



Young People and Active European Citizenship

A seminar organised in the framework on the Partnership on Research in the Youth Field between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

European Youth Centre, Budapest
23-25 November, 2006

Call for applicants from the field of inter-disciplinary research

Deadline - September 15, 2006.

Introduction

The Partnership in the Youth Field between the Council of Europe and the European Commission is organised around the three pillars of training, research and activities in the Euro-Med field. Within the research strand, the Partnership's programme of seminars, research networking and knowledge production through the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (www.youth-knowledge.net) is based on the promotion of a dialogue between young people and their organisations, researchers, policy makers and youth workers.

Both the Council of Europe and the European Commission are promoting active citizenship through policies and programmes. The youth research strand of the Partnership programme between the two institutions aims to contribute to the work on citizenship by enabling evidenced-based analysis of the issues at stake in "European Citizenship". The role of research in this domain is both to reflect more generally on the topic of citizenship and its particular relevance in the European context, and more specifically to enter into dialogue with youth NGOs, youth policy makers and practitioners on the outcomes of European programmes and policies for young people.

The Council of Europe has historically been involved in the development of democratic citizenship and political participation both in the formal education sector and the youth sector. In 1997, a specific project on Education for Democratic Citizenship was initiated, and in 2005 the Council of Europe launched a European Year of Citizenship through Education. In 2006, it will embark on a new phase of the project on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, which will work towards the development of a frame of reference in this field.

The European Commission has set the promotion of active European citizenship as a priority for its new Youth in Action programme (2007 - 2013). To this end it proposes to finance activities that nurture young people's sense of European citizenship. The European Commission programme in the youth field complements the European youth policy field, structured by a framework of European cooperation agreed upon in 2002 by the European Commission and the Member

States, as a follow up to the Commission White Paper on “a new impetus for European youth.” When adopting this framework of European cooperation, Member States agreed to introduce the open method of coordination to the youth field, in view of promoting young people’s active citizenship. In mid-July 2006, the Commission will adopt a Communication on the active European citizenship of young people, encouraging their participation in democratic life and making proposals for a structured dialogue with young people.

In addition, the partnership between the European Commission and Council of Europe in the youth field has been working together over the last five years to formulate and run non-formal training courses on the topic of European citizenship.

Thematic background

The collapse of Communism and the period following it in the 1990s led many scholars to proclaim the “end of the nation-state”. The growth of economic globalisation and the rise of multi- and transnational companies, organisations and institutions in this period also lent considerable support to the thesis that the era of nationalism had come to an end. In this atmosphere, it was widely believed that the strengthening of the political dimension of European Union would contribute to loosening the negative dimensions of national allegiances and increasing the sense of European identity among the populations of western Europe and the former accession countries.

However, political factors over more than a decade, such as the Balkan wars, the attacks of September 11 2001, but also the presumed crisis of multiculturalism and the development of consolidated European immigration policies have led many to see this as premature triumphalism. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, an alleged sense of human insecurity, seems to have rekindled national identities and dampened federalist dreams. Despite the greater knowledge of the world and the increased possibilities for travel afforded by the conditions of globalisation, there appears to be a paradoxical retreat to the national, or even the very local level. This can be witnessed both in the rise in far right-wing extremism, but also in the apparently more benign “reclaiming” of national identities as a source of individual pride.

The picture is complicated by the fact that a number of young people see economic policies made at European level, in accordance with general global trends, as contributing to increased insecurity in the labour market and the withdrawal of workers’ rights. The consolidation of immigration policies across the member states of the European Union is also being seen by some as leading towards the building of an ever-fortified “fortress Europe” that risks becoming an exclusive club closed to the outside world. This partly explains the rejection of the European Constitution by a number of young people in France, the Netherlands and even Luxembourg, apparently demonstrating their preference for European programmes and policies that promote social inclusion, professional integration, active citizenship, mutual understanding and solidarity.

Political and institutional concern with citizenship stems from the perception that there is a growing apathy among citizens, including the young, reflected mainly by the growing tendency not to participate in elections or the fall in the membership of political parties, trades unions and NGOs. However, several researchers, particularly those in the youth field, have pointed out that what is perceived as political apathy may actually be indicative of the fact that the focus of participation has shifted. Whereas participation in political life was gauged by

assessing electoral turn-out and the membership of association and parties, it is realised today that participation is more fluid and not always as evident. The Internet, for example, has become a major site for the engagement with politics, an engagement which may appear to take on a more passive dimension, but which in fact may represent a new means of organising across communities and borders. It is clear that, because of this fluidity and the multiplicity of the forms taken it is becoming more and more difficult to harness participation to the political needs of institutions. What it means to be an active citizen is harder to define because we no longer can rely exclusively on the old tools for measuring the degree of participation. Evidently, new tools are necessary to evaluate what participating actively in society and politics means today.

To assess what European active citizenship means to young people in Europe it is necessary to question to what extent it can work in practice when not everyone shares the same rights. The exclusion of non-citizens, many of them born and brought-up in Europe as the children of immigrants, as well as the status of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers raises important question for the definition of European citizenship. Research is needed on the intersections between competing - ideological and concrete - definitions of citizenship: how can European active citizenship be given meaning beyond the core group of actual citizens and spread to include all those living in Europe, including the states comprising the Council of Europe well beyond the boundaries of the EU-25.

A debate on active European citizenship would be incomplete without analysing the role of municipalities, regions, schools, regional or local youth councils in promoting active European citizenship. How can debates be organised from the local to the European level, to ensure timely and effective input from young people to debates in European fora? Does giving young people such local spaces to discuss the European agenda contribute to reinforcing their sense of European citizenship? How to assure that these debates are inclusive, diverse and bring together different partners dealing with issues relevant to youth policies?

Focus of the Seminar

Both of the work of the Council of Europe and the European Commission towards the promotion of active citizenship and participation in democratic life and the concerns raised in the above discussion on the nature of citizenship today provide the basis for the research seminar.

The aim of the seminar is not only to delve more deeply into the meanings of citizenship and their contemporary applications, but also into the impact of the work of the European youth field in this domain. Consequently, theoretical, policy-oriented and evidence-based papers are sought in order to contribute to building a holistic picture of the issues at stake in the discussion of active European citizenship and young people.

Papers may address one of the following (not exhaustive) list of topics:

- Theorisations of European citizenship and/or identity;
- Political/historical context of European citizenship;
- Competing definitions of citizenship;
- Citizens and non-citizens;
- Participation of young people in civic life (participation in local projects, voluntary activities, organisations, etc.);

- Participation in representative democracy (voting, being elected, participating in political parties, role of ICT in voting, role of peers as ambassadors etc.);
- Access to active citizenship (inequality in participation, social exclusion etc.).
- Learning to participate (link between formal and non/informal learning: role of schools in civic education and learning by doing);
- Participation in policy shaping: dialogue with young people on the development of youth related policies: starting the debate at the local level and making timely contributions to European fora.

Logistics

The three-day seminar will take place on 23, 24, 25 November 2006 in the European Youth Centre, Budapest.¹ A maximum of 15 applicants will be selected to give papers. Other participants shall include non-researchers (policy makers, youth trainers, secretariat of the Council of Europe and European Commission) who will join the debate but will not present a paper.

Working language

The working language of the seminar will be English.

Profile of participants

Participants shall be:

- Researchers with or about to complete Masters or PhD studies on relevant topics;
- Researchers interested to contribute to the development of thinking in the specific field of youth with regards the seminar themes;
- Applicants may apply who have practical experience of working on the topic but they must also have a research profile.

Selection

A wide range of participants is encouraged to apply to give a paper at the seminar. Selection of presenters will be made on the basis of quality and relevance to the seminar themes. All participants must be able to work in English. The final selection will also take into account gender and regional balance amongst participants.

Participation in the seminar

The number of papers shall be restricted in order not to overburden the discussion and ensure an in-depth analysis of the theme. Papers shall therefore be organised according to thematic panels, coordinated by a chair. Paper-givers will be contacted by their session chair in advance of the seminar to coordinate the running of each session.

Papers must be presented within the time limit of 25 minutes. Those participants whose abstracts have been accepted for the seminar must deliver their completed papers by October 20, 2006. We reserve the right to make papers available on the internet prior and/or after the research seminar on the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (www.youth-knowledge.net) and on its discussion platform Youth Debate (www.youth-debate.net). An online discussion on the topics of the

¹ Arrival date: November 22.

seminar will be launched on the Youth Debate platform prior to the seminar in which all selected participants are encouraged to participate.

The organisers of the research seminar reserve the right to select papers for presentation.

Presentation of papers for publication

The outcomes of this seminar will be published as an edited collection. Papers presented at the seminar may be selected for inclusion (as one of approximately 15 chapters) in this collection; the organisers will make the selection. Selected contributors will receive a fee of 500€ once the collection's editor accepts the final manuscript. Paper presenters invited to publish their contribution in the collection should expect to revise and edit their manuscript to publication standard and in accordance with the editor's recommendations. All papers will be available after the seminar on the European Knowledge Centre for youth policy website.

Financial and Practical Conditions of Participation

The research seminar will take place at the European Youth Centre in Budapest, Hungary. Arrival is foreseen on Wednesday 22 November, 2006, preferably before dinner, which will take place at 19h00. Arrival time should be determined by the cost of the flights. Should more reasonable travel expenses (APEX flights) require early arrival, the organisers will cover additional board and lodging. Departure is foreseen for 26 November, 2006, after breakfast. Board and lodging in rooms with en-suite bathroom is provided at the European Youth Centre, Budapest. Further information concerning how to get to the EYC from the different points of arrival in Budapest shall be forwarded at a later date to confirmed participants.

Participants are expected to make use of the most economical means of travel available and to take advantage of reduced tariff, APEX or weekend fares. Travel arrangements should be made according to the travel rules of the Council of Europe, which will be communicated to confirmed participants at a later date. Only those who travel according to the rules and who participate for the entire duration of the seminar can be reimbursed their travel expenses.

Applications

Those interested in participating in this seminar should send the following documentation by email to youth-partnership@coe.int (mentioning "Citizenship Seminar" in the subject line) by **15 September, 2006**:

- a completed application form (attached below);
- a succinct CV (maximum one page);
- 500 word abstract of the proposed presentation.

In order to ensure that you are informed on the activities of the Youth Research Partnership, you are also requested to register as a user on the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy website (www.youth-knowledge.net). The registration process takes only a few minutes and you will be regularly updated on news, events and future seminars.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN September 15, 2006

APPLICATION FORM

Surname:

First name:

Country of Residence:

Date of Birth:

Sex: Male Female

Complete Address for Correspondence (including street number, postal code, place and country)

Address where you will travel from if different from above

Telephones:

(Please give full international access dialling codes for all your telephone numbers)

Home:

Work:

Fax :

E-mail:

Please specify any special needs or requirements you might have (e.g. dietary, disability, etc.)?

If you will need a visa for Hungary please indicate (EU citizens do not need Visas):

Your date of birth :

Your passport number :