

NECE 2018 Marseille

Brave new Worlds?! The Future of Democracy and Citizenship Education

Welcome by **Christoph Müller-Hofstede**, Federal Agency for Civic Education

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Eighty percent of success is showing up, said Woody Allen, on that note let me welcome all of you to NECE 2018.

Merci, Sam, for the introduction and merci, Alain, for your welcome.

Bonjour à toutes et à tous, a warm welcome to all of you here in the Grand Plateau at La Friche. A special welcome and applause for all our guests coming from North and East Africa who time and again had to struggle to get their visas in order to join this meeting. We are happy that you have made it!

I am Christoph Müller-Hofstede from the Federal Agency for Civic Education in Germany, coordinator of our NECE networking platform.

I am very delighted to welcome you on behalf of NECE, its partners and sister networks and supporters. Michèle Schilt from the Center for Civic Education in Luxembourg and I will walk you through the idea behind NECE and the idea behind this meeting in Marseille

In the next minutes we both will try to answer just two basic questions which might be of interest as a starter:

What is NECE? or better WHO is NECE?

And: What is this conference all about?

Who is NECE?

NECE consists of many actors who work together across national and professional borders: it is a unique platform 'sui generis' and therefore sometimes not very easy to understand.

To help you get a grasp of NECE, just keep these three pillars of NECE in mind:

1. Partners

Eight partners from eight European countries have joined forces to work together as a transnational and diverse and open community of stakeholders of citizenship education. We are operating as partners in an open format but we are not an NGO, registered for example in Brussels, but want to provide a forum for debate, for political analysis and – very important - for exchange and cooperation among practitioners. Last but not least we want to promote advocacy of citizenship education in our countries and in Brussels. And we act as a joint venture by organizing such conferences.

2. The Advisory Board:

This is a new body in the NECE world since 2017 with intellectuals and experts who help us define the problems for which we need to seek solutions, and provide with expert knowledge and perspectives about the political challenges we are facing today and in the future. And they contribute to our conferences and workshops as you can see from the program: You will meet many of these distinguished colleagues here in this conference.

3. Last but not least we have what we see as 'NECE citizens': they are the great number of practitioners and activists all over Europe who are in many ways connected to NECE and among each other. We are very fond of such a kind of 'NECE citizenship', fluid, open and accessible for all... a kind of European citizenship in education, transcending legal and bureaucratic borders and obstacles.

What do we try to do, what do we want?

- Bridge the gap between theory and practice... feedback from both sides,
- Enhance the practical aspects of our work in schools and outside of schools
- Promote transnational action and cooperation on the European level but also with Eastern and Southern neighbours of Europe.

How to implement this?

Somehow these ideas seem to be very attractive as our sister networks have been growing over the last years.

Let me just mention:

NACE: Networking Arab Civic Education coordinated by an excellent steering committee from European and Northern African countries.

CENESA: Civic Education Network of East and South Africa is exploring the potentials of citizenship education there. We are looking forward to getting your perspectives and views on board of NECE as well.

EENCE: Eastern European Network of Citizenship Education; coordinated by my colleague Svetlana Alenitskaya.

The All=In Network with Khalid Mahmoud and Adam Newman Turner as coordinators, working from Leicester;

our newly created Forum transnational pour l'éducation citoyenne bringing together actors and scholars from France, Germany and Luxemburg, coordinated by Benjamin Kurc and Coralie Schirru from Vote&Vous.

And we should not forget the VOTE MATCH group which is coordinating the diverse Voting Advice Applications in order to prepare a joint intervention in the run up to the European elections in 2019. Thanks to Pamela Brandt and her colleagues for joining us.

Many thanks to all you for creative work to make NECE great for all.

Last but really not least let me highlight the invaluable contribution of my team from the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the equally great and creative work of the labconcepts agency team. Without your help we would never have made it to Marseille. Thanks and cheers to you all.

