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## CONTEXT

Education and training are seen as key actors in the development of a knowledge society. And more recently, the role of education and training in strengthening a shared European identity is stressed. Therefore, both the EU and the member states put forward daring targets to energize the sectors of education and training making them more performing.

## A SHORT HISTORY OF EUNEC

In order to give these innovation policies a broad societal support, governments mobilize the educational and social-economic stakeholders such as representatives of school boards, teacher trade unions, parent and student organizations and social partners to participate actively in the conception and the implementation of policies and activities in education and training.

Therefore most of the member states have set up national or regional formal institutions of consideration and consultation, bringing together all these stakeholders or part of them, in some cases together with experts, to formulate their recommendations.

Education councils have diverse statutes, but they all function as an advisory body towards governments on future education policies.

In 1999, some councils decided to work together on European educational subjects, and, to encourage a closer and more intense cooperation, the education councils created in 2000 EUNEC, a **European network of national and regional education councils**, with the support and the help of the European Commission.

In 2010, EUNEC celebrated its tenth anniversary, during a conference on stakeholder participation held in Brussels, and organized by the Flemish Education Council and “Le Conseil de l’Education et de la Formation” of the French Community in Belgium, two founding members of the network.

From 2008 until 2013, EUNEC was recognized and granted as European organisation acting at European level in the field of education and training under the Jean Monnet programme (DG EAC N° 28/07). Within this programme, EUNEC obtained two consecutive three year Framework Partnership agreements.

In 2014, EUNEC was granted under the Erasmus+ programme, Key Action 3 for civil society cooperation in the field of education and training. This grant allowed the network to continue its efforts to enhance cooperation on education and training in Europe and to aim for more sustainable results.

From 2015, EUNEC is no longer granted under Erasmus+, because of changes in the eligibility criteria. EUNEC continues its work and pursues its objectives with a limited number of actions, supported by member contributions.

## MISSION

EUNEC is convinced that all those involved in education (the European Commission, the governments of the Member States, the education councils, the stakeholders and all European citizens) can benefit from this European network where major evolutions in educational systems can be discussed thoroughly and prepared for a successful implementation.

EUNEC aims to discuss the findings of European policy documents in the field of education and training, to determine points of view and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC members and participants at national level. EUNEC has the objective that the councils should put the main international policy lines high on the national agenda.

### **EUNEC wants to work in two directions:**

EUNEC wants to disseminate and discuss – at the national and at the European level - documents, texts, studies... that are launched by the European Commission within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Bologna process, the Copenhagen process, Education and Training 2020.

With sound and coherent statements, the members of EUNEC want to influence the discussions and the decisions on the major European issues in education and training both on the European and on the national level.

### **TARGET GROUPS**

Through the members, education councils, EUNEC reaches stakeholders, experts and policy makers in the field of education and training in Europe.

EUNEC members are education councils. An education council must meet the following criteria (Statutes, Chapter II, art. 6.1):

- The council operates as a permanent body
- The council acts independently from any single interest through the presence of a range of members from different social groups, political affiliations and/or academic perspectives.
- The council has as principal goal to provide advice on educational and training policy.
- The advisory role is embedded in the policy making process at the level where the main competences on education and/or training policy are attributed.

The composition of the education councils guarantees the involvement of all the principal stakeholders in education in a region/country. This way, EUNEC wants to reach all stakeholders (policy makers, social partners, parents, students, teachers, providers...) in education throughout the European Union and beyond.

## EUNEC MEMBERS IN 2018

Members are national councils, or regional councils, such as in Belgium where education and initial training are exclusively regional matters.

### Members of the Executive Committee and of the General Assembly

Those members are entitled to take part in all the activities of the network. They have a full responsibility in the network as described in part III and IV of the Statutes (competences of the general assembly and the executive committee).

FLEMISH COMMUNITY (BELGIUM): Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR)

FRENCH COMMUNITY (BELGIUM): Conseil de l'Éducation et de la Formation (CEF)

THE NETHERLANDS: Onderwijsraad

PORTUGAL: Conselho Nacional de Educação (CNE)

LITHUANIA: Lietovous svietimo taruba (LST), the Lithuanian Education Council

CYPRUS : Symvoulío Paideias, the Cyprus Education Council

FRANCE: CNESCO (Conseil National d'Évaluation du Système Scolaire)

### Members of the General Assembly

Those members are entitled to take part in the general assembly, in the seminars and conferences and other initiatives they are invited to by the executive committee. They receive information produced by EUNEC on European, international and national policy lines.

ESTONIA: Estonian Education Forum (EEF)

QUEBEC: Conseil Supérieur de l'Éducation

SPAIN: Consejo Escolar del Estado (CEE)

ROMANIA: Institute of Educational Sciences (IES)

IRELAND: Teaching Council

MALTA: Curriculum Management Department

HUNGARY: Public Education Council

## **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE EDUCATION POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

The objective is to

- enhance the cooperation on these issues between the EUNEC members
- disseminate European proposals and tools on national/regional level; EUNEC disseminates European documents and initiatives to the members of its councils and tries to clarify them by summaries, comments or translations.

### ***A REVIEW OF THE MAIN POLICY LINES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING***

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In 2018, the EUNEC secretariat prepared overviews of the main policy lines in education and training. These documents present an overview of the documents that education councils need to integrate the European common policy lines and frameworks in their recommendations towards national Ministers of Education and governments.

These synthesis documents describe in a very concise and accessible way the new policy documents. They summarize the main lines of the documents and offer links to the full texts. They take into account all documents linked to education and training and transversal domains (youth, culture, welfare, employment) by all relevant decision making organizations (Parliament, Council, Presidency, Commission). The main policy lines are also paying attention to other international organisations

working in the field of education and training, such as OECD (a.o. CERI studies), UNESCO.

In 2018, the following themes were given major attention:

### **General EU policy: Education and training high at the general policy agenda**

Already in November 2017, European leaders met in Gothenburg to discuss the future role of education and culture in strengthening a shared European identity. This informal meeting of heads of state and government took place in the framework of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth. As a contribution to this meeting, the European Commission prepared a Communication on 'A European Education Area by 2025: Fostering a European Identity through Education and Culture'.

The European Council (December 2017) adopted conclusions on education, which is exceptional. In the conclusions, the Council states that education and culture are key to building inclusive and cohesive societies, and to sustaining competitiveness.

In the same context, the Commission pleads for more money for mobility. The Communication 'A modern budget for a Union that protects, empowers and defends' (2 May 2018) is the Commission proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027. The Commission asks to double the budget for Erasmus+ and for the Solidarity Corps.

### **General EU policy: The European semester**

Introduced in 2010, the European Semester enables the EU member countries to coordinate their economic policies throughout the year and address the economic challenges facing the EU.

Goals of the European Semester

- ensuring sound public finances (avoiding excessive government debt)

- preventing excessive macroeconomic imbalances in the EU supporting
- structural reforms, to create more jobs and growth
- boosting investment.

Each year, the Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of each country's plans for budget, macroeconomic and structural reforms. It then provides EU governments with country-specific recommendations for the next 12-18 months. It also monitors EU countries' efforts towards the Europe 2020 targets.

On 21 November 2018, the European Semester Package has been published.

The Autumn package represents the beginning of the 2019 European Semester cycle of economic and social policy coordination. It includes:

- The 2019 Annual Growth Survey
- The 2019 Alert Mechanism Report
- The 2019 draft Joint Employment Report

### **Work towards a European Education Area**

The European Commission has set out its vision for how we can **create a European Education Area by 2025**. The Communication is intended as a contribution at the meeting of 17 November 2017 in Gothenburg, where European leaders met to discuss the future role of education and culture in strengthening a shared European identity.

### **The results of the EU Council for Education**

- The Council adopted conclusions on a renewed agenda for higher education. The overall aim is to modernize higher education so that it keeps pace with the rapidly evolving environment.
- It also adopted conclusions on school development and excellent teaching. The conclusions highlight the importance of ensuring

high-quality and inclusive education for all, empowering teachers and school leaders, and shifting towards more effective, equitable and efficient governance.

- The Council adopted a recommendation for tracking graduates as a way of encouraging and supporting member states in their efforts to improve the quality and availability of information on what graduates do after leaving higher education or vocational education and training.
- The Council reached a general approach on a draft regulation on the European Solidarity Corps. The regulation aims to strengthen cohesion, solidarity and democracy in Europe by offering young people the possibility of volunteering or working on beneficial projects across Europe.
- A Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching.
- A Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.
- Ministers reached an agreement on a partial general approach on a proposal for a Regulation on the Erasmus+ programme.
- The Council also adopted a Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad.

## **The programmes and priorities of the Bulgarian, Austrian and Romanian presidencies of the EU**

### **The work programme of the European Commission: Delivering on promises and preparing for the future**

#### **A Digital Education Action Plan**

that outlines how the EU can help people, educational institutions and

education systems better adapt to life and work in an age of rapid digital change by:

- making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning;
- developing the digital competences and skills needed for living and working in an age of digital transformation;
- improving education through better data analysis and foresight.

## **The education and training monitor**

### **Eurydice publications**

- Citizenship education at school in Europe
- Teaching careers in Europe: Access, Progression and Support
- The organisation of school time in Europe
- The organisation of the academic year in Europe
- Home education policies in Europe
- National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education 2018-2019
- Structural indicators for education

### **Developments in other policy domains**

- an overarching Communication on 'Building a Stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies' which outlines how the Commission is taking forward the Gothenburg agenda and the European Council's mandate;
- a Youth Strategy for the period 2019–2027 to empower Europe's youth and give them a stronger voice in EU policymaking, reflecting the importance the Commission attaches to investing in young people and their future;
- a New Agenda for Culture to raise awareness of Europe's shared, diverse heritage. It aims to use the full potential of culture in

building a more inclusive and fairer Union, supporting innovation, creativity, sustainable jobs and growth and in reinforcing the external relations of the EU;

- The Council reached a partial general approach (the Council's position) on a proposal for a Regulation on the European Solidarity Corps 2021-2027.
- A European framework for high quality and efficient training places;
- Integrated early childhood development policies.

### **The World Bank report: 'World Development Report: Learning to Realize Education's Promise'.**

### **The IEA International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS);**

### **UNESCO publications and policy documents**

- Global Education Monitoring Report 2017: Accountability in education: meeting our commitments;
- The SDG's, Sustainable Development Goals, and more in particular SDG 4 on education;
- Global Education Monitoring Report 2018: Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls;
- A Global Framework of Reference on Digital Literacy Skills.

### **OECD publications and policy documents**

- Education at a glance 2018
- The resilience of students with an immigrant background: factors that shape wellbeing
- Equity in education
- Trends shaping education

### **Council of Europe Competences for democratic culture Reference Framework**

All these documents have been presented and discussed at the executive committee and general assembly meetings. These discussions are important, as an instrument for in-service training of the presidents, secretary generals and members of national and regional education councils. They pull the attention to new developments, to possible links between EU and international frameworks and national policies, to new approaches for ongoing and future advisory work. They offer a basis for common work and collaboration on new recommendations.

These documents are also important for determining emerging themes and fixing the themes EUNEC will work on in the following year.

Education councils offer platforms to local, regional and national stakeholders such as education providers, school boards, school heads, teacher trade unions, student organizations, parents' organizations. Through the channel of the council a lot of stakeholders get an insight in the European education policy. The states of affairs play an important role in raising the awareness and the understanding of advisers of Ministers and local, regional and national education stakeholders of the common European reference frameworks. By taking them into account in preparing national recommendations, the education councils contribute highly to the national implementation strategies of these frameworks.

These states of affairs are also available for a broader audience: they are published on the website ([www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu)) reaching individual citizens as well as organizations.

## EUNEC PARTICIPATES IN THE DEBATE ON THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

EUNEC insists on the importance of (more) stakeholder involvement in European policies. For that reason, EUNEC uses every possible occasion to express its viewpoints on relevant matters in education and training on the European level.

### *Contributions of EUNEC representatives at EU conferences and the European Summit*

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#### *European events organized by the institutions*

Manuel Miguéns, EUNEC president, participated at the **first European Summit**, Brussels, 25 January 2018.



In past years, the European Commission used to organise an Education Stakeholders Forum every year. From this year on, the Stakeholders Forum will be organised every two years, and replaced every two years by an Education Summit (the target group is more ministries and policy makers here).

The Summit was hosted by Tibor Navracsics, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

The Summit explored:

- how better to address inequality in education systems
- how citizens can benefit from a future European Education Area
- how education can help transmit our common values
- what competences will be needed for the decades to come

A representative of EUNEC participated at the following other events organized by the institutions:

- Information session on the priorities of the Austrian Presidency of the EU, Brussels, 27 June 2018
- Conference on languages, Brussels, 27 September 2018
- Launch of the Education and Training Monitor, 16 October 2018

### *Other international or European events*

When EUNEC is invited to an international event (conference, debate, workshop, seminar, survey), the secretariat forwards the invitation to the members by e-mail.

In accordance to the members' expertise and interest, a EUNEC member or the secretariat represent the network at these events. Positions taken during these conferences are based on the common understanding laid down in the statements. At conferences and workshops, EUNEC representatives are the voice of the network.



The EUNEC representative spreads the information throughout the network. The executive committee insists on the multiplying effect of participation in conferences on behalf of EUNEC.

Every representative is expected to make a report and send it to the secretariat. The secretariat makes a compilation of these reports in a document 'attended events' that is presented and commented during general assembly meetings and published on the website [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu).

This is an overview of such attended events:

- CNESCO international seminar, in partnership with CIEP on the methodology of international comparisons conferences;
- Education à l'orientation, Cnesco, 8-9 November 2018;
- Global Education Meeting 2018: Education in an interconnected world: Ensuring inclusive and equitable development.

## THEME IN THE PICTURE IN 2018

### *PROMOTING CITIZENSHIP AND COMMON VALUES THROUGH EDUCATION*

The spring seminar of EUNEC dealt with the theme of 'Promoting citizenship and common values through education'.

This seminar was hosted by the colleagues from the CNE (Portuguese Education Council), and took place in Lisbon, on 1 and 2 March 2018. About 50 persons (education stakeholders, experts and policy makers), coming from 13 countries, participated at this event.

The link between education and citizenship has always been prominently present in the work of EUNEC. The interest of EUNEC in the theme goes back as early as in 2003/2004 in The Hague.

At this moment, the theme of citizenship education is, again, very prominent on the education policy agenda, after the terrorist attacks, and the raise of new populist parties in many countries, and the polarisation of the political debate the last few years. Within Europe, the discussion is vivid, and education is facing new challenges, given the context of a number of societal disruptions.

Reasons enough for the EUNEC general assembly to decide to organize this meeting, with specific focus on how citizenship can be promoted through education.

After welcome words from EUNEC and from the Portuguese Council, Stefaan Hermans, Director of Policy Strategy and Evaluation of DG Education and Culture, European Commission, set the scene. Tristan McCowen, University College, London, explained how the concept of citizenship education is being retaught. Isabel Menezes, member of the Portuguese Council, presented practices from and for the life of schools, linked to EU policy lines.

In the afternoon, Christopher Reynolds for the Council of Europe, explained about recent work of the Council of Europe at the Education Department. Ralph Carstens, Co-Head for international studies at the International Association for Educational Achievement (IEA) presented the results of the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) 2016. Reinhilde Pulinx, staff member of the Flemish Education Council, linked theory and practice, presenting the results of her doctoral research on 'Dynamic relations between teachers' beliefs on language and citizenship on the one hand and teacher-student-interaction on the other hand'.

The presentations were followed by a school visit at the 'Agrupamento de Escolas do Carregado', where several projects have been presented: eco-school, school arts, special education, orchestra and multicultural project. The closing of the day took place at dinner in Salvaterra de Magos vocational school.

The second day of the seminar, the floor was given to EUNEC members, who presented cases related to citizenship projects. During the concluding debate, input was gathered for draft statements.

All participants adopted **statements** on the subject.

A **report** of the seminar including the statements, was sent to all participants, to all EUNEC members, to the European Commission and Parliament, OECD and other international organizations active in the field of education and training. It was published on the website.

## MANAGEMENT OF THE NETWORK

### *Organization of the network*

All the members of the organization are allowed to be represented in the **General Assembly**. The responsibilities of the General Assembly include the right to:

- amend the statutes;
- elect the President of the network;
- nominate and discharge the members of the Executive Committee
- determine the status of members and acceptance and exclusion of a member
- approve the budget and the annual account
- discuss and decide on matters concerning the operation, activities and working programme of the network;
- discuss and decide matters concerning the existence of the network;
- approve or amend the internal rules of procedure
- dissolve the organisation;

In 2018, the General Assembly met on 28 February and on 8 June. The minutes of these meetings are published at [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu) (management section).

The **Executive Committee** is the board of the network. The executive

committee has to prepare the proposals that are submitted to the General Assembly.

The Executive Committee must:

- implement the decisions of the General Assembly;
- announce the meetings of the General Assembly and the other network activities;
- approve new members
- appoint the auditor
- prepare the accounts after receiving the auditor's report
- decide on the budget
- take decisions in accordance with the statutes of the network, in accordance with the interests of the network or with the policy of the General Assembly;
- report to the General Assembly on its activities and its financial management
- nominate the general secretary
- decide on the annual fees

The executive committee is at the same time also the place of real exchanges and networking about the national and European priorities in the field of education, the place to discuss new European policy documents, the place where the state of affairs is presented.

Composition of the Executive Committee in 2018: Manuel Miguéns (president), Mia Douterlungne (general-secretary), Karin Westerbeek, Maria Emília Brederode Rodrigues dos Santos, Rosa Herpelinck, Jean-Pierre Malarme, Egly Pantelakis, Nathalie Mons.

In 2018, the Executive Committee met on 28 February and on 8 June. The minutes of these meetings are published at [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu) (management section).

The **EUNEC secretariat** is composed by the President, the General Secretary, two experts and the secretary.

They coordinate the project and assume the daily management of the network; they keep the contact with the European institutions and the agency (Jean Monnet grant). They also represent the network in several European events organized in Brussels, where the secretariat is based.

In 2018, the presidency was taken up by the Portuguese Education Council; the General Secretariat and the secretariat are assumed by the Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (Belgium, Flemish Community)

### *EUNEC annual account 2018*

#### **EUNEC 1 January 2018 - 31 December 2018**

earnings		<b>19 000,00</b>
	Membership fees	19 000,00
expenditure		<b>18 702,14</b>
	Hosting and support website	1 895,38
	Seminar Lisbon March 2018	14 480,58
	Participation Education and Training Forum	45,05
	Belgian Law Gazette	129,35
	Auditor	2 151,78
balance		<b>297,86</b>

bank account balance 31/12/2017	32667,08
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bank account balance 31/12/2018	32964,94
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## ***ANNEX: EUNEC statements on 'Promoting citizenship and common values through education'***

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These statements are based on the lessons learnt during the seminar in Lisbon, March 2018. They identify key issues for further debate within EUNEC and within each education council, member of the network.

EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively to the European Commission, the European Parliament and relevant DG's. EUNEC also wants to promote action by its members at national/regional level. These statements can contribute to the national advisory opinions of education councils. They should lead to reflection and action by relevant stakeholders in the field of education and training, such as providers of education, teacher trade unions, social partners, students, parents and experts in the field of education and training.

### ***Why is citizenship education at the centre of the policy debate?***

In 2002 already, EUNEC approved statements on citizenship education. The education councils acknowledged the crucial role education must play in the preservation of European democratic societies.

Research, since the 1990s, underpins a growing political disinterest and disaffection both by young people and adults. As engagement of young people seems to be a good predictor of political engagement during adulthood, this is a worrying tendency.

This crisis seems more worrying today because new people want to participate, in relation to new issues, and in new ways. We certainly face a decrease of traditional participation, but at the same time we witness the rise of new forms of participation.

Participation and the core elements of the policy debate are changing because of the growing superdiversity of main European societies. The terrorist attacks in big European cities have been perceived as a strong

signal to invest in shared convictions and democratic values. The Brexit was a wake-up call for the European Union to strengthen the belief in a common purpose and a continuing peaceful society. After a wave of democratization, there is a 'democratic recession', with the surge of populism and a return to authoritarian political systems. The development of social media offers unknown possibilities for influencing the society and the policy debate. But the information overload and the threat of false news create new challenges for any policy debate and the development of an evidence based political opinion.

Comparative research (such as ICCS) on learning results in the domain of civic competences underlines the need for raising the civic competences of all citizens. Especially engagement with the fundamental principles of civics and citizenship and familiarity with concrete and basic features of democracy could be much stronger as it is now. In all countries, socio-economic background and gender are strong predictors of students' civic knowledge.

### ***Core elements of a concept of citizenship***

Citizenship in a superdiverse society is not an obvious fact. The concept balances between respecting diversity, identity and building common grounds for living together. Difference/diversity is seen in different ways of understanding the world, different ways of positioning yourself in society (identity) and social and cultural traditions. We cannot deny that our modern society is deeply divided by tensions between liberal and civic republican approaches, between emphasising civic rights or civic duties, between universality and difference, between local, national and global level, between criticality and conformity. Nevertheless, even the most diverse societies need an 'overlapping consensus' (John Rawls) to organise the co-existence in our societies. Living peacefully together in culturally diverse and democratic societies requires a mutual understanding and respect for shared values.

Part of the overlapping consensus can be found in the common values as described in the different declarations of human rights (UNO, European

Declaration on Human Rights): respect for the human dignity, active and passive rights of freedom. The respect for the rights of persons belonging to minorities, equality between men and women. Non-discrimination and tolerance are at the heart of our European societies and they are fundamental to their functioning. These are values that are not negotiable. And we must ensure that they are embraced by future generations.

Citizenship refers certainly to democracy based on the rule of law, pluralism and justice, an open and tolerant society where all forms of diversity are cherished as an asset and not as a threat.

The democratic participation of citizens and their taking part in the development of a common understanding of co-existence requires also an active policy to tackle social inequalities and structural disadvantages. Fairness, inclusion and equal opportunities strengthen the sense of belonging to shared values. People should feel that their voice really counts in public life.

International and national policy frameworks underpin the efforts of schools in civics

For the European Union all these societal developments were reasons to reconsider the development and the understanding of the common European values and the concept of European citizenship . The leaders of government gathered in Göteborg in 2017 and set the policy agenda for a social Europe. Education and training are put forward as main assets for the further development of the whole society. Education and training are recognised in their preventive (against radicalisation), inclusive (creating opportunities and chances for further development) and pro-active (giving way to the future) roles.

The Council of Europe has a long tradition of stimulating school systems in the development of the civic competences of pupils . The Council states that both the development of competences and democratic institutions are essential to sustain a culture of democracy. In addition, the democratic participation of all citizens within society requires measures to tackle social

inequalities and structural disadvantages, that will allow for ‘living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies’.

EUNEC welcomes these initiatives because education is put into the centre of the policy debate and is recognised as a main actor in the development of our societies. These initiatives call for a strong commitment of all parts of society to invest in education policies. Secondly, the European and international frameworks endorse the national policies with regard to citizenship.

### ***Main levers for citizenship education***

School is more and more becoming the ‘common house’ for young people. Therefore, it is a significant context for citizenship education, with high potential.

EUNEC identifies four main levers for citizenship education in schools:

- the learning content and didactic approaches;
- a school culture based on democratic values and respect for diversity;
- the competences of teachers and school teams;
- cooperation between schools and other societal actors.

### **Learning content and didactic approaches**

Education should stimulate the sharing of common values and an ethic reflex from an early age, and at all levels of education. EUNEC considers key competences such as critical thinking, distinguish between fact and fiction (both in print as on-line) as fundamental for civics. Digital awareness, media literacy and a critical approach to digital information should be strengthened in all curricula. Human rights and the underlying concept and principles should be part of any curriculum at schools. This will be important for the pupils’ qualification (for instance, in the workplace it is of vital importance to be able to work with a diversity of people), their socialisation (we want pupils and students to become democratic citizens), and their subjectification (meaning that on the basis of their knowledge and experiences children are able to take their own

stand, to formulate their own opinion and find their own place).

The CDC model (competences for democratic citizenship) developed by the Council of Europe offers a comprehensive model for such curriculum design. It is valid for learners at all ages and at all levels of education.

There is need for a more action-oriented focus within schools and beyond (interaction with the community). Students show new forms of participation and societal involvement that should be recognised as a positive contribution (involvement in internet activism, new forms of collaboration and a sharing economy). Students should be more encouraged to bring their experiences into the learning process. As such, maybe the picture is not as dramatic as we might interpret. Maybe it is more inspiring and more positive to start looking at what young people are doing. To reach this, the education system should recognise the existing knowledge of the pupils and consider the informal and not-formal learning processes that are critical for any form of civic education. There is need for opportunities to discuss, to debate, to confront real life issues.

### **Democratic school culture**

An even more challenging level of competence for youngsters is to be able to have an evidence based and articulated personal political opinion. This be a basis for active participation in the policy debate and for an active commitment in society.

The real challenge for education is to move from the intention to provide citizenship education, to doing it, putting it into practice. Democratic and civic competences can be learned at the school through promoting a democratic learning environment. Children and young people must have the agency and the right to have their say regarding what the future is going to be. Active participation of teachers, parents, students and the wider community in school governance gives pupils an idea of what democratic decision making is about and what it can change in concrete situations.

Schools are places where trust and mutual respect can be built. Playing

together and speaking to each other is a strong starting point to realize how much we have in common. Intercultural dialogue is about real contacts between real people (and pupils).

### **Fairness and inclusion in education systems**

The link between common values and inclusive education is crucial. If we want to create and sustain fair and inclusive societies, then the education systems need to develop the fundamentals for this approach by creating equal opportunities at school and in the class room.

Education policies should reach out to all learners and strengthening inclusion in early childhood, for youngsters at risk and early school leavers, for disadvantaged groups with low literacy, numeracy or digital competences.

### **Competences of teachers and of school teams**

Teachers play, as in many aspects of qualitative education, a crucial role. Introducing a complex concept of civic education with its different layers of competence, is impossible if teachers are not taken seriously as agents for change and for curriculum development. In too many innovation policies they are reduced to instruments. As shown in the research presented during the seminar the convictions and beliefs of teachers play a predominant role.