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# **DRAFT REPORT**

on the implementation of citizenship education actions  
(2021/2008(INI))

Committee on Culture and Education

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## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT - SUMMARY OF FACTS AND FINDINGS**

### **The European political system cannot work if citizens do not know or understand it**

The ongoing process of globalisation and European integration requires the new generation of Europeans to increasingly engage politically at multiple levels, as well as to be able to live, work and integrate a growing level of diversity in their daily lives. The importance of education in this process is recognised in the European Pillar of Social Rights, which states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education to enable them to participate fully in society. From the analysis of key legislative texts and contributions by experts, stakeholders and studies emerges a threefold rationale for the need of stronger citizenship education covering all political levels, national, European and global.

Firstly, education is a fundamental enabler of an active and informed citizenship and thus, for democratic participation. The direction of a democratic political Union must be determined by the will of citizens. For many years, the emergence of a dynamic European citizenship has been hindered by a knowledge gap and a lack of emotional connection leading to the idea that the European Union is remote and complex.

Secondly, a series of events and socio-political changes reinvigorate the call for stronger citizenship education. The need to fight radicalisation, following the 13 November 2015 attacks in Paris by affiliates to the so called Islamic State, led to the Paris Declaration of 2015 by European Ministers of Education, which highlighted the need to promote citizenship and common European values.

Equally, the controversy surrounding Brexit is a reminder of the impact that lack of information and of emotional attachment, coupled with misinformation and propaganda, can have on the Union. More recently, national-populist movements are instrumentalising Euroscepticism for political purposes. The same trends can be observed at national level where the risk posed by social polarisation and fake news put increasing pressure on our democratic systems.

Thirdly, deep structural changes also support the need to reinforce this area of education and to recognise the ever-evolving nature of citizenship education. For example, the digital shift opens new opportunities for online citizens' participation and the environmental crisis highlights the need to act responsibly not only as members of a given political and social structure, but also as responsible inhabitants of the planet as a whole.

### **Citizenship education in European action**

There is a strong standing political consensus among the EU institutions on the need to strengthen citizenship education. This will was already explicit in the Solemn Declaration on European Union signed on June 1983, at the Stuttgart European Council, where the heads of state and government committed to "improving the level of knowledge about other Member States of the Community and of information on Europe's history and culture so as to promote a European awareness".

Since then, all institutions have put forward a growing number of political declarations and policy commitments underlying the need to advance in the promotion of citizenship education,

including European citizenship education. Most recently, the Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education(2015), the European Parliament resolution of 12 April 2016 on Learning EU at school, the Communication of the Commission on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture (2017), the Council Recommendations on promoting common values, inclusive education and the European dimension in teaching and on key competences for lifelong learning (2018), the Commission Communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (2020), the Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021), and the European Parliament resolution of 11 November 2021 on The European Education Area: a shared holistic approach.

However, when comparing the sustained declaratory commitment and stated policy objectives regarding citizenship education to actual implementation, there is a glaring gap. A gap between policy and practice, but also between general policy goals and actual plans to achieve them. There is a lack of concrete targets regarding citizenship education. This same conclusion is reached regarding the teaching of common European values, understood as the values inscribed in Article 2 TEU, where there is weak implementation in education policy in terms of concrete curriculum instruments and in supporting measures<sup>1</sup>.

Importantly, the rapporteur finds concerning the limited development of the 2018 Council Recommendation on Key Competencies with regards to the competence “Active Citizenship”. Most competences have been advanced by including dedicated benchmarks in the ET 2020 cooperation framework, in the European Skills agenda, or by developing at European level dedicated frameworks to support educational change (e.g. the Digital Competence Framework 2.0 or the EntreComp, the Entrepreneurship Competence Framework) Additionally, in 2020 a conceptual framework for Personal, Social, and Learning to learn<sup>2</sup> (LifeComp) competences was published by the Joint Research Centre, missing the opportunity to decisively advance on a framework for citizenship education

The main evidence of work undertaken in the area falls within the ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education that produced a compendium of best practices on different themes and carried out peer learning activities. This work is relevant to citizenship education, but falls short of an integrated and systematic approach on how to advance the teaching of citizens’ education in a comprehensive and structured manner. No evidence that the activities of the working group have a direct impact on advancing policy change in the area of citizenship education have been found, even if, several experts (e.g. Lithuania, Finland, Portugal, Croatia) acknowledged the positive influence of EU policy and actions on the implementation of citizenship education in their educational systems.

## **Contribution of EU programmes to the advancement of citizenship education**

### ***Erasmus +***

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching common values study EPRS

<sup>2</sup> The framework includes three competences per area, namely: Self-regulation, Flexibility, Wellbeing (Personal Area), Empathy, Communication, Collaboration (Social Area), Growth mindset, Critical thinking, and Managing learning (Learning to learn Area))

ERASMUS Key Action 1, which focused on mobility, has indirectly increased the sense of belonging to the Union. However, while Key Action 1 (KA1) can enhance knowledge of the host country and provide a reflective approach towards the home country, there is a lack of evidence regarding the effects of KA1 on the acquisition of knowledge regarding the European Union as a whole. An Erasmus mobility experience can help to develop some competences and skills through informal learning in some areas related to citizenship, such as intercultural skills, or learning to live and work with others. However, the lack of formal components in KA1 hinders the potential of the action to foster citizenship education.

Key Action 2, Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, and Key Action 3, Support for policy reform as well as Jean Monnet Activities are found to be the actions with greater contributions to the advancement of citizenship education. Eight projects have been identified relating directly to citizenship education. However, the total budget of these projects amount merely to 0,000046% of the 2014-2020 budget. Analysis of various KA2 and KA3 projects has shown that they cover some areas related to citizenship education, in particular dialogue and inclusion, human rights, participation, citizenship and to a lesser extent EU citizenship. It also appears that political elements, such as political participation (elections) or common European values (democracy, rule of law or justice including social justice) are addressed to a marginal degree. The projects cover different aspects required to improve the understanding of how citizenship education can be taught effectively. For example, project outputs include curriculum development, methodological and pedagogical tools. Equally, projects cover all levels of education, that is primary, secondary and higher education. A small proportion also extend to adult learning, contributing, albeit in a limited way, to lifelong learning.

In terms of geographical coverage, while most countries of the Union have participated in projects, geographical balance should be improved. Regarding impact, problems of sustainability and difficulties when developing stable structures to continue with the project's work, or to disseminate further the project's outputs, even after the end of the project, is seen as the major shortcoming.

More is expected in this area under the Erasmus programme 2021-2027, as KA2 will devote greater attention to 'common values, civic engagement and participation' in lifelong learning and awareness on understanding the European Union and common EU values, but progress is yet to be demonstrated. Overall, a total lack of systemic impact can be observed regarding Erasmus actions in the field of citizenship education.

### ***Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe***

Horizon Europe is the main research programme of the EU which can fund projects related to citizenship education. However, curricular, methodological and pedagogical approaches to teach citizenship education remain generally underdeveloped and suffer from lack of research. Evidence shows that, although many projects in Horizon 2020 focused on values that are relevant for European citizenship, only 8 research projects explicitly tackle citizenship education directly, adding up to an insignificant 0,00002% of the 2014-2020 budget. The projects cover a wide range of issues, exploring the link between citizenship development in public life and citizenship education in schools, as well as non-formal and informal education. They also research possibilities for new content, methodologies and activities through new participative, creative and technological methods. Research tends to concentrate on secondary

education followed by primary education.

However, questions regarding impact arise from the limited size of the projects in question and their relatively short duration. Moreover, a clear unbalance regarding geographical coverage emerges from the analysis with more participants from Western and South Western Europe.

The 2021-2027 Horizon cycle pays greater attention to issues relevant to this implementation report. In particular, the Cluster 2 ‘Culture, Creativity and Inclusive society’ aims to strengthen European democratic values, including rule of law and fundamental rights. A recently published special call for Education for Democracy in 2022 is an indication of this. Nevertheless, it is too early to assess the impact of the current programme.

### ***Europe for Citizens***

The **Europe for citizen’s** programme (2014-2020), aimed among others objectives, to help citizens to understand EU history, values and diversity and to encourage engaging with democracy at EU level. The programme allowed for the participation of schools and its two funding streams, European remembrance and Democratic engagement and civic participation, were relevant to citizenship education.

The mid-term evaluation of the programme<sup>3</sup> has found that it has been effective in achieving these goals and that its activities have contributed to enhancing civic participation and the overall debate on the past, present and future of the EU. Nevertheless, concerns regarding the geographical spread, particularly in the town-twinning strand, and the sustainability of the actions financed are highlighted.

Regarding the specific contribution of Europe for citizen to citizenship education, the rapporteur found only 6 projects focusing on citizenship education<sup>4</sup>, totalling almost 2% of the programme 2014-2020 budget, out of which only two involve the educational community directly, without information on the number final beneficiaries

Under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme 2021 -2027, the emphasis given to citizens’ engagement and participation is reinforced. This is apparent with the publication of a dedicated call for proposals<sup>5</sup> aiming at promoting the participation of citizens and representative associations in the democratic and civic life of the Union, which could involve the participation of schools and the educational community.

### ***Creative Europe***

The **Creative Europe** programme (2014-2020) did not have among its objectives to advance citizenship education or to improve knowledge of the EU directly. The programme does include among its goals the promotion of Europe’s cultural heritage as well as the better understanding of the common history of Europe. All actions financed through Creative Europe must deliver

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/efcp\\_mid\\_term\\_evaluation.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/efcp_mid_term_evaluation.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/europe-for-citizens/projects/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities>

EU added value also indirectly, by improving citizen's knowledge of cultures other than their own.

The rapporteur found only two projects<sup>6</sup> aiming explicitly to develop citizenship education in schools, which represents only 0,000007% of the 2014-2020 budget, through art and non-formal education. However, 24 projects dealing with citizenship were identified, showing the appetite of the beneficiaries of the programme to act in this area. Given the small amount of projects directly targeting citizenship education as an explicit aim, it is estimated that the overall impact across the Union is below its potential.

### ***European Solidarity Corps***

The **European Solidarity Corps** finances volunteer placements for young people across Europe. The programme was launched in 2018, which hinders the assessment of its impact due to the short time-frame of implementation. Despite this, its general objective is to strengthen cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, through active involvement. The rapporteur has identified 21 projects dealing directly with 'citizenship education'<sup>7</sup>, amounting to only 0.2 % of the 2018-2020 budget. It must be noted that there is an over representation of south-west Member States among the beneficiaries, generating a geographical imbalance and hindering the potential of the European Solidarity Corps. In addition, the limited budget of the new programme, just over 1 billion euros for the period 2021-2027, does not give any indication that the programme's potential can be achieved.

### ***The European Parliament Ambassador School Programme and Euroscola***

The sustained growth of the European Parliament Ambassador School Programme (EPAS), implemented at EU level since 2016, has demonstrated the existing interest in providing and receiving EU citizenship education. EPAS reaches out to secondary and vocational schools and students. It has an inbuilt system of teachers' training, thus all educators taking part in the programme have been trained in EU citizenship education.

After the school year 2020-2021, the network of EPAS counts with 3.897 Senior Ambassadors and 58.900 Junior Ambassadors, from 1.572 certified schools in the 27 Member States. During the school year 2020-2021, schools have hosted 11.980 EPAS events, with the participation of 242 MEPs. The introduction of digital participation has extended the reach of activities. Greater inter-institutional cooperation, in particular through the new Europe Direct centres, has also contributed to the expansion of the programme. However, difficulties to reach schools in rural areas remain. Equally, participation of teachers and students is done on voluntary basis, without official recognition of the programme by national authorities, limiting further engagement by participants. Furthermore, human and budgetary constraints pose difficulties to its EU-wide expansion.

Euroscola, set up in 1990, complements the EPAS, and has enabled students to participate in simulations of the European Parliament's work. Each year, Euroscola hosts 20 sessions per year

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<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/#search/project/keyword=citizenship%2520school&programmes\[0\]=31052583&matchAllCountries=false](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/projects/#search/project/keyword=citizenship%2520school&programmes[0]=31052583&matchAllCountries=false)

<sup>7</sup> <https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity/projects>



in Strasbourg, welcoming around 10.000 students aged between 16 to 18 years old from all Member States. The European Parliament has strengthened the synergy between the EPAS and Euroscola, enabling EPAS showing greater engagement to benefit from Euroscola, a highly regarded opportunity by participants.

### **Citizenship education in Member States**

The conclusions reached in this report are based on the limited data available at the European level, which only offers a partial picture of how citizenship education is taught and integrated in schools across the Union. The most complete information offering comparable data for Member States is the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), supported by the European Commission, with its latest edition dating back to 2016 and covering only 14 Member States<sup>8</sup>. A new edition is expected by 2022. The European Commission Joint Research Centre carried out an analysis based on the ICCS data in 2018. This is complemented by the 2017 Eurydice report offering qualitative data covering all Member States. Additionally, the European Commission dedicated its 2018 Education and Training monitor to citizenship education. Complementing these sources, the EPRS 2021 report on implementation of citizenship education actions in the EU, offers a review of 10 Member States in 2021.

A further difficulty in assessing the implementation of citizenship education lies in the fluidity of the concept and the lack of a unified definition across studies.

### ***Key findings on the implementation of education policies regarding citizenship education***

Taking the broadest definition, the Eurydice 2017 report finds that citizenship education was part of the national curricula for general education in all countries. In most Member States there is a focus at the policy level on concepts such as democracy, freedom, justice and inclusion. These curricula combine classical approaches on citizenship education fostering a better understanding of political institutions and processes, with multidimensional skills and competences, to encourage constructive interactions, thinking critically and acting in a socially responsible and democratic manner. The ICCS study concludes that there is a predominant national focus in teaching citizenship education, while the international dimensions (European and global) is not so strong. In some Member States, tension arises between the national and supranational level as well as the collective and individual scope of citizenship education. In these cases, such as Poland or Hungary, more emphasis is placed on developing a nationalist interpretation of citizenship, culture and history valuing discipline and adaptation rather than on freedom and critical engagement. Moreover, the EPRS report highlights that citizenship education easily falls prey to politicisation, which impacts the content, methods and hours devoted to the subject. These factors can vary substantially with changes in government.

Modes of teaching citizenship education vary substantially. Citizenship education can be a separate subject, it can be integrated into broader compulsory subjects or learning areas such as the social sciences or language studies, or it may be a cross-curricular objective jointly delivered by different teachers. In practice, a preference for cross-curricular approaches can be observed. However, this requires considerable teacher training for a high number of teachers and coordination across faculties. As a separate subject, citizenship education is often taught at

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<sup>8</sup> Belgium (Flemish region), Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia state), Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Sweden.



secondary level. In these cases, teacher training regarding content, competences and required skills is crucial to successful delivery. Moreover, specialised teachers can provide important support to others if the subject is taught transversally.

Often, curricula are accompanied with general, specific objectives as well as learning outcomes as guidance for curriculum implementation. In 2017, at least 19 countries combined all of them. Some experts point out that overloaded curricula, traditional teaching and highly centralised education systems create discrepancies between the curriculum prescriptions and actual practice in schools.

High variations across Member States are found regarding the time devoted to the subject. When the subject is taught independently, number of hours tend to be higher. A considerable variation is also found on the number of school years in which the compulsory separate subject is taught, ranging from 1 to 12 years.

In 2017, national tests in citizenship education were at some point administered in general education in 17 education systems, generally at the end of a school year. Only a few education systems administer such tests to evaluate the education system as a whole or to assess the school in order to improve the area of citizenship education.

Regarding preparedness to teach citizenship education, in 2017, half of the countries did not have regulations or recommendations in place concerning citizenship education competences through initial teacher education (ITE). Very few systems actually trained teachers on how to evaluate or continuously obtain up-to-date relevant knowledge on the core issues of citizenship education. This is particularly important regarding the European dimension of citizenship education, where deep knowledge about the Union is often lacking among educational professionals.

Importantly, there is a lack of understanding on how to evaluate effectively citizenship education, stemming from a lack of guidance by education authorities. In 2017, a third of the countries surveyed did not provide any central level regulations or recommendations on the assessment of citizenship education.

All sources indicate an even lower attention to citizenship education in initial vocational education and training (IVET) in comparison with general education.

### ***Key findings on student's attainment on citizenship education***

The ICCS study showed an increase in average civic knowledge scores between the previous edition in 2009 and 2016. The results from the 2016 ICCS show a wide variation within and among the EU Member States participating in the study, with the majority of participant countries' students showing competences above the threshold. Only 35% of students showed a holistic knowledge and understanding of civic and citizenship concepts and demonstrate some critical perspective. Additionally, the study showed gendered differences, with the female student population scoring statistically higher than their male counterparts. Experts warn that the threshold level will probably be insufficient to address the above-mentioned challenges and changes<sup>9</sup>; which highlights the need to devise new strategies for teaching citizenship education.

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<sup>9</sup>[https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/edc/pdf/european\\_union\\_postet2020\\_expert\\_panel\\_inclusion\\_and\\_citizenship.pdf](https://www.dcu.ie/sites/default/files/edc/pdf/european_union_postet2020_expert_panel_inclusion_and_citizenship.pdf)

Regarding European citizenship education, the ICCS concludes that in 2016, 83 % of surveyed students reported they had opportunities to learn about the history of Europe in school. On average, only 50 % of students reported having opportunities to learn about Europe in school. Importantly, the report concluded that students' support for cooperation among European countries was positively associated with higher levels of civic knowledge.

Both civic knowledge and civic self-efficacy when undertaking civic actions are predictors of students' perceptions of democratic institutions. However, this does not always translate into greater trust in democratic institutions with only 50 % of students trusting civic institutions, while 70% of students trust the European Union and 72 % the European Parliament

When looking at implementation modes, studies conclude that students do not learn about citizenship only by acquiring knowledge. School practices such as classroom discussions and learning by doing activities foster critical thinking and help students understand others and develop open-minded social attitudes. Importantly, fostering active participation in democratic practices in school is positively related to their expected future political and electoral participation. Equally, active community involvement is positively associated with students' civic attitudes. Lastly, a positive correlation was found between general education attainment and active citizenship.

While this report focuses mainly on formal education, studies and stakeholders highlight the importance of developing a lifelong learning approach to citizenship education.

## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the implementation of citizenship education actions (2021/2008(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Articles 2 and 10(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU),
- having regard to Articles 9 and 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 March 2021 on the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan (COM(2021)0102),
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights proclaimed and signed by the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the Commission on 17 November 2017,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 November 2014 on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture – The European Commission’s contribution to the Leaders’ meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017 (COM/2017/0673),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 June 2016 entitled ‘Supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism’ (COM(2016)0379),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 1 July 2020 entitled ‘European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience’ (COM(2020)0274),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 September 2020 entitled ‘Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 – Resetting education and training for the digital age’ (COM(2020)0624),
- having regard to the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), in particular its objective of promoting equity, social cohesion, and active citizenship,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 September 2020 on achieving the European Education Area by 2025 (COM(2020)0625),
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 189, 4.6.2018, p. 1.

values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching<sup>2</sup>,

- having regard to the Council resolution of 19 February 2021 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 17 May 2021 on strengthening the multilevel governance when promoting the participation of young people in decision-making processes<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education (Paris Declaration 2015), signed on 17 March 2015 in Paris, France,
- having regard to the report by European Citizens' Panel 1 of the Conference of the Future of Europe entitled 'Stronger economy, social justice and jobs / Education, culture, youth and sport / Digital transformation',
- having regards to the European Youth Event 2021 report entitled 'Youth ideas report for the Conference on the Future of Europe',
- having regard to the Commission's Eurydice report of 7 November 2017 entitled 'Citizenship Education at School in Europe, 2017',
- having regard to the Union of European Federalists (UEF) resolution on a systematic approach to European citizenship education, adopted on 4 July 2021 at the UEF XXVII European Congress in Valencia,
- having regard to the May 2021 briefing by the European Parliamentary Research Service on the European Education Area and the 2030 strategic framework for education and training,
- having regard to the Commission's Eurydice report of 19 October 2021 entitled 'Equity in school education in Europe – Structures, policies and student performance',
- having regard to the Commission report of 15 December 2021 entitled 'EU Citizenship Report 2020 – Empowering citizens and protecting their rights',
- having regard to the Commission's European democracy action plan of 3 December 2020,
- having regard to the summary of findings and the discussions at the 2019 Forum on the Future of Learning published by the Commission's European education and training expert panel on 7 December 2019,
- having regard to the Commission report of June 2020 entitled 'European Union

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<sup>2</sup> OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 66, 26.2.2021, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 241, 21.6.2021, p. 3.

## Citizenship and Democracy’,

- having regard to the Jean Monnet Network’s 2017 guidelines for teacher educators on children’s identity and citizenship in Europe,
  - having regard to the Commission report of 18 March 2015 entitled ‘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’,
  - having regard to the 2018 and 2020 Education and Training Monitor,
  - having regard to the European Education and Training Expert Panel’s issue paper on inclusion and citizenship,
  - having regard to its resolution of 12 April 2016 on learning EU at school<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2016 on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 11 November 2021 on the European Education Area: a shared holistic approach<sup>7</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 12 December 2017 on the EU Citizenship Report 2017: Strengthening Citizens’ Rights in a Union of Democratic Change<sup>8</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2021 on Citizens’ dialogues and Citizens’ participation in the EU decision-making<sup>9</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A9-0000/2021),
- A. whereas education is a fundamental right that should be equally accessible to all; whereas the Pillar of Social Rights states that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education in order to participate fully in society;
- B. whereas new systemic changes such as the climate crisis, supranational political integration and the digital shift require the corresponding adaptation of educational systems, including citizenship education;
- C. whereas citizenship education must be understood as multilevel, encompassing local, regional, national, European and global citizenship;

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<sup>5</sup> OJ C 58, 15.2.2018, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 11, 12.1.2018, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2021)0452.

<sup>8</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0487.

<sup>9</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2021)0345.

- D. whereas sociopolitical changes observed in Member States, ranging from social polarisation and low institutional trust to democratic backsliding, the erosion of the rule of law, exclusionary nationalism and the instrumentalisation of Euroscepticism for political purposes, along with the rise of extremist movements and authoritarianism, may pose a serious threat to European democracies and destabilise the EU as a whole; whereas strengthening citizenship education in formal, non-formal, informal and lifelong-learning education could play an important role in countering this trend;
- E. whereas the emergence of a dynamic European citizenship has been hindered by a knowledge and emotional gap; whereas insufficient knowledge about the EU and poor understanding of its added value may contribute to the perception of a democratic deficit and may lead to Euroscepticism in Member States;
- F. whereas the Commission has failed to undertake any substantial initiative of systemic nature in this strategic field;

### ***The state of citizenship education in the EU***

- 1. Regrets that there is no common definition of citizenship education; believes that teaching citizenship education involves a combination of knowledge, skills, competences and care;
- 2. Is concerned about the limited focus on European and global citizenship in national curricula;
- 3. Underlines that sociopolitical and global changes will require an increase in the current level of citizenship education; is concerned about the imbalances in terms of average civic knowledge across and within Member States;
- 4. Points out that while some aspects of citizenship education are present in most national curricula, there are strong differences across Member States; recalls that initial and continuous teacher training must be a priority in the field of citizenship education;
- 5. Decries the lack of attention to citizenship education in initial vocational education and training;
- 6. Recalls the crucial pedagogical role of non-formal and informal learning, including youth work, volunteering and sport, in developing social and civic skills, competences and behaviours, and in shaping responsible and active European citizens;

### ***EU policies in the field of citizenship education***

- 7. Regrets that the political consensus at European level on the need to advance citizenship education and the teaching of common European values has not been translated into concrete objectives, targets and benchmarks; concludes that citizenship education policies suffer from an implementation gap;
- 8. Regrets that EU programmes have not been able to provide substantial and effective support for EU and global citizenship education;
- 9. Finds that EU programmes make a limited contribution to advancing certain dimensions

of citizenship education, mainly because of a lack of explicit direct support, limited resources and uneven geographical coverage; regrets that so far, EU-funded projects in this area have not had a widespread long-term impact;

10. Affirms that on the basis of Articles 9, 10, 165 and 166 TEU, the EU has a primary responsibility to foster EU citizenship education as a way to ensure deeper knowledge among its citizens of the European project as a union of democratic states, thus guaranteeing its citizens the right to fully participate in political life and decision-making at EU level;
11. Notes that some Member States acknowledge the positive influence of EU policy developments in fostering educational change in the area of citizenship education;
12. Is concerned about the lack of effective action by the Commission regarding the advancement of ‘active citizenship’, which is a key competence of citizenship education, while other basic competences are reflected in the ET 2020 benchmarks or are supported by dedicated competence frameworks to facilitate teaching and uptake at national level;

### ***Recommendations for a renewed European citizenship education***

13. Considers that in the post-ET 2020 cooperation framework, attention should be focused on developing curricula and national assessments in citizenship education that integrate all relevant aspects of the subject area;
14. Calls for the development of concrete objectives and benchmarks on citizenship education in the European Education Area enabling framework, including European citizenship education;
15. Underlines the need for a more structured approach towards the identification and dissemination of the results of citizenship education projects from EU programmes;
16. Highlights the need to decisively advance the research on how to best teach and assess citizenship education, taking into account new systemic and contextual changes;
17. Calls on the Commission to include European citizenship learning modules and a visit programme to heritage and memory sites of historical significance for the Union and the host countries as an integral part of any Erasmus + and European Solidarity Corps mobility opportunity;
18. Calls for a comprehensive European strategy on European civic and citizenship education, as well as the creation of supporting platforms to promote its implementation, focusing notably on shared EU democratic values and principles;
19. Calls for coordination across EU programmes to be reinforced in order to increase the systemic impact of citizenship education;
20. Asks the Commission to propose a recommendation containing indicative primary and secondary school curricula on the EU and global civic education for its voluntary adoption by the Member States, in full respect of Treaty provisions; believes that said common demonstrative curricula should foster a better understanding of the existing EU



institutions, the European electoral and decision-making processes, and the history and cultures of Member States and the common links between them, combining different pedagogical approaches and methods, including theoretical and project-based learning;

21. Calls for the establishment of a new EU agency on citizenship education to improve accessibility to and the quality of citizenship education in all Member States and to support the development of a European dimension in citizenship education;
22. Considers the Conference on the Future of Europe a timely opportunity to hold a multilevel discussion on policy development in the area of education and culture; calls on the Member States and the Commission to embrace and take forward the concluding reports of the Conference's Working Group on Education, Culture, Youth and Sport;
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23. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.