits to civic engagement in Italian youth'. Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community, 40, pp. 8-21. https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2012.633064.

[45] Associational membership does not automatically or necessarily imply active engagement in the work of an association; it can be just a passive form of involvement which does not involve any civic or political activity.

[46] Van Driel, B.; Darmody, M.; Kerzil, J. (2016). 'Education policies and practices to foster tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility in children and young people in the EU', NESET II report, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. https://doi.org:10.2766/46172.

attitudes, and tolerance[47]. However, as the same report points out, scarce research has been done on (youth) NGOs' impact.

6. CHALLENGES

Despite frequent appeals to 'active citizenship' in EU political debates and policy documents, it remains one of the most challenging topics in education. Due to the inflow of large numbers of immigrants over a short time span, the refugee crisis, and growing domestic diversity, the traditional notion of citizenship is being challenged, and the core shared values and the European Union project are being put to the test.

Recent surveys show increasing intolerance[48] and radicalization, not only among adults, but among young people as well. The youngest seem to be most vulnerable. For example, one study[49] reports that there are more 16- to 19-year-olds who want their country to leave the EU than do 20- to 25-year-olds. While the difference may not be striking (14.9 % for 16- to 19-year-olds, and 12.1 % 20- 25-year-olds), it may portend an emerging trend, the risks of which should not be underestimated.

7. WHAT IS NEXT?

Teachers, educators and youth workers need to be provided with **clear methodological guidance** regarding citizenship/civic education. They should be offered **authentic teaching resources** and **good practice examples**. There are some effective approaches that develop interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences, and thereby foster social participation and active citizenship at local, national, and/or international level — for example, participation in **Erasmus+ European projects** and **Virtual Exchange,** or in the online **eTwinning** programme, or in **intercultural telecollaborations** related to citizenship education topics[50]. Priority should be given to **funding European multilateral projects** that focus on European literacy and citizenship education (see e.g. ELICIT and ELICIT-Plus projects[51], among many others), critical thinking and intercultural awareness (see e.g. IEREST project, among many others[52]).

Citizenship education can be effective only if all interconnected main actors are involved, namely: (1) **students**, (2) **teachers**, (3) **parents**, (4) **school administration**, and (5) **external stakeholders** (e.g. municipalities). The platform **European Toolkit for Schools[53]** could be expanded on citizenship education.

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[47] Van Driel et al., 2016 referring to Barr, D. J.; Boulay, B.; Selman, R. L.; McCormick, R.; Lowenstein, E.; Gamse, B.; Fine, M., Leonard, B. (2015). A Randomized Controlled Trial of Professional Development for Interdisciplinary Civic Education: Impacts on Humanities Teachers and Their Students, Teachers College Record, http://www.tcrecord.org/ExecSummary.asp?contentid=17470.
[48] See footnote 46.
[49] Strohmeier et al. (2017).
[50] e.g. see Byram et el. (2017).
[51] ELICIT (2010-2013). 510621-LLP-12010-1-FR-COMENIUS-CMP. www.elicitizen.eu/ and ELICIT-Plus (2014-2017). 2014-1-FR01-KA200-002362. www.elicitplus.eu/
[52] IEREST (2012-2015). 527373-LLP-1-2012-1-IT-ERASMUS-ESMO. http://www.ierest-project.eu/ and IEREST (2015). Intercultural Education Resources for Erasmus Students and Their Teachers. Annales University Press, Koper.
[53] https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsfor schools.htm.

Furthermore, it may be important to strengthen the **European Voluntary Service**[54] and **European Solidarity Corps**[55]. Both initiatives help young people find opportunities to volunteer, and thus to develop active citizenship, intercultural and collaborative skills. Excellent teaching material was developed in the frame of the IEREST Erasmus project, entitled 'Experiencing (interculturality through) volunteering'[56], which can be used to engage students in volunteer activities. In addition, **community service** could be introduced across secondary and tertiary education. In Hungary, for example, secondary school students must prove that they have performed at least 50 hours of community service before they leave secondary school. Another option can be awarding extra credits in higher education for volunteering activities and civic engagement.

Last but not least, the use of **social media** for the purposes of active citizenship participation and education should be explored because they hold **great potential**, especially with the younger generation. Social media have, unfortunately, been very successful tools for heightening radicalization and bullying. It is time, however, to discuss their potential for systematically and coherently empowering EU citizens of all ages to adopt pro-social values and to responsibly become active citizens.

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[54] https://europa.eu/youth/EU/voluntary-activities/european-voluntary-service_en.
[55] https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en.
[56] IEREST (2015).

CONCLUSIONS

This scoping report provides a brief overview of current research and data sources regarding 'active citizenship' or civic engagement and the role of education in promoting it. In addition, it reflects on the relevant theoretical paradigms, intellectual perspectives and policy approaches to the subject.

The report emphasises the importance of acquiring interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competences. For this, democratic values, human rights and responsibilities, social participation, and civic engagement, should all be promoted in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts. Central to active citizenship competence are critical thinking skills, which should be further enhanced, particularly to assist users of social media. Young people should learn to behave in a socially responsible way starting from early childhood. Evidence suggests that the youngest age groups are especially vulnerable to populist and radical narratives. Education and training systems should address issues such as hate speech, bulling, violence, intolerance, radicalisation, and any other issue that presents an obstacle to living together as equals in culturally diverse, democratic societies. The *Competences for Democratic Culture* model and the *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* both fit the needs of active citizenship education, by providing clear guidance for developing curriculum materials and other teaching tools (including interactive social media) to empower citizens of all ages to act as responsible citizens.

The available statistical information reiterates the importance of education for enhancing pro-social values and positive activation of citizens throughout their life course. A more innovative approach could be to capture examples of practices that effectively engage **students**, **teachers**, **parents**, **school administration**, and **municipalities** to achieve most effective active citizenship education and engagement.

To conclude, there is evidence of a strong link between education and active citizenship/civic engagement. And, it is undoubtedly in the shared interest of all EU Member States to explore the full potential of education as a main driver of active social and political participation, and to empower citizens to use information and communication technology responsibly.

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